

American Geosciences Institute

Guidelines for Ethical Professional Conduct



These guidelines address common ethical topics across the geoscience community; the ethics statements of individual societies may expand beyond these guidelines.

Geoscientists play a critical role in ethical decision making about stewardship of the Earth, the use of its resources, and the interactions between humankind and the planet on which we live. Geoscientists must earn the public's trust and maintain confidence in the work of individual geoscientists and the geosciences as a profession. The American Geosciences Institute (AGI) expects those in the profession to adhere to the highest ethical standards in all professional activities. Geoscientists should engage responsibly in the conduct and reporting of their work, acknowledging the uncertainties and limits of current understanding inherent in studies of natural systems. Geoscientists should respect the work of colleagues and those who use and rely upon the products of their work.

In day-to-day activities geoscientists should:

- » Be honest.
- » Act responsibly and with integrity, acknowledge limitations to knowledge and understanding, and be accountable for their errors.
- » Present professional work and reports without falsification or fabrication of data, misleading statements, or omission of relevant facts.
- » Distinguish facts and observations from interpretations.
- » Accurately cite authorship, acknowledge the contributions of others, and not plagiarize.
- » Disclose and act appropriately on real or perceived conflicts of interest.
- » Continue professional development and growth.
- » Encourage and assist in the development of a safe, diverse, and inclusive workforce.
- » Treat colleagues, students, employees, and the public with respect.
- » Keep privileged information confidential, except when doing so constitutes a threat to public health, safety, or welfare.

As members of a professional and scientific community, geoscientists should:

- » Promote greater understanding of the geosciences by other technical groups, students, the general public, news media, and policy makers through effective communication and education.
- » Conduct their work recognizing the complexities and uncertainties of the Earth system.
- » Sample responsibly so that materials and sites are preserved for future study.
- » Document and archive data and data products using best practices in data management, and share data promptly for use by the geoscience community.
- » Use their technical knowledge and skills to protect public health, safety, and welfare, and enhance the sustainability of society.
- » Responsibly inform the public about natural resources, hazards, and other geoscience phenomena with clarity and accuracy.
- » Support responsible stewardship through an improved understanding and interpretation of the Earth, and by communicating known and potential impacts of human activities and natural processes.

Signatories as of December 28, 2015

American Geosciences Institute
American Association of Petroleum Geologists
American Geophysical Union
American Institute of Professional Geologists
American Rock Mechanics Association
Association of American Geographers
Association of Environmental & Engineering Geologists
Clay Minerals Society
Council on Undergraduate Research, Geosciences Division
The Geochemical Society
Geological Association of Canada
Geological Society of America
The Geological Society of London
International Association of Hydrogeologists/U.S. National Chapter
International Medical Geology Association
National Association of Geoscience Teachers
National Association of State Boards of Geology (ASBOG)
National Cave and Karst Research Institute
National Earth Science Teachers Association
Paleobotanical Section of the Botanical Society of America
Paleontological Society
SEPM (Society for Sedimentary Geology)
Society for Mining, Metallurgy, and Exploration, Inc.
The Society for Organic Petrology
Society of Economic Geologists
Society of Exploration Geophysicists
Society of Independent Professional Earth Scientists
Society of Mineral Museum Professionals
Society of Vertebrate Paleontology