

PCER GUIDANCE NOTES

Professionalism and ethics

Professionalism and ethics

Unit PC1 – Uphold professional ethics, values and standards and demonstrate personal and professional development

This unit is about upholding professional ethics, values and standards as well as maintaining personal and professional development through a commitment to lifelong learning. It is concerned with maintaining professional integrity and objectivity as well as complying with regulations and guidelines for professional conduct. It expects you to adhere to high standards of professional conduct and act in the public interest at all times.

Element reference	Demonstrated behaviour and examples
Element 1 Uphold professional ethics, values and standards	<p>Maintain an awareness of the standards of professional conduct that relate to your role as an accountant and keep up to date with any changes</p> <p>Ensure compliance with standards and regulations that apply to professional activities and report instances of non-compliance or where you suspect fraud or other illegal behaviour by others, to the relevant authority</p> <p>Maintain a professional distance and demonstrate professional objectivity, integrity and scepticism in all contact with others</p> <p>Avoid or terminate relationships that put your professional integrity at risk</p> <p>Promote quality in all your activities and demonstrate a commitment to the public interest</p>
Element 2 Maintain an awareness and understanding of changes affecting the profession	<p>Identify and utilise a wide range of sources of information to ensure you keep up to date with changes affecting the profession</p> <p>Keep a record of information gathered</p> <p>Apply up to date knowledge in your day to day activities</p> <p>Discuss your understanding of changes affecting the profession with relevant people</p> <p>Read relevant literature and up to date information</p> <p>Attend in-house or external technical update sessions</p> <p>Prepare a seminar on recent changes for colleagues or clients</p>
Element 3 Demonstrate a commitment to your personal and professional knowledge and development	<p>Take responsibility for your own learning and development</p> <p>Attend development events outside your specialist technical area as part of a programme of development</p> <p>Seek feedback and reflect on your contribution and skills in order to continually improve your performance</p> <p>Regularly assess your own current level of competence and knowledge</p> <p>Carry out suitable learning and development activities</p> <p>Apply your learning in the workplace and review its effectiveness</p> <p>Discuss your development and progress with your mentor/senior colleague on a regular basis</p>

Please click [here](#) to see an example of confirmation statements relating to professionalism and ethics.

Professionalism and ethics

EXAMPLE 1

As Senior Manager, I need to ensure that I keep up to date with any regulatory changes. To achieve this, I ensure that I undertake CPD which is agreed with my manager to take account of my development needs and the needs of servicing clients.

For example, recently I attended several VAT courses and the impact of Brexit on my clients. Also due to COVID I attended several webinars and researched the various government grant and furlough schemes to ensure that I can advise my clients on the available support, as well as ensuring that I am applying the government guidelines correctly on each client. This learning was very useful as one of my clients had insisted on processing their own furlough claims instead of using our team, and through my learning I was able to note an ethical dilemma where my client was claiming incorrectly. I discussed this with the client to ensure that the appropriate rectifications were made.

I have been working on a partner development plan focusing on compliance for the firm. I took part in a GDPR courses to ensure I was informed of the requirements that the firm needs to comply with. Through this training, I was able to identify some weaknesses in our firm's data gathering. This led to me actioning changes, such as encrypting and password protecting documents and using shared cloud platforms when sending all information between my firm and our clients.

EXAMPLE 2

As a manager, it was important that I upheld the values expected from the firm and from being an ACCA member.

- A close personal friend wanted to engage the services of the firm. I ensured I disclosed our relationship to the senior director and that I thought they should be assigned to a different colleague to ensure my professional objectivity remained intact and the client would receive the great services offered by the firm.
- I ensured I kept up to date with changes by attending webinars and courses, and researching the HMRC website. Keeping on top of the HMRC website allowed me to accurately advise a client who was looking for advice to ensure they were MTD compliant – I explained the changes I had learned about to the client and what would be expected of them.
- I had regular discussions with my supervising principal regarding my progression within the firm, with the ultimate goal of becoming a director. They suggested I focus on my soft skills, identifying suitable courses for me. I used the training learnt in the courses during staff appraisals to develop and motivate my team. I also researched the practising certificate requirements as I knew I needed one before I could become a director.