PHANZA: Code of Practice

Responsibilities to Clients

- Undertake only research you are competent to perform
- Develop a realistic plan and carry out research with care and thoroughness
- Include from the outset in any agreement a provision for dispute arbitration by an appropriate independent person or body with historical expertise
- Set appropriate fees that reflect your professional status
- Inform your clients about project requirements
- Signal any major problems or challenges in a project
- Do your best to inform the client(s) of probable consequences of the project
- Keep your client(s) informed about progress and/or changes to the plan
- Gain all necessary permissions for the use of resource material
- Advise the client(s) to engage other expertise, where appropriate
- Use information gained in confidence according to agreements with the provider
- Report your findings accurately, promptly, and in a manner which serves the interests of your client, the profession and the public
- Maintain your professional obligation to interpret information independently in accordance with the principles outlined in this code

Responsibilities to those who Provide Information and Materials

- Familiarise yourself with the appropriate copyright and privacy laws so that you can make sure that your informants know their status under the law
- Record and respect all agreements made with informants
- Respect the rights and wishes and property of informants
- Familiarise yourself with the NOHANZ (National Oral History Association of New Zealand) code
of ethics before conducting a recorded interview
  • Conduct interviews with sensitivity, integrity and common sense
  • Represent the views of interviewees and correspondents accurately
  • Acknowledge informants appropriately

Responsibilities to the Historical Profession

  • Keep up to date with developments in your field (s)
  • Assist the professional development of other historians
  • Give credit to others where appropriate
  • Seek assistance (either paid or unpaid) from others solely on the basis of their ability to provide it
  • Make your material publicly available as soon as practicable
  • Be generous in discussing work in progress with other historians and students
  • Acknowledge the diversity of historical scholarship and the right of others to take different approaches
  • Provide an accurate and up to date account of your qualifications, experience and capabilities when representing them to others

Responsibilities to Other Professionals

  • Plan research so as to make the best use of your and others' time
  • Behave courteously
  • Observe the rules and procedures of institutions
  • Respect the integrity of collections, research materials and other resources
  • Acknowledge the professionalism of others and become familiar with their codes of practice and requirements

Responsibilities to the Public

  • Advocate the protection and conservation of historical resources
  • Advocate open and free access to historical records
  • Work for greater awareness and appreciation of history in the community
  • Represent research responsibly, in a way that is a reasonable interpretation of the available evidence
  • Report your findings accurately, intelligibly and to as wide a public as practicable
  • Give your professional opinions and make public comments on historical matters when you are competent to do so
• Encourage the depositing of significant historical material in an appropriate repository
• Engage in conduct which is legal, ethical, reflects cultural sensitivities and enhances the status of historians in the public eye

Adopted at 1998 AGM