

Frequently Ask Questions:

CIAO Code Ethics & Professional Conduct and Enforcement and Procedures for CIAO Code of Ethics & Professional Conduct

Q: Am I required to take an ethics course?

A: If you already have your CIAO then no, you are not required to take an ethics course; however, all CIAO designees are encouraged to take "002-310: Exploring Assessment Ethics," which is a seminar launched in 2020.

Q: Who is required to take an ethics course?

A: 1) CIAO Candidates (individuals going through the series of courses to obtain their CIAO) are required to take "002-404: Ethics for New Assessment Professionals". 2) Current CIAOs who wish to obtain an advanced designation (CIAO-I, CIAO-S, CIAO-M) and have not previously taken "Ethics for New Assessment Professionals" are required to take "002-310: Exploring Assessment Ethics," a new seminar course which launched in 2020.

Q: If I already have my CIAO designation, do I need to take this IPAI ethics course to get on the ballot or be appointed?

A: No.

Q: Why has the IPAI developed courses for assessment ethics?

A: Everyone from CFPs, to IAAO designation holders, to ChFCs, have a code of ethics or code of conduct. In implementing this, the IPAI is keeping pace with other providers of professional credentials and helping to ensure the highest standards from our designation holders.

Q: Who appoints the Ethics Committee?

A: The Ethics Committee is appointed annually by the IPAI Board of Directors Chairperson. It has three regular members and two alternates (in case of a conflict of interest).

Q: Who is currently serving on the Ethics Committee?

A: The names of committee members are posted on the IPAI website.

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Q: Who is the CIAO Ethics Officer?

A: The IPAI Executive Director serves as the CIAO Ethics Officer. In that role, the Ethics Officer accepts complaints through the official reporting form on the IPAI website and facilitates the work of the Ethics Committee.

Q: Is anonymous reporting allowed?

A: No. The IPAI will not accept anonymous reports against CIAOs. However, the information of a person filing a complaint will be kept confidential.

Q: When I was young, wild, and free, I got a DUI. Am I now at risk of losing my CIAO?

A: No. First, the violation of the Code of Conduct must have occurred within the last four years to be acted on and second, the violation must be relevant to the CIAO Code of Conduct. You may have made a bad decision and been convicted of a DUI, but it was more than four years ago, and most importantly, it is not relevant to the CIAO Code of Conduct or CIAO designation.

Q: Is the Code of Conduct complicated?

A: No. It is straightforward. If you are acting in good faith, doing your best to serve the public good, and striving to maintain professional standards, you are probably OK.

Q: I know of a CIAO who is doing something I think is illegal. Should I report them to you?

A: If you think someone is doing something illegal, you should contact the police, sheriff, or state's attorney.

Q: How does the IPAI prevent complaints about Code of Conduct violations from becoming a political witch hunt?

A: First, for sanctions to be imposed against a CIAO, the violations must be relevant to the Code of Conduct. Second, in most all cases, by the time the Ethics Committee examines a complaint, it will be fairly clear that the CIAO designee or candidate in question has done something that violated the Code of Conduct. In order to be subject to sanctions, they will likely have already been convicted in a court of wrongdoing, had a professional license revoked, been terminated, or removed from their position. Please see the "Enforcement & Procedures" document (page 2, section 2) for a complete list of reasons a CIAO designee/candidate could be subject to sanctions.

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Q: If I want to file a complaint, what kind of documentation does the IPAI Ethics Committee need submitted?

A: Here are a few examples of the kind of documentation we want to see:

- Court documents that detail a conviction of a CIAO designee/candidate or civil action that was found in favor of the plaintiff as outlined in section 2 of the "Enforcement & Procedures" document.
- News articles/stories from a regional/local newspaper of record, regional/local radio station, or regional/local television station that detail a CIAO designee/candidate violation of the Code of Conduct as outlined in section 2 of the "Enforcement & Procedures" document.
- A copy of an official notice or a letter from an organization documenting a license, certification, designation, or membership of the CIAO designee/candidate has been revoked for violating that organization's code of conduct.
- Documentation showing termination, removal from office/employment, or resignation as outlined in section 2 of the "Enforcement & Procedures" document.
- Approved minutes of a public body documenting relevant violations to the CIAO Code of Conduct as outlined in section 2 of the "Enforcement & Procedures" document.

Q: A CIAO designee/candidate posted something on social media that I found rude and offensive. Will you sanction that person?

A: In order for a CIAO designee/candidate to be sanctioned, the violation must be relevant to the CIAO Code of Conduct.