



Governance

Code of Conduct

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# Introduction

The purpose of the Code of Conduct of the European Society of Anaesthesiology and Intensive Care (ESAIC) is to serve as the standard of conduct for its various committees, governance bodies and staff. It contains a framework with guiding principles for daily practices and interactions based on the values of the society. The Code of Conduct is a short manual that states the organisation's rules, values, goals, ethics, and vision. In addition, it clearly outlines expected behaviour and instructions on what is and is not considered good practices by ESAIC. These include behaviour in the workplace, work-related events, or any time one will be representing ESAIC's interest.

The guiding principles are in line with the Biomed Alliance Code of Conduct endorsed by ESAIC in 2021.

## Mission, Vision, and Values

The ESAIC is dedicated to supporting professionals in anaesthesiology and intensive care by serving as the hub for development and dissemination of valuable educational, scientific, research, and networking resources.

- **Leadership:** To be the leading European organisation for members and national societies for anaesthesiology, intensive care, pain and perioperative medicine, advocate for the vital role of anaesthesiologists in perioperative medicine and collaborate with institutional stakeholders to improve patient care in this field.
- **Policy Engagement:** To actively engage with policy leaders within the European Union, fostering exchange and participate in the decision-making.
- **Patient Safety:** To promote the professional role of anaesthesiologists and enhance perioperative patient outcomes through a focus on quality of care and patient safety strategies. The Society is committed to implementing the Helsinki Declaration on Patient Safety and leading patient safety projects.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** To implement the Glasgow Declaration on Sustainability and drive initiatives towards greater environmental sustainability within European anaesthesiology and intensive care.
- **Training, Education, and Professional Exams:** To promote and deliver high-quality training and education at ESAIC. We ensure the provision of robust and standardised examination and certification systems to support the professional development of anaesthesiologists to continuously enhance our exams and knowledge, ensuring the production of top-quality future doctors in the field of anaesthesiology and intensive care.

- **Research, Clinical Trials and Big Data:** To actively engage in research projects through the Clinical Trial Network and the Academic Contract Research Organisation, harnessing the collective knowledge and resources of the ESAIC network. Through these efforts, ESAIC aims to advance patient outcomes and contribute to the progress of anaesthesiology and intensive care practices. Building upon structures established during the COVID-19 pandemic, ESAIC aims to be optimally prepared for future pandemics, in all perioperative settings. To strive for collecting data in anaesthesiology and intensive care practices in order to improve knowledge and evidence-based practices.

## Values

- Excellence – Inspiring and motivating, setting high standards and commitment to quality,
- Collaboration – teamwork, empowerment, and open communication,
- Integrity – accountability, honesty, and ethical behaviour,
- Trust
- Inclusion – ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their backgrounds, identities, or abilities, feel valued, respected, and have equal access to opportunities and resources.

## Individual ethics for professional conduct<sup>1</sup>

It is expected that all ESAIC employees, volunteer anaesthesiology and intensive care medical experts, consultants and partners will:

- Establish a basis built on respect
- Exhibit and display professional and personal integrity, acting ethically and transparently in all professional aspects,
- Be accountable, representative, and considerate,
- Promote and adhere to ESAIC policies and procedures,
- Promote equality, diversity, and social inclusion,
- Report any concerns on misconduct and unethical behaviour.

Candidates for both nomination and election have a duty to serve the interest of ESAIC and therefore must respect a framework of principles and rules that govern their conduct about ethics and integrity. They are expected to agree with the ESAIC Code of Conduct AND the specific Code of Conduct for ESAIC Elections when standing for an elected position. When being asked to represent ESAIC or speak on behalf of ESAIC, this always requires approval by the Board of Directors.

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<sup>1</sup> This applies to all levels of society, being its staff or governance, committee, and task force members.

## Conflict of interest

- In the course of their work, it is essential that employees and volunteer anaesthesiology and intensive care medical experts avoid any suggestion of bias or favouritism in any of their dealings with partners, service providers, suppliers, other employees, volunteers, and stakeholders.
- ESAIC is involved in promoting scientific research and providing access to high-quality educational resources. It also plays a key role in advocacy – raising awareness of anaesthesia amongst the public and politicians with the ultimate goal of improving patient outcomes.
- The independence and integrity of ESAIC is highly valued as an important asset. Our membership community can use ESAIC supporting educational materials and participate in ESAIC events with the knowledge that the content is current, balanced and of the highest quality.
- The relationship of the society with its industry partners (where industry relates to any company manufacturing or supplying a product or service to the anaesthesiology and IC healthcare sector) is transparent. The collaborations and agreements undertaken with industry partners are an essential aspect of the operation of the society and it is therefore important that they:
  - are not exclusive to any one partner,
  - are flexible and make allowances for differing levels of interaction with partners dependent on the nature and requirement of the collaboration,
  - allow for ESAIC educational materials to remain independent and balanced, and
  - have clear goals and reported outcomes.
- Every employee, volunteer anaesthesiology and intensive care medicine expert, faculty member and member of the Council needs to sign the Conflict of Interest document yearly.
- We strongly recommend refraining from simultaneous service in any position on the Board of other organisations with significant overlap.
- When applying to an elected position, candidates cannot place themselves under any obligation or time constraint to any international organisation which might affect their ability to act impartially and objectively as Board member in the best interest of its members, as long as the mandate or election period is running.

# Confidentiality and GDPR

All confidential materials and information related to ESAIC must be kept in the strictest confidence and compliance with GDPR.

Confidential information refers to any data or knowledge that is sensitive, valuable, or proprietary to ESAIC and not meant to be disclosed to unauthorized parties or the general public. It can include financial data, personal information, intellectual property, strategic plans, or any other information that, if disclosed, could cause harm or loss to ESAIC. When in doubt, please contact the ESAIC Headquarters.

The ESAIC privacy and data security policy are available on the ESAIC website.

## Social media

- Posts available on the official ESAIC webpages or online platforms or social media accounts (website, linked-in, X, ...) can be shared with the broader public. Emails with the reference 'for internal use' should remain internal and not to be shared outside our governance unless indicated otherwise.
- Posts and activities related to ESAIC should always be consistent with your role in ESAIC.
- Be aware that social media users cannot always formally separate the personal from the professional.
- Data and pictures of internal governance meetings should not be shared outside ESAIC.

## Activities

With regards to our main activities, we refer to the Biomed Code of Conduct which provides a clear framework on the principles the organisation should adhere to. A selection has been made in line with our core activities.

## Representation

When carrying out representation activities (e.g. advocacy), members and staff of ESAIC shall abide by the following principles:

- **Transparency:** declare their full name, employer, position, funding, and the interest represented, and register with the European Union's Joint Transparency Register.

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- **Conflict:** avoid any professional conflicts of interest; where such conflicts occur, disclose such conflicts to affected parties and seek to resolve such conflicts in advance of any advocacy activity.
- **Integrity:** act with honesty and integrity at all times and not disseminate false or misleading information.
- **Confidentiality:** honour and respect confidential information.
- **Inducement:** not obtain or try to obtain information, or influence any decision, dishonestly, or by use of undue pressure, financial, personal, or other inappropriate inducement.
- **Influence on elected or other public officials:** not propose or undertake any action, which would constitute an improper influence,
- **Competitors:** not to intentionally damage the professional reputation of other individuals or organisations.

## Continuous medical education (CME)

When developing and organising CME, we should abide by the following principles:

- being exclusively responsible for the selection of the topics or contents of particular CME activities, or in the development of the educational materials.
- aim to evaluate programmes effectiveness.
- CME activities will be delivered independently by the organiser and speakers, in whatever setting is deemed appropriate.
- CME activities must be held in an appropriate venue that is conducive to the main purpose of the event, avoiding venues that are renowned for their entertainment facilities or are extravagant. Hospitality offered should be reasonable in level.
- CME programmes provided by Health Care Organisations are developed, peer reviewed and delivered by a faculty of experts in their field.
- Be exclusively responsible for appointing a scientific committee that oversees the selection of the faculty, speakers, and producers of CME they organise.
- Potential conflicts of interest of faculty members must be both disclosed and resolved in a comprehensive manner, based upon previously declared interests.
- Organisational activities may be subcontracted to commercial entities if they are supported by appropriate transparent declarations of interest.
- Supporters may only contribute financially to CME activities, by way of an unrestricted educational grant or by sourcing equipment in kind when necessary for educational and training activities. Contributions to ESAIC organised, regulatory recognised CME activities other than by financial contributions are not permitted unless the ESAIC consider valuable any other type of support e.g. to invite a company speaker, based on transparent criteria.

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- Supporters may not be involved in the development of promotional materials of ESAIC's organised CME activity. Any materials promoting ESAIC organised CME activity distributed by the supporters of an educational grant will be reviewed beforehand by the organiser to ensure compliance with these principles. Any written reference to the supporters must be prefixed by: 'supported by an unrestricted educational grant from [name of commercial entity].
- ESAIC shall ensure that all requests to supporters for information and material resulting from these activities will be directed to the ESAIC, whose representatives will retain full control of the rights and responsibilities to distribute such information and material. Likewise, ESAIC shall ensure that supporters shall not use these in any way to promote their goods or products.
- Provision of educational grants shall be governed by the relevant national and European Union's applicable regulations and codes governing the activities of the grantor.

## Congresses

ESAIC will follow the following principles in relation to Congresses we organise

- ESAIC's organised CME, at congresses, is underpinned by the compilation of the scientific and educational programme, which is undertaken by scientific committee.
- The sessions organised by industry, such as satellite symposia, are to be clearly identified and their agenda/speakers are reviewed by the Scientific Committee.
- ESAIC Board members should not be permitted in general to present, or to chair, satellite symposia and meetings sponsored by industry or interest groups. They are present at the congress as representatives of ESAIC. Exceptions will need to be discussed/approved and declared to the Board of Directors.

## Exhibition

ESAIC will ensure that on all relevant occasions, where commercial product promotion activity is taking place, all applicable laws, statutes, and Codes of Conduct are understood by all participants.



## Research Funding

- Research grants may be accepted for a specific research topic and should follow applicable regulations.
- The process for applications reviewed by the Research Committee should be exclusively based on the scientific value of the applications. The Research Committee will choose the candidates to be funded and must disclose all personal or professional conflicts of interest.

## Clinical Practice Guidelines

- Clinical Guidelines developed by ESAIC will be developed in the best interest of all patients and based on medical evidence available at the time they are written.
- The experts involved in guidelines will develop clinical guidelines in an unbiased, independent way, following their respective writing rules, as well as rules of confidentiality, integrity, respect and fairness towards other experts and societies, on involving patients and in the interest of best practice.
- ESAIC and their experts involved in guidelines should avoid conflicts of interest. All relationships with industry shall be disclosed beforehand and for the whole duration of any guidelines' writing process and managed according to the ESAIC conflict management policy.

## Code of Conduct – duty to report and overall governance

ESAIC has appointed a Chair who will ensure the oversight of the Code of Conduct. The Chair has an advisory role and may be consulted on specific issues. Governance bodies of the ESAIC, ESAIC Headquarters' employees and individual members may raise an issue and contact the Chair by email at [codeofconduct@esaic.org](mailto:codeofconduct@esaic.org) who will decide whether to deal with it, refer it to other instances or discard it.

Any conflict of interests that may compromise a role within the society needs to be notified and all suspected breaches of the Code of Conduct will be investigated, where it is found that there has been a breach, necessary measures will be undertaken based on the impact of the breach.

Upon completing the investigation, the Chair will draft a report detailing the relevant facts and evidence. This report will be submitted to the Board of Directors, which will then decide on any disciplinary actions that may be necessary.

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- The Chair shall serve for a 3-year term. To achieve continuity of experience in fulfilling this responsibility, the 3-year mandate of the Chair can be organised to overlap with 6 months periods.
- Volunteers in officer positions of the ESAIC cannot act as Chair.
- The Chair will report twice a year to the Board of Directors and inform the General Assembly at the yearly meeting at Euroanaesthesia.

## Reference

- ESAIC website – mission, vision, and values
- Biomed Alliance, Code of Conduct Jan 2022
- Other supporting documents/internal policies
  - Data privacy policy
  - Conflict of interest
  - Reimbursement policy
  - Nomination Policy
  - Code of Conduct SOP for clinical guidelines and Research
  - Examinations guide for examiners
  - Euroanaesthesia congress Information – policies

## Acronyms

CME Continuous Medical Education

ESAIC European Society of Anaesthesiology and Intensive Care