

Code of Conduct for AUSIT Office-Bearers

Passed by the National Council in July 2026

Primary Author: Carl Gene Fordham

Secondary Authors: Anna Grogan, Catherine Pfammatter, Dave Deck, Eirlys Chessa, Giuseppina Pungitore, Jess Shepherd, Jim Hlavac, Patricia Evelin Argüello de Avila, Sebastien Robin, Vesna Flower Cvjeticanin, Miranda Lai, Silvia Martinez

1. Purpose and application of this Code

- 1.1 The Code of Conduct for AUSIT Office-Bearers ('this Code') sets the standards of behaviour for office-bearers of the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators Ltd (AUSIT) in the discharge of their official duties.
- 1.2 Additionally, this Code provides for the investigation of alleged breaches, as well as the prevention and resolution of disputes among or involving office-bearers.
- 1.3 For the purposes of this Code, an 'office-bearer' is defined as any individual holding a position of authority within AUSIT, whether paid or unpaid.
- 1.4 Examples of AUSIT office-bearers include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Members of AUSIT's National Council;
 - b. Members of AUSIT's Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Groups;
 - c. Delegates of AUSIT's Language Divisions;
 - d. AUSIT's Administration Officers; and
 - e. Contractors engaged by AUSIT.
- 1.5 This Code does not govern the conduct of AUSIT members who do not meet the definition of 'office-bearer' provided in 1.3.
- 1.6 This Code operates independently from the AUSIT Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct, which regulates the behaviour of translators and interpreters during their professional work.

2. Behavioural standards

- 2.1 Office-bearers must discharge their duties in a way that complies with AUSIT's Constitution, particularly the objects of AUSIT as outlined in clause 3.1 of its Constitution.

- 2.2 Office-bearers must follow all AUSIT policies, and any relevant laws and regulations.
- 2.3 Office-bearers must act with integrity by:
- a. Prioritising the interests of AUSIT's members over personal or professional interests in all decisions and actions;
 - b. Declaring potential conflicts of interest as soon as they arise;
 - c. Refraining from participating in discussion or voting when a conflict of interest applies;
 - d. Refraining from engaging in activities that may conflict with AUSIT's interests or damage its reputation;
 - e. Refraining from offering or accepting gifts, gratuities, favours, or personal rewards of non-tokenistic value that are intended to influence AUSIT's decisions or activities;
 - f. Using AUSIT property and information — including member information — only for AUSIT's intended purposes, and not for personal or commercial gain; and
 - g. Being truthful and sincere in all dealings with fellow AUSIT members.
- 2.4 Office-bearers must keep confidential all information received during meetings and AUSIT activities.
- 2.5 Office-bearers must refrain from speaking or writing publicly on behalf of AUSIT unless explicitly authorised to do so by the National Council.
- 2.6 Office-bearers must observe principles of accountability and good governance by:
- a. Understanding clearly their own roles and responsibilities, and how they differ from those of other office-bearers;
 - b. Taking responsibility for the roles they assume and the decisions they make;
 - c. Applying AUSIT policies uniformly across the membership, without favouritism or discrimination;
 - d. Communicating decisions, processes, and expectations in a manner that is open to scrutiny by fellow AUSIT members; and
 - e. Staying informed about developments and issues relevant to AUSIT and its operations.
- 2.7 Office-bearers must show respect and courtesy to fellow AUSIT members at all times.
- 2.8 Office-bearers must maintain a work environment for AUSIT members that is free from hazards that may cause mental, emotional, or physical harm, including peer pressure, bullying, ostracism, verbal abuse, gossip, and discriminatory language.
- 2.9 Office-bearers must observe principles of inclusion and member participation by:
- a. Acknowledging and respecting fellow AUSIT members' ownership over work they contribute that furthers AUSIT's objects.

- b. Ensuring fellow AUSIT members feel genuinely heard and meaningfully involved in decisions that affect them.
- c. Encouraging healthy and constructive debate among AUSIT members that aims to solve problems and improve the quality of decisions.
- d. Acting on the input and feedback of fellow AUSIT members in a timely and meaningful way.

2.10 Office-bearers must attend and participate in AUSIT meetings punctually, actively, and respectfully.

2.11 Office-bearers who engage in conduct that falls short of these standards may be in breach of this Code (see '4. Investigation of alleged breaches').

3. Preventing and resolving disputes

3.1 This Code recognises that unresolved disputes involving AUSIT office-bearers can:

- a. Compromise the fulfilment of AUSIT's objects;
- b. Undermine the goodwill of volunteers;
- c. Create psychosocial risks for members; and
- d. Damage AUSIT's standing in the translation and interpreting profession, and among external stakeholders.

3.2 The National President, or relevant Committee Chair where applicable, should attempt to prevent disputes from arising in the bodies they lead.

3.3 Disputes among or involving office-bearers can be prevented and minimised by:

- a. Fostering a courteous, collaborative and supportive working environment;
- b. Directing AUSIT members who are preparing to assume office to access this Code and become familiar with its contents;
- c. Providing AUSIT members who are preparing to assume office with a clear and accurate description of their new role; and
- d. Supporting office-bearers to resolve disagreements in the early stage before they escalate.

3.4 Should a dispute arise between an office-bearer and another member of AUSIT, the office-bearer themselves should first attempt to resolve the dispute in good faith.

- 3.5 The office-bearer may seek support from the National President, or relevant Committee Chair where applicable, to resolve the dispute.
- 3.6 If a resolution to the dispute cannot be reached within 14 calendar days of support being sought from the National President or Committee Chair, the office-bearer and/or any parties to the dispute may make a written request to the National Council that a mediator be appointed, with the request including a list of preferred mediators proposed by one or more of the parties to the dispute.
- 3.7 In considering a request to appoint a mediator, the National Council will have regard to the following criteria:
- a. The mediator must be an accredited mediator;
 - b. The mediator must not be a member of AUSIT;
 - c. The mediator must not have any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest with any of the individuals involved in the dispute;
 - d. The mediator must be available to provide mediation in a reasonable time frame;
 - e. The mediator's fee must be determined by the National Council as a reasonable use of AUSIT's funds; and
 - f. All parties to the dispute must agree on the chosen mediator.
- 3.8 The National Council must inform the requestor in writing as soon as possible of the outcome of the request.
- 3.9 Should the request be approved, the National Council should effect the appointment of the mediator as soon as possible.
- 3.10 The office-bearer whose request for mediation was granted should inform the National Council of the outcome of the mediation as soon as possible.
- 3.11 If mediation is unsuccessful or either party is unsatisfied with the outcome, any party may submit a written complaint to the National Council for formal investigation, in accordance with section 4 of this Code.
- 3.12 Where a dispute arises concerning the standards of conduct between two or more members of the National Council, the matter must be referred to an independent mediator appointed in accordance with the process set out in this section.
- 3.13 A member of the National Council who is a party to such a dispute must not participate in any National Council deliberations or votes relating to the dispute, in order to avoid a conflict of interest.

4. Investigation of alleged breaches

- 4.1 This section sets out the formal process for investigating alleged breaches of this Code. It applies where:
- a. Mediation under section 3 has been unsuccessful or unsatisfactory to either or both parties; or
 - b. The nature of the alleged breach is such that the National Council considers formal investigation to be necessary or appropriate without first requiring mediation.
- 4.2 A complaint must be submitted in writing and must include:
- a. The name and contact details of the complainant;
 - b. The name of the office-bearer against whom the complaint is being made;
 - c. A clear description of the alleged breach, including relevant dates, circumstances, and any supporting evidence; and
 - d. The complainant's agreement to the conditions set out in clause 4.3.
- 4.3 For a complaint to be considered, the complainant must agree to the following conditions:
- a. The complainant must identify themselves by name; and
 - b. The complainant's identity may be disclosed to the office-bearer against whom the complaint is being made, as a requirement of procedural fairness.
- 4.4 While anonymous complaints will not be considered under this Code, the National Council has discretion to take other action in response to information received anonymously.
- 4.5 Upon receiving a complaint that satisfies the conditions in clause 4.3, the National Council will notify the office-bearer against whom the complaint has been made ('the respondent') and provide them with a copy of the complaint.
- 4.6 The National Council may elect to impose stand-down measures on the respondent pending the conclusion of the investigation.
- 4.7 As a principle of natural justice, the respondent is entitled to respond to the allegations, however this must be done in writing within 14 calendar days of being notified of the complaint, unless an extension is granted by the National Council.
- 4.8 Following receipt of the respondent's response, or upon the expiry of the response period in clause 4.7, the National Council will consider the complaint and the response and determine an appropriate course of action, as follows:
- a. If the respondent accepts the allegations as true, the National Council will determine what disciplinary action, if any, is appropriate (see clause 4.11).

- b. If the respondent refutes the allegations, the National Council may elect to refer the matter to the Ethics and Professional Practice Committee, which will empanel a Board of Professional Conduct to investigate the alleged breach and make a determination.
- 4.9 A Board of Professional Conduct empanelled to investigate an alleged breach will conduct its investigation in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice.
- 4.10 Upon completing its investigation, the Board of Professional Conduct will recommend to the National Council appropriate action, which where a contravention is found will ordinarily include a formal warning and a directive that the behaviour not recur, but may also include other disciplinary measures.
- 4.11 In addition to sanctions provided for in AUSIT's Constitution, disciplinary action for the purposes of this Code may include but is not limited to:
 - a. Termination of the office-bearer's appointment, contract or engagement;
 - b. Changes to the office-bearer's working arrangements; and
 - c. Revocation of the office-bearer's AUSIT membership.

5. Review

- 5.1 The National Council may seek to review this Code when needed, particularly in the event of changes to best practice, regulatory advice, or applicable laws.