

History of the IOA Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics

The history of the Standards of Practice (SOPs) and Code of Ethics (COEs) of the International Ombudsman Association (IOA) derives from many years of work previously conducted by the University and College Ombudsman Association (UCOA) & The Ombudsman Association (TOA), as well as consideration of input from other organizations including the American Bar Association (ABA). This collective input together created a set of standards which model the level of practice for organizational ombudsmen, and which are known as the IOA Standards of Practice and the IOA Code of Ethics. The Preamble of the Standards of Practice states that “the IOA Standards of Practice are based upon and derived from the ethical principles stated in the IOA Code of Ethics.”

The IOA SOPs and COEs are intended to define the method of practice for an organizational ombudsman. They may be modified by the Directors of the IOA Board when circumstances suggest that review and modification are necessary. An individual may suggest and submit changes or modifications of the SOPs or COEs to the Professional Ethics, Standards and Best Practices Committee (PESBP) for consideration. The PESBP then reviews and analyzes these changes for the potential impact to the profession, and thereafter opens the proposed changes up to IOA Members* for comment and feedback. Once Members have had an opportunity to provide such commentary, the PESBP make a recommendation to the Board. The Directors* of the IOA Board vote on the changes, and a simple majority (51%) is required to approve any changes made.

* Please note that IOA Members are currently defined as those individuals who practice fully to IOA SOPs. IOA Associate Members, currently defined as those individuals who are unable to practice fully to the SOPs, along with the Associate Member Representatives who sit on the IOA Board, are not authorized to provide input or vote on the Standards of Practice.

(This document was approved for inclusion on the IOA website at the May 18, 2011 Board meeting.)