

## IES 4 Professional Values, Ethics and Attitudes

### General Overview

We welcome the IAESB's work on reviewing all of the IESs and the objective of the review:

- To prescribe the professional values, ethics and attitudes that must be acquired by aspiring professional accountants through learning and development during their education and thereafter, as part of their mandatory continuous professional development (CPD); and
- To ensure that aspiring professional and professional accountants maintain and develop appropriate levels of professional ethical competence throughout their specific and wider general work roles and behaviours.

In response to the specific matters requested by the IAESB, these are provided initially in response to the five questions given.

### Specific Response

#### **Question 1: Is the proposed requirement for reflective activity in relation to ethics education appropriate?**

Reflective activity is an important aspect of learning and development and so CIMA would support this requirement in relation to ethical education. Some students may have limited practical experience and could find this concept challenging. Guidance on 'reflection' would assist some students with these ideas and help them appreciate the Code of Conduct more fully with regard to particular circumstances. This area could also feature as an important part of their ongoing softer skills set and provide a mechanism for anticipating as well as reflecting upon ethical dilemmas.

Continuous reflection should be part of the Professional Accountants portfolio and CIMA remains committed to supporting its members and students in developing this capability and providing guidance on ethical and responsible management behaviour.

Ideally members and students should help to create a global ethical culture which permeates all their professional and business related activities.

#### **Question 2: Does this requirement raise implementation issues?**

The reflective element should not raise issues for students receiving tuition from a training provider. Students undertaking their professional study remotely may need some additional guidance from supervisors and mentors. Social networking opportunities, elearning and edramas can be used to help students appreciate the importance of reflection as part of life long-learning in the area of ethics and related professional development activities (sustainability and responsible management).

CIMA produces case studies, checklists, guidance notes, webcasts, articles and events around key ethical issues and guidance on the resolution and best practice approach to a wide range of

dilemmas. Opportunities to reflect are being further developed with probing questions, analysis of past issues and links to implementation of ethically sound solutions.

Students are assessed on knowledge understanding, interpretation and application of the Code, ethical principles, values and behaviours. They undertake these both specifically, through named examinations, and generally, as ethics are embedded in the context of all our examination papers. At the final examination level (T4) students have to compile a record of practical experience and pass the Case Study Examination before election to membership and ethics is embedded throughout.

Members receive considerable ethical guidance and resources through their CPD. They also have to record CPD in their CIMA Professional Development Record and reflect upon the learning outcomes in this document, which is open to audit by CIMA Professional Standards (this is assessed rather than measured).

**Question 3: Is the objective to be achieved by a member body, stated in the proposed revised IES 4, appropriate?**

CIMA has no difficulty with the objective of this standard. CIMA remains committed to upholding and fully supporting the highest professional and ethical standard amongst our students and members. Our Code promotes a global culture of ethical appreciation and implementation.

**Question 4: Have the criteria identified by the IAESB for determining whether a requirement should be specified been applied appropriately and consistently such that the remaining requirements promote consistency in implementation by member bodies?**

The Code is an integral part of the Standard and the principles provided in the Standard ensure a very clear focus. The intent around applicability is apparent, but implementation issues are very important here and an important element of the consultation process is to develop a best practice benchmark. This Standard though important in itself for promoting ethical behaviour and awareness should permeate and be reinforced in all standards which inform professional accounting educational and developmental programmes.

**Question 5: Are there any terms within the proposed IES 4 which require further clarification? If so, please explain the nature of the deficiencies?**

**The terms that may provide difficulties in global translation and appreciation are as follows:**

The title itself could be more focused e.g. Professional Global Business Ethics

'Aspiring' e.g. aspiring accountant. This term could be more specific e.g. trainee, professional student.

'Values and attitudes'. These may have wider connotations in the global environment.

Point 11 in the standard uses 'measure the competence', perhaps 'evaluate' or 'assess' would be more appropriate in this broader context.

