



AARP Code of Conduct

Part 2: Ethics

For Certified Practicing Nutritionists

Issued by the Board of The Australasian Association and Register of Practicing Nutritionists
(AARP) LTD.

Approved and Implemented October 2019

Revised October 2024

1. PURPOSE of the Code of Conduct Part 2 - Ethics

1.1 The AARPN Code of Conduct Part 2 – Ethics, provides guidance to Certified Practicing Nutritionists (CPNs) on how to act ethically and professionally in the capacity of an AARPN credentialed practitioner.

1.2 It is designed to guide Certified Practicing Nutritionists towards fulfilling proficient practice requirements – it does not specify how to make decisions or to act in particular situations.

1.3 It reiterates that Practitioners have a duty of care towards their patients/clients and their primary concern is to practise safely and effectively within an ethical framework.

1.4 It aims to:

- Recognise and communicate the requirements for clinical practice and of Certified Practicing Nutritionists as per AARPN Constitution and Code of Conduct Part 2 – Ethics.
- Communicate a basis of expected standards for Certified Practicing Nutritionists.
- Clarify what constitutes a 'inadequate professional conduct', and 'professional misconduct'.
- Inform the public and other allied health practitioners about the values and ethos of Certified Practicing Nutritionists.

Extensive consultation was undertaken to develop this Code of Ethics by a Task-force committee nominated by the AARPN Chairperson, followed by a peer review process. These ethics will be reviewed and revised, if necessary, on an annual basis to ensure they remain relevant to the changing professional environment.

All Certified Practicing Nutritionists must always act in accordance with the law. This Code is not a substitute for the provisions of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009 (the National Law), or other relevant legislation and case law. If there is any conflict between the Code and the law, the law takes precedence.

1.5 It is essential for all Certified Practicing Nutritionists to be aware of and to conform to, the standards, guidelines and policies of the profession.

1.6 This code does not address the range of general legal obligations that are applicable for Certified Practicing Nutritionists, such as those under privacy, child protection and antidiscrimination legislation. It is the duty of the individual practitioner to ensure that that they are aware of their obligations under the general law and other legislation, and to act in accordance with them.

2. DEFINITIONS

Professional conduct: is adherence to the AARPN Constitution, Code of Ethics, Code of Conduct, and the commitment of no act that could be construed as an act of inadequate professional conduct or professional misconduct.

Inadequate professional conduct is 'conduct that falls short of the professional standard indicated in the constitution of AARPN and its Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics, and/or conduct that falls short of the clinical performance and diligence, that the National and

International professional Nutrition community, is entitled to expect of a degree qualified Nutritionist. This includes diverse platforms including but not limited to private practice, online, conferences, meetings, social gatherings, and government/community/public health.'

Professional misconduct is 'conduct which demonstrates a considerable and/or consistent failure to exhibit/maintain the professional standard indicated in the constitution of AARPN and its Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics, and/or conduct which demonstrates a considerable and/or consistent failure to exhibit/maintain the clinical performance and diligence, that the National and International professional Nutrition community, is entitled to expect of a degree qualified Nutritionist, and if established, justify a finding that the practitioner is not competent to continue to be a member of AARPN and engage in Nutrition Practice. This includes diverse platforms including but not limited to private practice, online, conferences, meetings, social gatherings, and government/community/public health. Professional misconduct may additionally include conduct that places the Nutrition profession in disrepute and/or being convicted of a criminal offence.

Being Ethical means: 'Certified Practicing Nutritionists act lawfully and responsibly and are accountable for their decision making'.

Refer to AARPN Constitution for other relevant definitions.

3. ABBREVIATIONS

AARPN	Australasian Association and Register of Certified Practicing Nutritionists
AHPRA	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
COC	Code of Conduct
COE	Code of Ethics
NP	Nutrition Practice (Clinical Nutrition practice in accordance with CPN standards)
CPN	Certified Practicing Nutritionist

4. INTERPRETATION STATEMENT

This Code of Conduct (the "Code") functions as a cornerstone of the profession's self-regulatory framework and serves as the foundation for the ethical, professional, and legal responsibilities of Certified Practicing Nutritionists (CPNs). It expresses the minimum enforceable ethical and professional values which characterize the CPN profession and serves to underpin both professional accountability and public trust. The Code aims to support CPNs in providing high-quality, ethical, safe, and culturally responsive nutrition services while ensuring the public's protection. It operates in tandem with, and does not override, the broader legal obligations of the National Law as it might apply or other relevant legislation. Compliance with this Code is a mandatory component of maintaining certification and demonstrating fitness to practice.

5. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

This Code of Conduct Part 2 - Ethics applies to all CPNs certified by the AARPN Certification Committee. It outlines the attitudes and expectations required of practitioners and is aligned with the **Certified Practicing Nutritionist Scope of Practice** document. The Code is subject to periodic

review every three years to ensure its relevance and effectiveness within a self-regulatory framework.

6. CODE OF ETHICS

Summary

In reference to the following all Certified Practicing Nutritionists will:

1. Health Promotion and Evidence-Based Practice

- Support positive health outcomes for individuals and communities.
- Uphold ethical responsibilities by engaging credible, scientific evidence-based practice.

2. Privacy, Confidentiality, and Professional Boundaries

- Protect personal and medical information according to relevant laws and codes of conduct.
- Avoid sexual or intimate relationships with current clients and maintain a reasonable interval before any relationship with a former client.

3. Respectful Conduct and Collaboration

- Uphold professional respect in all interactions, including online, at conferences, and in practice settings.
- Acknowledge and values the expertise of other health professionals.
- Declare any conflicts of interest, whether financial, personal, or potential.

4. Safety and Accountability

- Maintain a safe work environment by adhering to workplace health and safety guidelines.
- Take responsibility for professional decisions.
- Report unsafe or inadequate conduct by self or others.
- Ensure personal health and well-being to provide competent service and avoid practicing when judgment or capacity is impaired.

5. Qualifications, Communication, and Honesty

- Displays all relevant qualifications and certifications.
- Credits original research or information sources when used.
- Provides accurate, non-misleading information about services and qualifications.
- Uses Certified Practicing Nutritionist accreditation only for nutrition services and ensures separate qualification and credential for other services/modalities.

6. Client Rights and Child Protection

- Practice non-discrimination based on age, gender, race, religion, or any other status.
- Respect the right of clients to make informed choices about healthcare.
- Involve parents or legal guardians when providing nutrition advice to children, in compliance with local legislation.

All Certified Practicing Nutritionists will:

- 6.1 Endeavour to achieve positive health outcomes for the individual and wider community.
- 6.2 Respect confidential information relating to a client's personal and medical information in accordance with the relevant country/state/territory policy such as for Australian practitioners and the AHPRA Shared Code of Conduct.
<https://www.ahpra.gov.au/documents/default.aspx?record=WD22/31749&dbid=AP&chks=um=p10Wc2v5MWiwLsVtkgFXYw%3d%3d>
- 6.3 Engage in respectful behaviour while acting as a Certified Practicing Nutritionist on diverse platforms (such as private practice, social media, on web, conferences and meetings)

towards clients, public, and peers and refrain from contrary remark/discussion/ that may reflect negatively upon the competence and integrity of Certified Practicing Nutritionists or of AARPN or that may place the profession in disrepute.

- 6.4 Respect and acknowledge all health practitioners and health professionals.
- 6.5 Maintain a safe work environment at the place of practice - managing work health and safety risks in accordance with the 'code of practice' outlined by [safeworkaustralia](https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/) or relevant country/state/territory guidelines (For example: Follow these links for [worksafe.govt.nz](https://www.worksafe.govt.nz/) and [worksafe.qld](https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/) guidelines).
- 6.6 Declare any real or perceived conflicts of interest. Conflicts may be but are not limited to actual or potential, financial or personal or sexual.
- 6.7 Display all relevant certificates and degrees demonstrating practicing status and level of competency at the place of practice (for example: doctorate, postgraduate degree, graduate degree/post graduate diploma, NSA registration, Certified Practicing Nutritionist certification certificate and TGA Schedule 1 Exemption Certificate).
- 6.8 Be proactive and accountable for their decision making while acting as a Certified Practicing Nutritionist and have a moral and legal obligation for the provision of evidence-based practice.
- 6.9 Report any unsafe and inadequate professional conduct and support peers who appropriately notify the relevant authorities of any such practices.
- 6.10 Recognise their own scope of practice and respect expertise of other health professionals and provide referrals wherever appropriate.
- 6.11 Acknowledge and refer to original contributors (of research, facts) in their oral or social media or web presentation and marketing material.
- 6.12 Refrain from establishing a sexual relationship with a client during the period of care as per the [Medical Board of Australia](https://www.mba.gov.au/) guidelines. Ensure that there is a reasonable gap before initiating any relationship with a former client. Any approaches of a sexual nature by a client must be declined and documented in the client's record. Ensure appropriate informed consent prior to any patient contact within the consultation.
- 6.13 Practice non-discriminatory and non-judgemental service irrespective of age, colour, sex, gender identification, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, race, and mental or physical status.
- 6.14 Respect the right of the client to make informed choices regarding their health care.
- 6.15 Use their own current health fund provider numbers and do not provide such numbers to other practitioners for use.
- 6.16 Refrain from using false, misleading or incorrect information.

- 6.17 Accept responsibility for personal psychological and physical well-being as it may affect professional ability.
- 6.18 Not to undertake any patient/client treatment whilst professional judgement is potentially impaired because of fatigue, illness, medicine or any lawful or unlawful substance.
- 6.19 Abstain from using Certified Practicing Nutritionist accreditation to imply or represent accreditation in another modality.
- 6.20. Abstain from using Certified Practicing Nutritionist accreditation alongside a service/modality for which they are not separately and independently accredited.
- 6.21 Ensure to provide nutrition advice to a child (<16 years within Australia and as per their country/state/territory legislation) only in the presence/consent of a parent or any legal guardian.

7. COMPLIANCE IS MANDATORY

Compliance with this *Code of Conduct Part 2 - Ethics* is mandatory for maintaining certification as a Certified Practicing Nutritionist.

8. DECLARATION REQUIREMENTS

Certified Practicing Nutritionists (CPNs) must declare understanding and compliance with this Code of Conduct Part 2 – Ethics upon:

- 7.1 **Initial Certification:** Submit a declaration of compliance during the initial certification process.
- 8.2 **Recertification:** Reaffirm compliance annually, acknowledging any updates to the Code.

9. COMPLIANCE MONITORING

9.1 Compliance

AARPN will implement the following processes and policies to monitor and maintain compliance with the Code of Conduct Part 2 - Ethics:

- a. *Annual Mandatory Declaration:* All practitioners must complete an annual declaration of compliance with the AARPN Code of Conduct Part 1 – Practice Guidelines and Part 2 - Ethics, in accordance with the Mandatory Declaration Policy. This component of the mandatory declaration is that practitioners are fully aware of the Code's requirements and have adhered to them throughout the year.
- b. *Certification and Recertification:* Practitioners must declare their understanding and compliance with the Code upon initial certification and at each recertification cycle, including proof of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities.

- c. *Continuing Professional Development (CPD)*: Ongoing CPD participation is required to maintain and enhance professional skills and competence.
- d. *Complaints and Investigations*: This Code of Conduct Part 1- Practice Guidelines and Part 2 – Ethics, and its principles, are linked to the Complaints Process, enabling the investigation and adjudication of formal complaints regarding CPN conduct. The Complaints Committee will investigate reports of inadequate professional conduct or professional misconduct. Processes for assessing complaints are outlined in the publicly available Complaints Policy.
- e. *Random Audits*: Periodic audits of member practices, documentation, and adherence to the Code of Conduct Part 1- Practice Guidelines and Part 2 – Ethics, may be conducted.
- f. *Peer Review*: A peer review process to support and assess practitioners, promoting adherence to professional standards.

9.2 Addressing Non-Compliance

If a CPN is found to be in breach of the Code of Conduct Part 1 - Practice Guidelines and/or Part 2 – Ethics one or more of the following remedies can be applied:

- a. *Warning and Education*: For minor breaches, a warning may be issued, and educational resources provided to address gaps in understanding.
- b. *Supervision*: Continued non-compliance may result in a period of supervised practice to ensure adherence to professional standards.
- c. *Revocation of Certification*: In cases of serious misconduct, AARPN reserves the right to suspend or revoke certification.
- d. *Report and referral to the relevant Health Complaints Authority*: In the instance where the conduct is likely contrary to health practitioner law or requirements for unregistered health practitioners.
- e. *Report and referral to Law Enforcement Agency*: In the instance where the conduct is likely contrary to law.

10. REVIEW

The Code of Conduct will undergo an annual review by the AARPN Board, with input from CPNs and stakeholders, to ensure it remains relevant and effective in guiding professional practice. During the review process, any amendments to the Code will consider the evolving allied health primary care landscape of Clinical Nutrition, social, legal, and professional standards. Changes will be communicated to all CPNs, and CPNs will be required to acknowledge and comply with the updated Code as part of their annual Mandatory Declaration.

11. CLARITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

An accompanying Code of Conduct **Guidance Document** is available on the **AARPN website** to further support consumer comprehension.

EXTERNAL POLICIES

Document	Accessible format
AHPRA Social media policy https://www.ahpra.gov.au/Resources/Social-media-guidance.aspx	
AHPRA Shared Code of Conduct https://www.ahpra.gov.au/documents/default.aspx?record=WD22/31749&dbid=AP&chksum=p10Wc2v5MWiwLsVtkgFXYw%3d%3d	
AHPRA Advertising guidelines https://www.ahpra.gov.au/Resources/Advertising-hub/Advertising-guidelines-and-other-guidance/Summary-of-the-advertising-requirements.aspx	

Codes and guidelines

Document	Accessible format
Code of Conduct: Part 2 - Ethics	Available for download from the AARPN website.
Code of Conduct: Part 1 – Practice Guidelines	Available for download from the AARPN website.