



ETHICS CHECKLISTS FOR PARLIAMENTARY RESEARCH & LIBRARY SERVICES

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THIS PRESENTATION DOES NOT REFER TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT BUT TO PARLIAMENTARY RESEARCH & LIBRARY SERVICES AS A WHOLE; IT REFLECTS THE PERSONAL VIEW OF THE AUTHOR AND DOES NOT REPRESENT THE VIEW OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

INTRODUCTION

- **Ethics –**
 - Good and bad, right and wrong
 - Fair treatment, equity
 - Correct use of public money and resources
 - Interests – recognising, responding to and managing interests

INTRODUCTION

Distinguish between –

- a. General approach to ethics, morality
 - E.g. professional code of no discrimination, equal treatment for all clients
- b. Ethical approach in an institutional context
 - E.g. institutional policy that Members of Parliament are privileged clients – there cannot be equal treatment of all clients

INTRODUCTION

As professionals we face two key ethical challenges –

- a. Can I reconcile my professional and personal ethics with the institutional policies and practices that define how we must work?
- b. In my area of responsibility, can I ensure that work is done ethically within the institutional framework?
 - E.g. institutional policy may not itself be equitable, but is it applied uniformly and fairly?

WHY ARE ETHICAL ISSUES IMPORTANT?

- How parliamentary research services and libraries handle ethical issues affects e.g.
 - Service performance, reputation and value of products
 - Product quality and authority
 - Relations with clients, staff & suppliers
 - Career and even health of you and your staff

WHAT GUIDANCE EXISTS?

- There is no direct reference to “ethics” in either the ‘Guidelines for legislative libraries’ or ‘Guidelines for parliamentary research services’
- There are generic ethical frameworks for e.g.
 - Library services
 - Academic/professional research in general
 - Public servants/officials of parliament
 - Procurement (which concerns especially contracted research)
 - Management of people etc.
- Useful but not sufficient for our purposes

WORK DONE SO FAR

- Topic introduced in IFLAPARL 2017 and a wide range of practical ethical challenges identified by survey and workshop
- Working group of the Standing Committee took the project forward
- Existing policies of parliamentary research & library services, with an ethical dimension, were collected and analysed

WORK DONE SO FAR

- Conclusion: not productive to lay down universal rules, but useful to identify ethical issues and examples of ‘solutions’
 - Idea of ‘checklists’ so that services can self-assess
- The checklists are based on the real-life cases and the issues covered by the existing policies
- They are draft and certainly need to be edited further – adding and removing points, revising texts

More info: <https://www.ifla.org/node/61910>

CHECKLISTS

- Divided into seven areas:
 1. Service mandate
 2. Autonomy within the administration
 3. Access to services
 4. Resource allocation
 5. Production methods
 6. Staff (human resource management)
 7. The power of Members

Draft checklists: <https://www.ifla.org/node/62123>

WORKSHOP

- In groups, to review one of the seven checklists
- Consider the issues listed
 - Are there issues missing from the list?
 - Any points that are irrelevant?
 - Which are the most important points?
- Do you find the idea of a self-assessment checklist useful?
- Is there another approach to working on ethics we should take instead, or in addition?

AFTER THE WORKSHOP

- Before you leave the IFLA Conference
 - Please answer all seven checklists *anonymously*, reflecting your view and the situation in your service
 - Put the completed checklists in the envelope provided
 - Return the envelope at the open session on Tuesday 28 August or give it to Iain Watt, Steve Wise, Karin Finer or any member of the Standing Committee.
- You are encouraged to discuss the question of service ethics with your staff and colleagues, and in the regional organisations for parliamentary research & library services. Share the conclusions!



THANK YOU!

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