Principles Applying to Consultant Librarians

These principles are complementary to the Code of Professional Conduct which applies to all librarians including consultants.

Consultants’ prime responsibilities are to their clients. In all matters relating to a contract they shall act in their clients’ interests, provided that these do not conflict with an overriding responsibility to the public interest.

- Consultants should offer their services to prospective clients only in those areas in which they have actual competence, experience and standing.
- Consultants should not accept assignments where they lack the skills and knowledge necessary to achieve the stated aims and objectives of that assignment.
- Any business connection or interest, or religious, moral or other factor which may affect the consultant’s ability to act impartially or complete an assignment should be made known to the client.
- Before undertaking an assignment, consultants should ensure that all major aspects of the work involved have been discussed with the client and a written agreement drawn up.
- Consultants should contract out work only with the agreement of the client. Subcontractors should be bound by the same terms and conditions of the contract as the consultants themselves.
- Consultants should not disclose or use for other purposes any information or material of a confidential nature that has been made available to them in the course of their duties without the prior consent of their client unless required by law to do so. This duty to the client continues after the relationship of consultant and client ceases.
- Consultants should not solicit considerations of any kind in connection with the supply of goods and services to a client.
- Consultants should not offer inducements to a third party in an attempt to secure business.
- Consultants should not accept an assignment with a client while another library consultant is serving that client unless they are assured and satisfied that there will be no conflict between the two assignments.
- Consultants should not undertake any parallel assignments where these are likely to conflict with the assignment in hand.
- Consultants should not attempt to recruit staff members from a client without the client’s permission.
- Consultants should not set out to injure the professional reputation of another librarian.
- Those people working in libraries who accept outside consultancy work should not do so without due regard for the interests of their primary employer.
- Consultants should not be liable for any outcome which is prejudiced by the lack of information where for overriding reasons clients choose to withhold relevant information.