



Principles

June 2011

Public officers should make decisions that serve the public interest by ensuring decisions support policy, are made in pursuit of organisational goals and are ethical and equitable. These decisions should be made in accordance with key ethical, accountability and proportionality principles. By doing this public officers are more likely to make decisions that are fair and reasonable and can withstand independent scrutiny.

Ethical principles

Ethical principles relate to the way decision makers conduct themselves. This may include:

- Acting in the public interest;
- Impartiality, honesty and fairness;
- Diligence, consistency and timeliness; and
- Respect for the interests, rights and safety of others.

Accountability principles

Accountability principles relate to transparency and the responsible use of power and resources. This may include:

- Adhering to relevant legislative/regulatory requirements;
- Acting in accordance with the organisation's ethical codes and policies;
- Considering confidentiality and a person's privacy;
- Applying procedural fairness (natural justice);
- Using public resources of the State in an accountable and transparent manner;
- Documenting the rationale for decisions;
- Providing reasons for decisions; and
- Allowing an opportunity for review.

Proportionality principles

Proportionality principles relate to making reasonable decisions in consideration of the circumstances of the case. This may include:

- Considering the nature and importance of the decision to be made;
- Identifying all relevant information;
- Evaluating the costs, benefits and potential consequences (including unintended consequences) of the decision;
- Ensuring decisions are reasonable given the circumstances of the case; and
- Giving due regard for the practical implementation of the decision.

Principles - Checklist

June 2011

This checklist may be useful to assist public authorities and decision makers in ensuring they are applying the appropriate principles for integrity in decision making.

| | YES | NO | IN DEVELOPMENT |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Considerations for public authorities | | | |
| • Are organisational goals and priorities consistent with policy? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Is the concept of 'public interest' understood and explained within the organisation? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are relevant ethical codes applied within the organisation? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Do internal policies include integrity principles and are they readily accessible to all employees? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are there activities undertaken that raise awareness of integrity in decision making? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Do decision makers know where to seek clarification when applying the integrity principles? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are there processes in place to monitor the application of key integrity principles and potential integrity risks and report suspected misconduct? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are there controls to mitigate integrity risks and address issues identified? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Considerations for decision makers | | | |
| • Do you know the ethical codes and legislation/regulations applying to decision making in your organisation? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Have you considered the 'First Steps' questions for ethical and accountable decision making: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Am I doing the right thing? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • How would others judge my actions? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • How could my actions impact on others? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Should I discuss this with someone else? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Does your decision support organisational goals? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are your reasons for making a decision transparent and capable of being reviewed? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Are you aware of maintaining an appropriate level of confidentiality and have you considered privacy? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Do you know where to report concerns about the application of the integrity principles in decision making within your organisation? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |