

# Membership Terms & Conditions

- To adhere to the PTGA Code of Conduct (referred to henceforth as the 'Code').
- Maintaining Professional Membership annually.
- Only current financial members with an active Pro-file may say they are PTGA Members and/or hold P Qs or display Pro-Marks in communications.
- To agree to maintain currency of qualifications by:
  - maintaining any pre-requisite 1st Aid or Emergency Care qualification
  - logging continual professional development
  - undertaking three yearly revalidation process.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Code is to promote standards of professional behaviour for those practicing as professional guides and field staff in polar environments and portraying themselves as such to the public by using their PTGA qualifications.

#### 1.2 Standards

The Board of the PTGA wishes to promote good practice and requires its members to discharge their responsibilities in a manner that represents high standards of conduct professionally, ethically and morally. Members should show commitment to the PTGA's vision of creating International Polar Guiding Standards and creating a Profession.

#### 1.3 Code Revision

The compilation, revision, updating and policing of the Code shall be the responsibility of the PTGA Board. The Code will be reviewed annually. The Code is set out as principles under the following sections:

- Professional Integrity
- Professional Relationships and Responsibilities
- Professional Standards
- Relationship with Clients and Public
- Commitment to Positive Values in Environmental Issues
- Harassment and Discrimination
- Interpretation and Enforcement
- Supervision and Ratios
- Professional Misconduct

## **2. Professional Integrity**

### **2.1 Personal Integrity**

Members are expected to demonstrate high standards of personal integrity through all of their interactions with the public and other members. This will be demonstrated through the qualities of fairness, honesty, consistency, truthfulness and discretion.

### **2.2 Personal Gain**

Members should not accept favours, gifts or hospitality in situations that could bring the member or the profession into disrepute.

### **2.3 Advertising**

Where membership is quoted to clients or employers, such mention should be clear, honest and contain no misrepresentations. Only current financial members with an active Pro-File may say they are PTGA Members, qualified guides and/or hold current qualifications.

## **3. Professional Relationships and Responsibilities**

### **3.1 Professional Demeanour**

Members should conduct themselves in a manner befitting a professional. When dealing with other members, agencies, or the general public, members should present themselves as responsible persons and in a manner that inspires confidence and trust.

### **3.2 Working Relationships**

Members should respect the needs, traditions, practices, special competencies and responsibilities of other nations, institutions, associations, professions and agencies that share a common working environment.

## **4. Professional Standards**

### **4.1 Working Competence**

4.1.1 Members must work within the limits of their competence, taking all reasonable steps to ensure that the services they provide or manage are based on justifiable working practices that place proper emphasis on training, qualifications and experience.

4.1.2 Where a member delegates responsibilities, then such a member must be satisfied that the person to whom these are delegated is competent to carry them out, and with the knowledge that the ultimate responsibility for the delegate's decisions remain with the member as if those decisions were their own.

### **4.2 Professional Development**

4.2.1 Members acknowledge their responsibility to remain active in maintaining and developing their personal professional competence.

4.2.2 Members are expected to strive to improve and update their own knowledge and skills. Members should also endeavour to share their professional expertise with other members in order to upskill the whole profession.

## 5. Relationships with Clients and Public

### 5.1 Respecting the Rights and Needs of Clients and Public

- 5.1.1 Members accept their responsibility to promote and protect the dignity, privacy and safety of all those using their services.
- 5.1.2 Members should manage the operations for which they are responsible with due regard for customer care and participants' welfare.
- 5.1.3 Members must manage their operations in compliance with all relevant nation's legal requirements.
- 5.1.4 Members must run any services in accordance the requirements of the PTGA Code of Conduct or other safety guidelines of the representative Nation, Association or Governing Body of the particular activity where these are applicable and appropriate. Any variation to these must be able to be justified in terms of safety.
- 5.1.5 Members should be aware of, and avoid situations and behaviours that may compromise their ethical integrity and safety.

### 5.2 Maintenance of Service to Clients and Public

Members have a duty of care to Clients who are engaged in any program of activity, and members of the public who they may interact with. Where staff shortages, financial restriction or other factors might inhibit the delivery of the services/program, then members must take all reasonable steps to establish priorities and balance the needs of the users with the competence, knowledge, training and experience of the staff available. On no account may the safety of Clients or the Public or Self be compromised

### 5.3 Personal Relationships

Members should both define and respect the boundaries between personal and working environments.

### 5.4 Confidentiality

Members are under a duty to safeguard confidential information relating to Clients. This requirement is without prejudice to the need to share essential information with professional colleagues.

### 5.5 Client and Own Safety

Members must take all practicable steps to safeguard themselves, their clients and the public. This includes both physical and mental well-being.

## 6. Commitment to Positive Values in Environmental Issues

### 6.1 Minimum Impact

Members must endorse and practice the principles of Leave No Trace any time they are in the polar environment.

### 6.2 Knowledge and Science

Members should actively contribute to improving the global understanding and protection of polar environments by fostering ambassadorship and education among clients/guests.

### 6.3 Shared Use Sensitivity

Members should ensure that the operations for which they are responsible give reasonable consideration to the needs of other operational users who may wish to share the same working venues.

## 6.4 Identified Standards

Members must be aware of, and abide by any acknowledged local standards and those of governing Associations IAATO/AECO.

## 7. Harassment and Discrimination

Harassment, discrimination or bullying of any kind will not be tolerated within PTGA's operations or a member's engagement with any stakeholders in the PTI. Proof of such actions will lead to permanent termination of Membership, Guide or Assessor status.

### 7.1 Harassment

- 7.1.1 PTGA aims to provide a harassment-free environment for all peoples interacting with our processes. Mutual respect, along with cooperation and understanding, must be the basis of interaction. PTGA neither tolerates nor condones behaviour that is likely to undermine the dignity or self-esteem of an individual, or create an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.
- 7.1.2 All harassment can be defined as any unwelcome action by any person, whether verbal or physical, on a single or repeated basis, which humiliates insults or degrades. "Unwelcome", for the purposes of this Code, refers to any action which the harasser knows or ought to reasonably know is not desired by the victim of the harassment.
- 7.1.3 Specifically, racial harassment includes any unwelcome comments, racist statements, slurs, jokes, graffiti or literature or pictures and posters which may intentionally or unintentionally offend another person.
- 7.1.4 Sexual harassment includes any unwanted attention of a sexual nature such as remarks about appearance or personal life, offensive written or visual actions like graffiti or degrading pictures, physical contact of any kind, or sexual demands.

### 7.2 Discrimination

PTGA provides equal opportunities to all peoples. No person shall be discriminated against because of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, age, status as an individual with a physical or mental disability unrelated to ability, military status, citizenship status, genetic information, marital status, parental status, ancestry, source of income, credit history, housing status, actual or perceived association with such a person or other classes protected by law.

### 7.3 Bullying

Workplace bullying is considered as repeated unreasonable behaviour by an individual towards a another which creates a risk to health and safety.

## 8. Supervision and Ratios

### 8.1 PTGA Ratios

PTGA has ratios in place for training and assessment activities. It does not set or recommend ratios for other organization's activities. As a guide, you should always be able to ask yourself, and have a suitable answer to "Are my clients/guests adequately supervised?"

### 8.2 Other Organization Ratios

- 8.2.1 PTGA's expectation regarding supervision is that members are aware of recommended ratios set by governing polar tourism bodies, Sovereign Nations and/or industry good practice (industry good practise is defined as the range of actions currently accepted within the tourism, adventure or outdoor sector to manage the risk of harm to staff and/or clients).

- 8.2.2 Where a member is working for another body that sets the ratios, the member would be expected to ensure that organization is aware of current pertinent factors that should reduce the ratios.
- 8.2.3 Members of PTGA are expected to ensure companies are aware of supervision levels required by other governing bodies.

## **9. Incident and Near Miss Reporting**

### **9.1 Incident and Near Miss Reporting**

We encourage all members to share and learn from near misses and/or incidents and report data. We also realize many guides sign contracts which do not allow such sharing. We cannot ask members to break what their employment contracts require.

### **9.2 Incident Investigation**

Where a member has been involved in an incident, members must cooperate fully with any investigation with a view to enhancing learning for the sector.

## **10. Professional Misconduct – Disciplinary Action Pathway**

### **10.1 Grievances**

- 10.1.1 The PTGA is a self-regulating professional association whose members voluntarily agree to be bound by various professional, technical and ethical standards.
- 10.1.2 As a professional industry Association the PTGA has an obligation to consider complaints against members for misconduct strictly within the terms of its By-laws, Articles and the Code.
- 10.1.3 It is important to note that this process is not a legal process, but rather an internal process to determine whether a member has breached any of the major principles contained in the Code and the impact such conduct may have on their continued membership.
- 10.1.4 Our process deals with complaints relating to professional standards only, not legal disputes. Where a matter which is the subject of a formal complaint against a member is also before the courts in any country, the PTGA will suspend further consideration of the complaint until the legal process is concluded. This is done to ensure our investigation process is not used to influence any legal action nor prejudice the legal process.

### **10.2 Jurisdiction**

- 10.2.1 We may investigate breaches of ethics, standards, rules as they relate to PTGA By-laws, Articles and the Code. As a disciplinary jurisdiction, the outcomes available relate only to a member's membership and standing.
- 10.2.2 In some cases, it may also be appropriate to refer the matter to another agency such as the police or other statutory regulators.
- 10.2.3 We do not investigate complaints that are:
  - anonymous
  - frivolous
  - vexatious
  - an abuse of process
  - lacking in substance, vague, imprecise or unsupported by evidence related to historical issues no longer practical to investigate
  - of insufficient nature to warrant referral to the member
  - capable of being resolved by referral to an alternative forum and it is reasonable for that to occur.

### **10.3 Reporting Misconduct**

10.3.1 Professional misconduct may include:

- professional misconduct
- unsatisfactory professional performance
- conduct likely to bring the PTGA into disrepute or reflect adversely on the PTGA.

10.3.2 Misconduct may be constituted by, but is not limited to:

- misrepresenting any material facts in relation to an application for any category of Membership
- misrepresenting any material fact in respect of any ongoing accreditation requirements
- misleading or deceptive conduct by a Member in relation to their dealings with employers or the public or with the PTGA
- conduct that falls short of the standard of competence and diligence that a member of the public is entitled to reasonably expect of a Member
- breaching the Code
- fraud or other dishonest conduct
- any act or omission injurious to the PTGA
- conviction of an indictable offence or offence involving dishonesty
- misuse of PTGA data or confidential information provided to a Member in the course of their regular relationship with the PTGA.

10.3.3 PTGA Grievances are not involved with, or responsible for the following:

- Employees of PTI companies and grievances to do with their place of work (e.g. a complaint of sexual harassment/discrimination). Complaints of this nature must be filed in line with the applicable workplace policy.
- Situations that may endanger the health and safety of people in the workplace (e.g. bullying) – for information refer to the specific operator’s workplace policy.
- Violence – in these situations criminal laws may apply. Contact your immediate manager and follow the relevant policy.

### **10.4 Reporting Misconduct**

Any PTGA member who has a concern as to a breach of rules or professional misconduct by another member that they believe should be investigated, should put their concerns in writing and send to the PTGA Disputes Sub-Committee at [admin@polartourismguides.com](mailto:admin@polartourismguides.com). This needs to be a formal complaint, detailing what the concern is, why it is a breach of the rules and/or professional misconduct and why it should be the subject of an investigation under the rules of the Association.

### **10.5 Misconduct Review**

10.5.1 The Disputes Sub-Committee shall consist of one male and one female members of the Board of Directors.

10.5.2 If it is decided an investigation is needed, the PTGA Disputes Sub-Committee will be appointed to carry out an investigation and report to the Board. The investigation will be carried out in the context that: The Board shall be primarily concerned with preventing a recurrence of undesirable incidents and a member’s membership and standing.

## 10.6 Complaints Process

10.6.1 The member will be given details of the complaint and be asked to respond.

10.6.2 The PTGA Disputes Sub-Committee will investigate the complaint and provide response and will forward a recommendation to the PTGA Board.

10.6.3 The outcomes of the above meetings may include:

- no action required
- written guidance or advice
- written warning
- temporary suspension of membership
- termination of membership.

10.6.4 There is a right of appeal to the next meeting of the PTGA Board whose decision will be final.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_