

Code of conduct for Financial Education Providers

I. Important Definitions:

- 1. Financial Education Providers:** The Code of Conduct is applicable to the financial service providers, associated organizations and financial education providers broadly comprising:
 - a. Institutions delivering financial education as a business activity
 - b. Not-for-profit organisations with links to the financial sector but no direct commercial interest (Industry associations, IBA etc.)
 - c. Not-for-profit organisations with no direct link to the financial sector and with an interest in financial education (NGOs, consumer associations research institutions etc.)
- 2. Financial Education Trainer** means an individual who is providing instructions/guidance/training to the audience/beneficiaries on behalf of the financial education providers.
- 3. Audience/Beneficiary** means any individual or group receiving instructions/guidance/training from a financial education provider.
- 4. Modes of Dissemination of Financial Education:** The dissemination could be done physically (offline) as well as digitally (online) including technology led campaigns etc.

II. Scope of the Code:

Nature: One of the strategic goals under the action plan for the **National Strategy for Financial Education (NSFE: 2020-25)** is to develop a **voluntary code of conduct for the financial education providers**. It is in addition to the general guidelines/standard operating procedures issued by the organization on behalf of which the trainer is representing.

Applicability: This voluntary code of conduct may be adopted by the Financial Education Trainers of the Financial Education Providers who have been identified for implementation of the strategic goals of National Strategy for Financial Education (NSFE) 2020-25 (*refer Section I important definitions).

III. Core Principles: The purpose of this voluntary code of conduct is to establish and maintain the standards of conduct for financial education by the Financial Education Providers as detailed in the indicative list above.

- a) The public/trainees should understand his/her relationship with the financial education provider on whose behalf he/she is acting.
- b) An appropriate distinction should be made between educational and commercial activities so as to reinforce the credibility of the initiative. Financial education trainers, while participating in financial education delivery representing them should not carry out any marketing activities. Proper documentation and video-recordings of the programme may be insisted upon, if it is conducted by private players.
- c) Every financial education trainer, while discharging his/her duties in the interest of the financial education provider he/she is representing, he/she should follow the recognized standards of professional conduct. The Professional codes of conduct draw on the professional ethical principles viz, honesty, trustworthiness, loyalty, respect for others, adherence to the law, doing good and without affecting others accountability, as the basis for prescribing required standards of behavior for members of a profession. Hence, he/she should act with care and diligence and conduct his/her dealings with public/trainees with utmost good faith and integrity at all times.
- d) The financial education trainer should take appropriate steps to maintain the security of basic information in his/her possession. He/she should have a responsibility to be aware of his/her issues of prejudice and stereotyping and particularly to consider ways in which this may be affecting the training relationship.
- e) The financial education trainer must recognize the value and dignity of public/trainees with due regard to issues of origin, status, gender, age, beliefs, sexual orientation or disability. The Trainer has a responsibility to encourage and facilitate the self-development of trainees.
- f) The financial education trainer is expected to avoid making disparaging remarks regarding other training organizations or trainers while discussing training programmes with trainees. Potential conflicts of interests are inherent in the financial education training. Trainer is expected to recognize such situations and deal with them in accordance with the best interests of the public/trainee.
- g) Branding, logo, or reference to a financial institution may be kept to a minimum and within limits agreed in advance, if any.
- h) The financial education providers shall be ensuring the proper/right conduct of financial education trainer and shall be held responsible in case trainer found at fault.

IV. Content/Delivery

There shall not be any compromise on quality of the content that would be used by Financial Education Providers. All the materials, information and awareness programmes of financial education developed, promoted and used by the financial education providers should be:

- a) Accurate, complete, up-to-date and of high quality as well as easily accessible.
- b) Balanced, impartial, unbiased, and not linked to their commercial priorities. In particular, they should not be specific to a given product or provider.
- c) Fair in addressing all relevant population segments (for instance in terms of gender, age, social background, culture, ability, and any additional factor depending on national/local circumstances and needs).
- d) Developed in the interest of consumers and learners and of addressing their needs. They should also make reference to financial consumers' rights and responsibilities as appropriate.
- e) Appropriate to the target audience's level of literacy, numeracy, financial knowledge, technological ability, learning styles and preferences; they should especially avoid technical jargon unless appropriate to the audience. While using any technical jargon, the definitions should be explained in a glossary to make it non ambiguous.
- f) Tailored to the local contexts, including social, economic, cultural and linguistic circumstances.

V. Financial Education Trainers

- a) The financial education providers should ensure that the trainer representing them is trained enough and upgraded his/her skills from time to time in order to have adequate subject knowledge and confidence to teach financial literacy topics. The Trainer should commit themselves to continuing professional development as trainer.
- b) The trainer must disclose the details of the organization/ financial education provider being represented by him to the audience/trainees.
- c) The trainer should not alter the content provided by the Financial Education Providers without their written permission.
- d) The trainer shall ensure an appropriate distinction between educational and commercial activities. Financial Education Programmes should not be a marketing arm of the sponsoring agency.

- e) The trainer should ensure and maintain high-level integrity in the whole FE programme cycle. The trainer should not claim honorarium/payment from more than one financial education provider for the same programme unless it is allowed as per the guidelines of the respective FE provider.
- f) The trainer shall submit the database of audience/trainee and FE Programmes to the concerned financial education provider and these financial education providers may utilize this database positively for organizing better/advanced FE programmes to the audience/trainee. However, consent must be taken from the audience/trainee before any other Financial Education Provider/Trainer approaches for any such programme. Key principles such as Lawfulness, fairness & transparency, Purpose limitation, Data minimisation, Accuracy, Storage limitation, Integrity and confidentiality (security) and Accountability to be followed during the process of collecting, storing, sharing data.
- g) The Financial Education Providers reserves the right to take appropriate action on financial education trainer if the programmes conducted were found to be faulty or misleading.