



## THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF SPORT AND EXERCISE SCIENCES

### CODE OF CONDUCT

#### 1. Introduction

This code of conduct sets out the principles of conduct and ethics for the guidance of members of the British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences (BASES) and its three constituent Divisions: Education and Professional Development; Physical Activity for Health; and Sport and Performance. All members of BASES are bound by the provisions of this code of conduct and each Division's own professional guidelines, which provide further detail in respect of experimental techniques, protocols and analysis procedures, the obtaining of medico-legal clearance and informed consent. BASES members are reminded that the aims of the Association are:

- (a) the promotion of research in sport and exercise sciences
- (b) the encouragement of evidence-based practice in sport and exercise sciences
- (c) the distribution of knowledge in sport and exercise sciences
- (d) the development and maintenance of high professional standards for those involved in sport and exercise sciences
- (e) the representation of the interests of sport and exercise sciences nationally and internationally.

Throughout this Code of Conduct the word 'client(s)' includes all participants. In both, carrying out these aims and their working practices, BASES members must take into account the three following principles:

- a) all clients have the right to expect the highest standards of professionalism, consideration and respect,
- b) the pursuit of scientific knowledge requires that research and testing is carried out with utmost integrity
- c) the law requires that working practices are safe and that the welfare of the client is paramount.

#### 2. Structure

Members are reminded that the authority of BASES is vested in the Strategic Management Team, which alone has the power to review and recommend amendment to this code of conduct. Any questions arising from this code of conduct or its interpretation (apart from disciplinary matters for which see section 9) shall be referred at first by any member to the relevant Division Chair for a ruling. Such Chair may, at their discretion, refer such matter to the Strategic Management Team for final determination. Any member aggrieved by the decision of a Division Chair may appeal to the Strategic Management Team for a ruling, whose decision shall be final.

#### 3. Ethical Clearance

Ethical clearance must be obtained from an appropriate Local Ethics Committee or similar local body for non-routine work undertaken by members. Specific clearance must always be obtained before the imposition of any unusual or severe physical or psychological stress, the administration of any ergogenic aid, working with clients with disabilities, or the employment of biopsy or venipuncture. The list is not exhaustive and specific clearance is often required in other areas of work, such as with children, vulnerable adults or the sampling of capillary blood. If any member is in doubt as to whether ethical clearance is required, an assessment of risk should be carried out and if there is any remaining doubt reference should be made, in advance, to the local ethics committee or body.

#### **4. Informed Consent and Confidentiality**

##### *a) Informed Consent*

No member may undertake any work without first having the informed consent of all participating clients. Informed consent is the knowing consent of a client (or legally authorised representative in the case of the child) who is in a position to exercise free power of choice without any undue inducement or element of force, fraud, deceit or coercion.

In most cases, informed consent may be obtained by having the client read and sign a document setting out all of the information relevant to the proposed investigation or test. This would normally include a description of the investigation and its objectives, the procedures to be followed, an outline of the risks and benefits, an offer to answer any queries, an instruction that the client is free to withdraw at any point without prejudice, together with an explanation concerning confidentiality.

In some cases (e.g., simple field tests), informed consent may be obtained verbally but in every such case members must make an appropriate written record confirming that informed consent had been obtained. Where a full explanation to a client may adversely affect the work, members must obtain prior local ethics committee consent to provide a more general outline of the aims of the investigation and the committee may set out the extent of the information to be given at its discretion.

##### *b) Confidentiality*

It is of paramount importance that all BASES members must preserve the confidentiality of the information acquired in their work which must not be devolved without prior written consent of a client. All clients must be informed that they have a right to a copy of such information relating to them and all members must supply a copy if so requested. It is deemed to be good practice to supply copies in any event, as a matter of course.

#### **5. Data Protection and Responsibility**

- a) Storage and use of individually identifiable data must be in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.
- b) The obtaining of data and its presentation/publication must be unbiased and responsible. Validity, objectivity and reliability are key principles and caution should be exercised with the interpretation and explanation of test results.
- c) Members should seek to maximise the accessibility of research findings and, wherever appropriate, publish them in the interest of both science, and sport and exercise.
- d) Publication of data must not disclose the identity of any individual client unless the prior written consent of the individual is obtained.

#### **6. Competence**

- a) Members must recognise their limitations in qualifications, experience, expertise and competence and must operate within these limits, restricting the interpretation of results to those which they are qualified to give and in employing any equipment and techniques which they are qualified to use.
- b) Any matter whose essence appears to lie within another specialist field such as medicine or physiotherapy, or another discipline within BASES, must be referred to an appropriate professional within such a field.
- c) Members must not misrepresent their qualifications, experience or expertise in any way or exaggerate or mislead clients in respect of the effectiveness of any techniques they undertake.
- d) Professional members should seek to become accredited where and when appropriate.
- e) All members must be knowledgeable in respect of contemporary research and practice.

#### **7. Professional and Personal Conduct**

- a) Members paramount concern is the well-being of their clients.
- b) Members must conduct themselves in such a way that brings credit to their specialist areas.
- c) Members must not practise or work when they are not fit to operate effectively and professionally.
- d) Members must not exploit relationships with clients for personal gain or gratification.
- e) Members must not in any way jeopardise the safety or interests of clients.
- f) Members must be totally unbiased and objective in their practices and actions.
- g) Members must ensure, where appropriate, the highest standards of safety and working practices and research both in respect of work undertaken by members themselves or by others under their

supervision.

- h) Members must respond, with all due expedition, to any enquiry from any client or any other member of BASES or any committee of BASES.
- i) Members must ensure that suitable insurance indemnity cover is in place for all areas of work that they undertake.
- j) Members must not do any act or thing, or omit to do any act or thing, which in any way brings, or is likely to bring, BASES into disrepute.

## **8. Officers**

All officers of BASES and the individual Divisions must:

- a) act with strict impartiality with respect of any matter referred to them for consideration as officers,
- b) use their best endeavours to make the best use of all resources available to BASES in the interests of BASES and its members,
- c) make a prior declaration in respect of any matter in which they have direct or indirect personal interest,
- d) not take part in any part of or vote on any matter in which they have a direct or indirect personal interest.

## **9. Disciplinary Procedures**

- a) Any person (whether or not a member) may make a complaint that a member has failed to comply with this code of conduct. Members are under an obligation to report all instances of breaches of this code.
- b) Such complaint shall be made in writing to the Honorary Secretary of BASES.
- c) Upon receiving a complaint, the Honorary Secretary must investigate it as soon as possible unless the complaint is anonymous in which case the Secretary has the discretion as to whether to investigate it or not. The Honorary Secretary shall investigate any complaint impartially and with the assistance of a salaried member of the BASES staff or other nominated officer.
- d) The member shall receive full written details of the complaint against them.
- e) The member shall respond in writing within 28 days of receiving details of the complaint.
- f) The Honorary Secretary shall cause all such relevant enquiries to be made as the Honorary Secretary considers necessary to ascertain the validity or otherwise of the complaint and, as soon as possible thereafter, the Honorary Secretary shall refer the matter to a disciplinary tribunal.
- g) The disciplinary tribunal shall comprise the Chair of BASES, Division Chair of the member's Division and one other Division Chair and a BASES legal representative if deemed necessary.
- h) The disciplinary tribunal shall meet as soon as conveniently possible to consider the complaint and will give reasonable notice to the member of the time, date and place of disciplinary tribunals meeting.
- i) The member shall be entitled to attend the tribunal in person (with a representative if they so wish who must be identified 14 days before the tribunal meets) and shall be entitled to a copy of all documentation that the tribunal is considering.
- j) The tribunal may call any person to give information to it and the member shall be entitled to ask any relevant questions of such person and shall be entitled to address the tribunal. Subject to this, the disciplinary tribunal shall have the power to decide the form and nature of any hearing but any such procedure must be fair and reasonable to all parties.
- k) At the conclusion of the hearing, the disciplinary tribunal must adjudicate on the complaint and decision may be reached by a majority.
- l) In the event that the complaint is upheld the disciplinary tribunal shall have full discretion to impose any of the following penalties on any member:
  - i) a written caution as to future behaviour
  - ii) a fine
  - iii) suspension from membership for a fixed period
  - iv) expulsion from membership
- m) Prior to the imposition of suspension or expulsion a member must be provided with the opportunity to make a written or personal presentation to the tribunal.
- n) Written notice of any penalty imposed shall be given to the member and a copy may be circulated to any other member.

- o) On being presented with any new relevant evidence the tribunal has the discretionary power to review any complaint and may, on any such review, review not only its prior decision but also any penalty imposed whether by reducing, increasing or cancelling the same.
- p) If any member is aggrieved by the decision of the disciplinary tribunal, he or she may, within fourteen days of receiving the written decision of the disciplinary tribunal, appeal the decision to the Strategic Management Team who shall have full power to consider the matter afresh, excluding the original tribunal members, together with full power to reduce, increase, cancel or confirm any penalty imposed.

21 Feb 2006  
Copyright © BASES, 2006