



Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia

Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers

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For further information, please email ceo@pacfa.org.au

Proposals for amendments or additions to this document should be sent to the CEO via ceo@pacfa.org.au

PACFA acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of this nation. We pay our respects to Elders, past and present, as the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we work and live. Our office is on the land of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin nation in Naarm/Melbourne and we thank them for their enduring and continuing contribution to the life of this place. We recognise that First Peoples' sovereignty was never ceded. □

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1. Introduction

PACFA has a proud history of more than 25 years as a volunteer-led organisation. Volunteers are embedded in all parts of the organisation, working alongside staff, other volunteers and members in a range of paid and unpaid roles with a variety of responsibilities and authority.

A high standard of professional conduct is expected of both staff and volunteers. It is the role of the Board and senior staff to lead respectfully and provide appropriate support to other members of PACFA communities.

This document should be read in conjunction with other PACFA materials including volunteer induction and the PACFA Strategic Plan which outlines our values and mission. This document complements the Code of Ethics which provides guidance for PACFA members in their clinical practise. This policy is ultimately accountable to the PACFA Constitution.

2. Who this policy applies to

Staff

Volunteers

Contractors

3. Values

PACFA's Strategic Plan sets out the PACFA's Values:

Authenticity

We act with integrity by being consistent, fair, transparent, and accountable.

We are trustworthy and professional. We do what we say we will do.

We are courageous in our willingness to speak our truth.

We stand for the value and integrity of Psychotherapy, Counselling, and Indigenous Healing Practices.

Compassion

We approach everyone from a position of kindness and goodwill.

We celebrate difference and diversity.

Connection

We seek to connect curiosity and openness.

We value the self of the practitioner as the heart of professional practice, and the role of professional supervision in safeguarding our practices and their recipients.

Humility

We acknowledge our mistakes, embrace our failures, and learn from them.

4. Expectations of conduct within PACFA

All PACFA staff and volunteers are expected to:

- uphold the Mission and Purpose outlined in PACFA's Strategic Plan, and our statutory requirements as an incorporated association.
- honour their responsibility to PACFA as outlined in applicable Position Descriptions, Terms of Reference and induction. This includes participation in meetings and timely completion of project commitments. Individuals are expected to contact their relevant PACFA leader or representative (CEO if unknown) in a timely manner if attendance or completion is not possible to ensure work can be reallocated or arrange a 'pause' of responsibilities.
- act in the best interests of PACFA, regardless of any connection to internal or external agencies (i.e., leadership groups, training providers, other membership organisations).
- foster a positive working relationship with other volunteers, staff and other relevant stakeholders.
- treat all members, staff and other relevant stakeholders with courtesy, professionalism and respect.
- adhere at all times to PACFA's Confidential Information Non-Disclosure Agreement, including after an appointment has ceased.

4.1 Interactions between PACFA volunteers and staff

All PACFA staff and volunteers are expected to treat other staff and volunteers with patience and respect in line with all legal workplace requirements, including those specified by Safe Work Australia legislation, principles and Codes of Practice.

Staff and volunteers are encouraged to engage with curiosity and respect, recognising that each person brings valuable insight, experience, and intention toward shared purpose and collaboration.

In the event of a dispute, the Complaints and Feedback policy is applied.

4.2 Interactions between PACFA volunteers and other members

All PACFA volunteers are expected to participate respectfully in discussion with other volunteers and members, across all settings.

All PACFA volunteers are expected to contribute to a harmonious, safe and productive organisational environment. This includes behaviour outside of PACFA's formal settings.

PACFA values respectful dialogue. Volunteers are expected to engage in disagreement without behaviours that may intimidate, silence, or distress others.

In the case that support is requested, PACFA can facilitate use of our EAP program for staff and volunteers which is managed by Converge. In the first instance contact 1300 687 327 or visit <https://convergeinternational.com.au/contact/>.

4.3 Interactions with stakeholders

No individual can represent PACFA without the express written permission of the CEO.

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It is incumbent on all volunteers to be clear in their communications with stakeholders in any setting that whilst they may share information about PACFA's standards, policies or expectations they are not authorised to commit PACFA to any business or organisational agreement or contract.

5. Expectations of work done on behalf of PACFA

5.1 Communication and official information

Other than the CEO and President, all staff and volunteers are not authorised to speak on behalf of PACFA as an organisation without the express written permission of the CEO.

Other than the CEO and President, as authorised by the Board, all staff and volunteers are instructed not to comment to or on any media, including social media, in a manner that may bring PACFA or its colleges into disrepute. This includes (but is not limited to) criticism of other industry organisations.

5.2 Fraudulent and criminal behaviour

Board members, Committees, Leadership Groups and Panels will:

- not engage in fraud or criminal behaviour, or any behaviour that results in personal material gain without the express permission of the CEO. Personal material gain is defined as any benefit or advantage that an individual receives for themselves, either financially or in the form of goods, services, privileges or opportunities, which arises from their role or position, rather than from fair, transparent processes.
- report any fraudulent or criminal behaviour by other Board, Committee, Leadership Group and Panel members or employees in line with available policies; report any breaches of the Code of Conduct by other Board, Committee, Leadership Group and Panel members in line with the Complaints and Feedback policy; and, if the reporting process is unclear, to the CEO, Secretary or President as appropriate.

5.3 Proper use of PACFA resources

People with the authority to influence purchasing decisions will:

- be accountable for expenditure in their PACFA roles.
- use PACFA funds and resources diligently and efficiently. This includes office facilities and equipment, hired venues, cab charge vouchers, and travel expense claims.
- not use PACFA office time or resources for personal activities or for personal gain, financial or otherwise.
- ensure that any travel for PACFA is only undertaken when teleconferences or web conferencing is not adequate for the purpose of the meeting.

5.4 Record keeping and use of information

Depending on the responsibilities of a volunteer role, a volunteer may be given member information if that is necessary to complete their duties. This may relate to member location and contact details, membership level and professional experience. All PACFA staff and volunteers are expected to keep all information relating to members, assessment of

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applications and appeals confidential.

All PACFA staff and volunteers should make every effort to ensure confidential information is not accessed by anyone other than themselves, including maintaining good practice in relation to data storage, password protection and network security on their personal devices and home network as outlined in PACFA's Privacy Policy.

Board members, Committees, Leadership Groups and Panels will:

- record actions and reasons for decisions in the appropriate register to ensure transparency and precedent;
- ensure the secure storage of sensitive or confidential information in electronic and hard copy forms by using password protected cloud, computer and email access and locked filing cabinets;
- report regularly to the Board and Council on decisions and actions;
- hand over to the relevant Chairperson or Convenor all documents and emails relating to involvement in the PACFA Board, Committees, Leadership Groups or Panels after the end of that involvement and destroy any copies of these documents and emails once they have been handed over.

6. Management of Conflicts of Interest

A Conflict of Interest occurs when an individual's personal interests, (financial, professional, relational or otherwise) interfere with or could reasonably be seen to interfere with their duty to act in the best interests of the organisation and its members.

Personal interests include direct interests, as well as those of family, friends, or other organisations a person may be involved with or have an interest in (for example, as a shareholder, investor, employee or contractor). It also includes a conflict between a person's duty to PACFA and another duty that the person has (for example, to another organisation).

To adhere to PACFA's Conflict of Interest policy. Specifically:

- to not take advantage of their role with PACFA to promote their own services, including but not limited to continuing professional development (CPD) or other training.
- not misuse PACFA information for personal or commercial gain for themselves or others.

Board members, Committees, Leadership Groups and Panels will:

- ensure their personal, professional or financial interests do not conflict with their ability to perform their PACFA duties.
- perform PACFA roles and tasks in a professional and objective manner, or their selection to perform roles and tasks for PACFA.
- professionally manage and declare any conflict between PACFA and their other professional roles.
- ensure any conflicts of interest that arise are managed in the interest of PACFA, its members, Member Associations, stakeholders and the public.

5. Management of Breaches of this policy

In the event any person wishes to raise a concern in relation to their role, their interaction(s) with any key stakeholders, or any PACFA-related matters, these concerns should be addressed first to the CEO, who will escalate matters to the PACFA President and/or Board as required. If the matter relates to the CEO, the President should be the first point of contact. If the matter relates to the CEO and President, then the Vice-President or another Board member if appropriate.

Should the matter not be resolved, the matter will be escalated in line with PACFA's Complaints and Feedback policy.

6. Legal Compliance

In the event that this policy is breached it is acknowledged that there may be legal ramifications if it is identified that a workplace health and safety issue or incident has occurred. While overall responsibility for workplace health and safety within the organisation is held by the Board, the CEO holds operational responsibility for management of the safety of staff and volunteers.

7. Definitions

In this Policy, unless a contrary intention appears:

ACNC Act	Means the <i>Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 (Cth)</i> as amended from time to time.
Act	Means the <i>Associations Incorporation Act 1991 (ACT)</i> , as amended from time to time.
Association	Means PACFA, incorporated as an association in the Australian Capital Territory under the Act on 9 June 1999, association number A03266.
Board	Means the Board of the Association structured and appointed in the manner approved by this Constitution.
Board Member	Means an individual elect or appointed to the Board.
By-law	Means a set of rules of the Association made or amended by the Board in accordance with this Constitution.
Chair	Means the person chairing a General Meeting or Board meeting.
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	Means the person appointed by the Board from time to time as the chief executive officer of the Association for such tenure and on terms as approved by the Board.
Code of Conduct	Means the PACFA Code of Conduct currently in force, as amended from time to time.
College	Means a Division of PACFA Members which may be established in relation to Members from a particular therapy modality or other shared professional interest.

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Constitution	Means this constitution of the Association as from time to time amended.
Interest Group	Means a group of members of PACFA and other interested persons, who come together to explore aspects of practice and to provide networking and support opportunities around a specified area of interest.
Material Personal Interest	A material personal interest is a personal interest, whether financial or non-financial, that is significant enough to influence an individual's judgment or ability to act impartially in a particular situation, particularly in a professional or official capacity. It creates a conflict of interest, real or perceived, where the individual's personal interests could potentially bias their decisions or actions.
Office-bearer	Means a Board member elected to the position of President or Secretary or Treasurer.
Ordinary committee member	Means a member of the Board who is not an office-bearer of the Association.
Professional Conduct Panel	Means a panel appointed in accordance with the Professional Conduct Procedures to hear a complaint against a practitioner.
Professional Conduct Procedures	Means the documented complaint handling procedure currently in force, as amended from time to time.
Registrant	Means a person who is listed on a PACFA Register.
Regulation	The <i>Associations Incorporation Regulation 2023 (ACT)</i> as amended from time to time.

8. Further resources

[Safe Work Australia](#)

[Conflict of Interest policy](#)

[Privacy policy](#)

Complaints and Feedback policy

[Code of Ethics/Clinical Code of Conduct](#)

[Strategic Plan \(April 2023\)](#)

[EAP service – Converge International](#)