

DToL Code of Professional Conduct

Version 1 Mark Blaxter and the DToL Project Steering Group 2020-03-25¹

Code of Professional Conduct *for the Darwin Tree of Life Project*

As an open scientific collaboration, the partners in the The Darwin Tree of Life Project expect their staff and colleagues to adhere to high standards of scientific and professional conduct and to provide a welcoming and supportive environment for all people, regardless of background or identity.

Participants in the Darwin Tree of Life Project:

1. owe a primary loyalty to their employers, colleagues, the community they serve and the environment they affect. Their work activities should be performed according to the highest professional standards and ethical principles, maintaining respect for people and living organisms. They should also ensure the objectivity and reliability of any professional advice given.
2. must abide by the legal requirements relating to their work activities or operation, including all aspects of safety legislation and safety regulations, in the country or jurisdiction in which they undertake their duties.
3. must perform their duties and work activities in such a way as to safeguard the health and safety of themselves, their colleagues and must at all times have regard to the public interest.
4. are required to maintain and develop their professional competence by attention to new developments and procedures and to implement their use, as appropriate, to ensure continuation of the highest professional standards. They are also expected to encourage others working under their supervision to do so.
5. shall accept professional responsibility for all their work and for the work of subordinates. They shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that persons working under their authority or supervision are competent to carry out the tasks assigned to them and are treated with fairness and equal opportunity. They shall also utilise local procedures for management of staff.
6. shall have regard to the reputation and good standing of the Darwin Tree of Life Project, its members and professional standards and shall not bring them into disrepute directly or indirectly.
7. shall not recklessly or maliciously damage, or attempt to damage, the professional reputation, prospects or business of another member, organisation, employer or relevant individual.
8. shall not behave in a way which may be considered inappropriate to staff or other participants in the Darwin Tree of Life Project.

¹ This code of professional conduct is built from elements in <https://istonline.org.uk/about/code-of-practice/> and https://docs.carpentries.org/topic_folders/policies/code-of-conduct.html. We thank our colleagues in these organisations for their work in generating these models.

9. shall not improperly use their membership or position within the Darwin Tree of Life Project for commercial or personal gain or use or attempt to use qualifications, titles and/or designations to which they are not entitled and shall not enter into any contract or pledge the credit of the Project or represent or hold out that s/he has the power to do so without specific written instructions from the Darwin Tree of Life Steering Group..
10. shall not improperly disclose any information which may reasonably be considered to be prejudicial to the business of any present or past employer, related organisation, the Darwin Tree of Life Project or relevant individual.
11. shall ensure, in holding or handling any information relating to work activities and individuals, that they comply with the data protection principles and notification requirements set out in the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) 2018, or equivalent legislation for the country or jurisdiction in which they undertake their duties.
12. shall maintain financial propriety in all their professional dealings with their employers, related organisations and individuals.
13. shall not unfairly discriminate, in the course of their professional activities, on the grounds of race, colour, religion or belief, disability, sex, marital status, age, sexual orientation, nationality and ethnic origins.

All participants in our research, collaborative and public events and communications are expected to show respect and courtesy to others. All interactions should be professional regardless of platform, whether online or in-person. In order to foster a positive and professional learning environment we encourage the following kinds of behaviours in all Darwin Tree of Life Project events and platforms:

- Use welcoming and inclusive language
- Be respectful of different viewpoints and experiences
- Gracefully accept constructive criticism
- Focus on what is best for the community
- Show courtesy and respect towards other community members

If you believe someone is violating the Code of Conduct, we ask that you report it to the Darwin Tree of Life Project Principal Investigator (Mark Blaxter; mb35@sanger.ac.uk) or another member of the Darwin Tree of Life leadership team, who will take the appropriate action to address the situation. We will appoint an external, independent individual who can be approached in cases of conflict.²

² 2002-03-25: The individual will most probably be an independent member (i.e. non-Sanger Institute, Non-Wellcome Trust) from the Genome Research Limited Board of Governors. Genome Research Limited is the not-for-profit organisation that runs the Genome Campus at Hinxton. GRL is wholly owned by the Wellcome Trust. The DToL Principal Investigator, Mark Blaxter, will inform the DToL project teams as soon as he has agreement from the individual.