

ABU



Code of Conduct

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This Code of Conduct explains what we – members of the ABU – believe in and how we want to act and conduct ourselves in our day-to-day work. That is to say, our conduct towards our workers, our clients and each other, and towards the community. The Code is founded on our four core values: **community involvement, good employment practices, quality awareness** and **reliability**. This Code of Conduct explains how we express those values, all day and every day.

When we mention workers in this Code of Conduct, we mean both job seekers who have applied to us as candidates and employees who work for our clients through our mediation. Depending on the nature of the services, it could also mean temporary agency workers, seconded employees and/or payroll employees. Consequently, the promises made in this Code of Conduct must be viewed in the light of these different kinds of service.

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ABU. It works better for everyone.

Work is beneficial, because it generates income, stimulates personal growth and contributes to the community. We – members of the ABU (Federation of Private Employment Agencies) – are proud of the role we have been playing on the Dutch labour market for more than half a century. We help job seekers find suitable employment and offer companies better prospects. For instance, we help solve issues of manoeuvrability and flexibility for our clients.

We have already helped millions of workers find permanent or flexible employment. And all of us do it our own way, with some healthy competition among ourselves. Regardless of that rivalry, we share a mission: to make work beneficial to people, companies and the community.

We want to improve the opportunities on the labour market and the future prospects of everyone who works for us, or for others through our mediation. That's why we put so much effort into creating a fair, inclusive labour market full of opportunities: a labour market that works for everyone. These ambitions unite us – members of the ABU – and set us apart from the rest of our industry. In practice, it means that we support community involvement, good employment practices, quality and reliability.

Our actions and our behaviour are based on this Code of Conduct. The Code contains everything workers, clients and other members may expect from us, at any time. We must also consider that our day-to-day work involves several stakeholders. Firstly, of course, there are our workers and clients. However, stakeholders can also be government bodies and other kinds of organisations. Their interests might clash. In such cases, we always look for the best possible, tailored solution - within the framework of the applicable legislation and regulations, of course. All the promises we make in the Code of Conduct must be viewed in that light.

Lastly, we – members of the ABU – shall act and behave in keeping with this Code of Conduct and can be called to account on those grounds. And that applies to all our employees. We therefore actively promote this Code of Conduct within our own organisations.

For workers

It does not matter who you are, or what your background is: we will fortify your career. We start as soon as you walk into our office (in real life or online) and keep going until you leave us, towards the next step in your career. We will be there for you, with prudent and focused feedback – and always with practical advice. Even if we can't help you find work, we will do our best to support you as you make the next move towards your dream job. We can offer you practical advice about your C.V., for example.

We promise you this:

We shall treat you with respect

- **We believe in a diverse, inclusive labour market and do not discriminate.** We help everyone who wants to work – and it doesn't matter what their background, sex, age, belief or sexual orientation is.
- **We shall look for suitable employment for you.** Employment that matches your knowledge, skills and ambitions – and we can help if you don't know quite know what you're looking for yet.
- **We keep our word.** We shall be clear and realistic about what we can or can't do for you.

We shall act as befits a good employer

- **We support good employment practices.** We, and our clients, are dedicated to ensuring healthy, safe working conditions.
- **We have ideas and suggestions for your future.** Depending on what you want, and what you can do, we will invest our energy in your development.
- **We shall always be clear about what you can expect from us.** You may call us to account if we don't live up to those expectations, by starting a complaints procedure, for instance.

We observe the legislation and regulations

- **We shall not ask you for any payment for our help.**
- **Our employment conditions comply with the law and Collective Labour Agreement.** You will always get whatever you are entitled to: not just your salary, but your allowances, holidays and pension rights too.
- **We shall treat your personal details in confidence.** We shall always explain, in advance and in clear, straightforward wording, which information we process, and why.

Lastly: we are both responsible for a good relationship. It means that we expect you to behave as befits a good employee. And that we are both clear about what we expect from each other. We shall hold each other to account and shall keep our word.

For clients

The right employee, at the right time, in the right place. That's our commitment to you - and it's a skill. To be able to live up to this, we anticipate the developments on the labour market, we speak to candidates all the time and we make sure we know your company inside out. It means we can advise on the creation and publication of vacancies, followed by the recruitment and selection of suitable candidates. We stay closely involved once our workers have started work. Many of our members do much more in addition, so that you get full control of your overall staffing employment. It could be support, including by digital means, for flexible schedules or workload analyses to improve your productivity responsibly.

We promise you this:

We know your company and your sector

- **We shall examine your company and sector closely.** That will help us understand your staffing issues and capacity needs. We know who or what you need, and know who is available in the market. It means that we can help, even in a tight labour market, to make the work suitable for candidates who are available.
- **We know our workers.** When we look for a suitable candidate for you, we soon know who will suit that role and your organisation.
- **We do our best to find the right person for the right place at the right time.** We do our utmost to ensure that our workers have the qualifications and skills that we have agreed on.

We support good employment practices

- **We believe in a diverse, inclusive labour market.** Everyone should be able to take part and be themselves.
- **That is why we refuse to be a party to discrimination.** To us, everyone is equal, regardless of their family background, sex, age, belief or sexual orientation. Our actions and behaviour reflect that.
- **We do not compete with employment conditions.** We pay our workers on time, and observe employment conditions that comply with the legislation and regulations, the Collective Labour Agreement and hirer's remuneration. We refuse to be a party to strikebreaking.
- **We commission external parties to inspect us.** The ABU is not just an association; it is also a mark of quality. Members are inspected twice a year to ensure their observance of the rules and procedures.

Our actions are transparent

- **We communicate clearly and transparently about our services.** You know what you can expect from us, and what costs are involved. We shall always notify you about them in due time.
- **We create realistic expectations.** For example, we explain, in advance, what the chances are of finding people to fill your vacancies.
- **We respond quickly.** Whatever the problem is, you can rest assured that we will respond quickly and adequately.

Lastly: we support good employment practices. But we need your help. We expect you to behave as befits a good client. And that you take care of our workers exactly as we do, which implies providing a safe and healthy environment to work in.

For ABU members

The ABU wants work to be beneficial: to people, companies and the community. We, members of the ABU, are united in this mission, which consists of four motivating forces: community involvement, good employment practices, quality awareness and reliability. It is our contribution to the Netherlands' sustainable growth. We work together and share knowledge where we can. At the same time, we also appreciate the rivalry among our members and the commercial successes of our own companies, working on the principle that we all play by the rules.

We promise this:

Our actions are both principled and conscientious

- **We believe in the benefits of work and our services.**
We provide full-service solutions for our clients and take care of our workers, which raises the value of employment for people and for organisations.
- **We observe the legislation and regulations.** It doesn't matter whether we are dealing with employment conditions, discrimination, processing personal data or something else entirely: we make sure our knowledge is up-to-date. We introduce changes in due time, and properly.
- **Our actions comply with the ABU's applicable agreements.**
That includes our mission, our Articles of Association, our standing rules and this Code of Conduct.

We are involved in the community

- **We strive for a fair labour market.** We do not compete with employment conditions and together we strive for fair, clear and enforceable legislation and regulations.
- **We invest in long-term employability, safety and job satisfaction for workers.** That is why we are committed to the expenditure obligation for personal development and education, as laid down in the Collective Labour Agreement.
- **We endeavour to solve structural mismatches on the labour market.** Our efforts, aided by our clients, include investments in education for people in areas where it is needed and wanted.
- **We want to create opportunities for people who have trouble finding employment.** Wherever possible, we dedicate our efforts to helping people left on the side lines find jobs..

We connect as members

- **Together, we are more than the sum of the parts.** We believe in the power of competition, but together, we strive for a fair labour market and the position of our workers. We share knowledge and whenever possible, we work together and help each other.
- **In the ABU, we all support** the continuous improvement and enhancement of the entire sector's quality, for the workers, for the clients and for the community. Accordingly, ABU members do not undertake any activities that could harm the sector's image.
- **We do not express negative opinions of other members.** We compete with each other by stressing our own added value, not by badmouthing others.
- **We hold each other to account on our behaviour.** We resolve misunderstandings together. If necessary, this Code of Conduct offers options for finding a solution by means of escalation.

Observance

Obviously, there is always a chance that workers, clients or members have a dispute arising from this Code of Conduct. If that happens, the route below is the one to follow to reach a solution.

1. The parties should try to reach a solution in joint consultation.

The members of the ABU have set up a clear, accessible procedure for it.

2. What happens if the parties cannot come to an agreement, or one of the parties feels that their grievances are not addressed? In that case, they can ask the ABU to mediate.

The ABU has a contact point for those cases. In case of disputes that specifically concern the observance of the Collective Labour Agreement for Temporary Agency Workers, the parties can apply for help from the dispute committee that has been set up for this purpose.

3. As a last resort, the parties can take their case, if it is not related to the observance of the Collective Labour Agreement, to an independent arbitration tribunal.

That authority has the competence to issue binding decisions related to the observance of this Code of Conduct. Moreover, the arbitration tribunal has the authority to issue formal reprimands to members or – as a last resort – to recommend that the ABU's Board expel members from membership. The ABU's Articles of Association contain the procedure for submitting a case to the arbitration tribunal.

Application

This Code of Conduct applies to all employees of every organisation that is a member of the ABU. The individual members are free to deviate from this Code of Conduct in a positive way – with additional, supplemental provisions.

Furthermore, supplemental Codes of Conduct apply to members who act as intermediaries for international employees or for the education sector. Those Codes of Conduct have been laid down by the ABU in agreement with the relevant sectors..

They are:

- **The ABU-Fair Employment Code for Migrant Workers and the ABU-Fair Recruitment Charter for Migrant Workers**
(code for ABU members)
- **The Code of Conduct for the Education Sector**
(intersectoral code)

ABU

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(Federation of Private Employment Agencies)**

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