

# Code of Conduct

All Virtual Assistant Placement Partners are bound by  
this Code of Conduct which is monitored by our  
Professional Standards Panel

2009/2010

VA Placements is a service provided by  
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## Preamble

Virtual Assistants develop a valid and reliable body of knowledge and skills and apply these in a variety of contexts to assist business owners, managers and supervisors in the day to day management of their organisation. In doing so Virtual Assistants perform many roles, within a range of sectors and industries, such as research, education, manufacturing, small business, not-for-profit to name a few.

Virtual Assistants also strive to help the general public who are considering setting up as a Virtual Assistant and aspire to be a positive influence on society in general.

121 Temps VA Placement service has a responsibility to ensure that the ethical codes of its members are in accord with the following fundamental principles which are intended to provide a general philosophy and guidance to cover all situations encountered by Virtual Assistants.

In general, networks and associations should require their members to continue to develop their awareness of ethical issues, and promote training to ensure this occurs. They should provide consultation and support to members on ethical issues.

121 Temps provides the following guidance for the Code of Conduct of its members. The ethical code should cover all aspects of professional behaviour. 121 Temps have procedures to investigate and decide upon complaints against members, and mediation, corrective and disciplinary procedures to determine the action necessary taking into account the nature and seriousness of the complaint.

- *Respect for a Person's Rights and Dignity*  
Virtual Assistants accord appropriate respect to and promote the development of the fundamental rights, dignity and worth of all people. They respect the rights of individuals to privacy, confidentiality and autonomy, consistent with other obligations and with the law.
- *Competence*  
Virtual Assistants strive to ensure and maintain high standards of competence in their work. They recognise the boundaries of their particular competencies and the limitations of their expertise. They provide only those services and use only those techniques for which they are qualified by education, training or experience.
- *Responsibility*  
Virtual Assistants are aware of their responsibilities to their clients, to the community, and to the society in which they work and live. Virtual Assistants avoid doing harm and are responsible for their own actions, and assure themselves, as far as possible, that their services are not misused.
- *Integrity*  
Virtual Assistants seek to promote integrity in the virtual assistant industry. Virtual Assistants are honest, fair and respectful of others. They attempt to clarify for relevant parties the roles they are performing and to function appropriately in accordance with those roles.

## ***Interdependence of the Four Principles***

There will always be strong interdependencies between the four main ethical principles with their specifications. This means for Virtual Assistants that resolving an ethical question or dilemma will require reflection and often dialogue with clients and colleagues, weighing different ethical principles. Making decisions and taking actions are necessary even if there are still conflicting issues.

### **1.1 Respect for Person's Rights and Dignity**

#### **1.1.1 General Respect**

- Awareness of and respect for the knowledge, insight, experience and areas of expertise of clients, relevant third parties, colleagues and the general public.
- Awareness of individual, cultural and role differences including those due to disability, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, national origin, age, religion, language and socio-economic status.
- Avoidance of practices which are the result of unfair bias and may lead to unjust discrimination.

#### **1.1.2 Privacy and Confidentiality**

- Restriction of seeking and giving out information in accordance with contracts and legislation.
- Adequate storage and handling of information, data files and records, in any form, to ensure confidentiality, including taking reasonable safeguards to make data anonymous when appropriate.
- Obligation when the legal system requires disclosure to provide only that information relevant to the issue in question, and otherwise to maintain confidentiality.
- Recognition of the rights of clients to have access to their information and files, and to get necessary assistance and consultation.

#### **1.1.3 Informed Consent and Freedom of Consent**

- Clarification for clients on pricing of services and of your procedures regarding storage and supply of information and files..
- Recognition that there may be more than one client, and that these may be first and second order clients having differing professional relationships with the Virtual Assistant, who consequently has a range of responsibilities.

### **1.2 Competence**

#### **1.2.1 Ethical Awareness**

- Obligation to have a good knowledge of ethics, including the Ethical Code, and the integration of ethical issues with business practice.

#### **1.2.2 Limits of Competence**

- Obligation to practice within the limits of competence derived from education, training and experience.

#### **1.2.3 Continuing Development**

- Obligation to continue to enhance your skills by participating in a professional development program.

## 1.3 Responsibility

### 1.3.1 General Responsibility

- For the quality and consequences of the Virtual Assistant's professional actions and not to bring the occupation into disrepute

### 1.3.2 Promotion of High Standards

- Promotion and maintenance of high standards of business activity, and requirement on Virtual Assistants to organise their activities in accord with the Ethical Code.

### 1.3.3 Extended Responsibility

- Assumption of general responsibility for the professional activities, including ethical standards, of employees, sub-contractors and others in your employ.

### 1.3.4 Resolving Dilemmas

- Recognition that ethical dilemmas occur and responsibility is placed upon the virtual assistant to clarify such dilemmas and consult colleagues, and inform relevant others of the demands of the Ethical Code.

## 1.4 Integrity

### 1.4.1 Recognition of Professional Limitations

- Obligation to be self-reflective and open about personal and professional limitations and a recommendation to seek professional advice and support in difficult situations.

### 1.4.2 Honesty and Accuracy

- Accuracy in representing relevant qualifications, education, experience, competence and affiliations.
- Honesty and accuracy with regard to any financial implications of the business relationship.
- Recognition of the need for accuracy.

### 1.4.3 Straightforwardness and Openness

- General obligation to provide information and avoid deception in business practice.
- Obligation not to withhold information. If deception has occurred, there is an obligation to inform and reestablish trust.

### 1.4.4 Conflict of Interests and Exploitation

- Awareness of the problems which may result from dual relationships and an obligation to avoid such dual relationships which may lead to conflict of interests, or exploitation of a client.
- Obligation not to exploit a business relationship to further personal, religious, political or other ideological interests.

### 1.4.5 Actions of Colleagues

- Obligation to give a reasonable critique of the professional actions of colleagues, and to take action to inform colleagues and, if appropriate, the relevant professional associations and authorities, if there is a question of unethical action.