

Statement on Good Practice for Historians

The principles outlined in this Statement of Good Practice for Historians are aligned with the Society's charitable objectives.

All members should be aware of the ethical, legal and professional responsibilities incumbent to the specific community in which they work. All individuals should avoid personal and professional misconduct that might bring the Society or the reputation of the profession into disrepute.

The maintenance of high professional standards includes:

- being acquainted with best practice in the use and evaluation of evidence;
- understanding and following intellectual property laws;
- taking particular care when research concerns those still living and when the anonymity of individuals is required;
- observing the ethical and legal requirements of the repositories and collections being used;
- avoiding plagiarism, fabrication, falsification and deception in proposing, carrying out and reporting the results of research;
- following robust procedures for the citation of sources.

The maintenance of high ethical standards includes:

- declaring any interests, including financial ones, that bear on professional life;
- reporting any conflict of interest;
- observing fairness and equity in the conduct of research, teaching and administration, and representing credentials accurately and honestly;
- behaving and acting with integrity where summarising, interpreting or translating material for publication or communication so as not to misrepresent the historical record.

Other statements of good practice

You may also wish to consult the American Historical Association's [Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct](#); the European Commission's guide to Ethics in Social Science and Humanities; and the [RESPECT Code of Practice for Socio-Economic Research](#).

The Society echoes the encouragement within the AHA statement for 'all historians to uphold and defend their professional responsibilities with the utmost seriousness, and to advocate for integrity, and fairness and high standards throughout the historical profession.'

Selected further reading

There are many valuable studies of historical practice, of which the following is a small selection:

- Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft* (1954, Manchester reprint 2015, with an introduction by Peter Burke)
- James M. Banner, *Being a Historian: an Introduction to the Professional World of History* (Cambridge, 2012)
- Peter Claus and John Marriott, *History: an Introduction to Theory, Method and Practice* (London, 2017)
- Penelope J. Corfield and Tim Hitchcock, *Becoming a Historian. An Informal Guide* (London, 2022)
- Ludmilla Jordanova, *History in Practice* (London, 2000, third edition 2019)
- Tracey Loughran ed. *A Practical Guide to Studying History. Skills and Approaches* (London, 2017)
- John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods and New Directions in the Study of Modern History* (London, 1984, sixth edition 2006)