

# **CODE OF CONDUCT**

**April 2010**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **The Market Research Society (MRS)**

With members in more than 70 countries, MRS is the world's largest association serving all those with professional equity in provision or use of market, social and opinion research, and in business intelligence, market analysis, customer insight and consultancy.

MRS has a diverse membership of individuals at all levels of experience and seniority within agencies, consultancies, support services, client-side organisations, the public sector and the academic community.

It also serves MRS Company Partners agencies, suppliers of support services, buyers and end-users – of all types and scale who are committed throughout their organisations to supporting the core MRS values of professionalism, research excellence and business effectiveness.

In consultation with its individual members and Company Partners, MRS supports best practice by setting and enforcing industry standards. The commitment to uphold the MRS Code of Conduct is supported by the Codeline service and a wide range of specialist guidelines.

MRS contributes significantly to the enhancement of skills and knowledge by offering various qualifications and membership grades, as well as training and professional development resources.

MRS enables its members and Company Partners to be very well-informed through the provision of a wide range of publications, information services and conferences.

MRS offers many opportunities for meeting, communicating and networking across sectors and disciplines, as well as within specialisms.

As 'the voice of market research', MRS defends and promotes research in its advocacy and representational efforts.

Through its media relations and public affairs activities, MRS aims to create the widest possible understanding of the process and value of market, social and opinion research, and to achieve the most favourable climate of opinion and legislative environment for research.

## **The Code of Conduct**

### **This edition:**

This edition of the Code of Conduct was agreed by MRS to be operative from 1 April 2010.

It is a fully revised version of a self-regulatory Code which has been in existence since 1954.

### **Who it applies to:**

#### **MRS Members**

All Members of the MRS must comply with this Code. It applies to all Members, whether they are engaged in consumer, business to business, social, opinion, international or any other type of research project.

It applies to all Members irrespective of the sector or methodologies used e.g. quantitative, qualitative, mystery shopping.

It also applies to MRS Members when conducting non-market research exercises using research techniques e.g. database building or research projects which are used for purposes other than research. Further regulations that apply to these activities are set out in MRS Regulations on Using Research Techniques for Non-Research Purposes and rule B48.

#### **MRS Company Partners**

MRS Company Partner organisations are required to take steps to ensure that all individuals employed or engaged by them (whether MRS Members or not) comply with this Code as if they were MRS Members.

### **The purpose of the Code:**

The Code of Conduct is designed to support all those engaged in market, social or opinion research in maintaining professional standards.

The Code is also intended to reassure the general public and other interested parties that research is carried out in a professional and ethical manner.

### **The principles of the Code:**

These are the principles of the MRS Code of Conduct:

1. Researchers shall ensure that participation in their activities is based on voluntary informed consent.
2. Researchers shall be straightforward and honest in all their professional and business relationships.
3. Researchers shall be transparent as to the subject and purpose of data collection.
4. Researchers shall respect the confidentiality of information collected in their

professional activities.

5. Researchers shall respect the rights and well being of all individuals.
6. Researchers shall ensure that respondents are not harmed or adversely affected by their professional activities.
7. Researchers shall balance the needs of individuals, clients, and their professional activities.
8. Researchers shall exercise independent professional judgement in the design, conduct and reporting of their professional activities.
9. Researchers shall ensure that their professional activities are conducted by persons with appropriate training, qualifications and experience.
10. Researchers shall protect the reputation and integrity of the profession.

**The structure of the Code:**

Section A of the Code sets out general rules of professional conduct.

Section B of the Code sets out more specific rules of professional conduct as they apply in different aspects of research.

The Appendix lists a selection of other research codes which may be of interest.

All MRS Members and MRS Company Partners must adhere to the rules in Sections A and B of the Code.

## **MRS Guidelines and Regulations**

A full list of guidelines, which provide additional best practice guidance, appear on the MRS website [www.mrs.org.uk](http://www.mrs.org.uk). Unless otherwise stated these guidelines are not binding. Binding guidelines currently in force are as follows:

1. MRS guidance on data protection (which has been written and agreed with the regulator, the Information Commissioner's Office) is binding on Members (except those that are published as consultative drafts).

MRS regulations are binding on Members. At the time this Code was published, the regulations were:

1. MRS Regulations on Using Research Techniques for Non-Research Purposes.
2. MRS Regulations on Administering Incentives and Free Prize Draws.
3. MRS Regulations on the Use of Predictive Diallers.

Members should keep themselves informed of any amended or new regulations. All documents can be found on the MRS website.

## **MRS Disciplinary Regulations**

Under the MRS Disciplinary Regulations, membership may be withdrawn or other disciplinary action taken, if a Member is deemed guilty of unprofessional conduct. This is defined as a Member:

- a) being guilty of any act or conduct which, in the opinion of a body appointed by Council, might bring discredit on the profession, the professional body or its Members; or
- b) being found by a body appointed by Council to be guilty of any breach of the rules set out in Sections A and/or B of this Code of Conduct; or
- c) being found by a body appointed by Council to be guilty of any breach of the provisions set out in any MRS binding guideline laid down from time-to-time by the Council; or
- d) being found by a body appointed by Council to be guilty of any breach of any other regulations laid down from time-to-time by Council; or
- e) failing without good reason to assist the professional body in the investigation of a complaint; or
- f) in the absence of mitigating circumstances having become bankrupt or having made any arrangement or composition with his/her creditors; or
- g) being found to be in breach of the Data Protection Act 1998 or other comparable legislation applicable outside the UK. Or being found, by a body appointed by Council, to have infringed any of the 8 data protection principles set out in the Act or similar provisions set out in comparable legislation outside the UK.

Note that where more than one MRS Member is involved in a matter under complaint, whilst the MRS reserves the right to proceed with an investigation and other relevant processes against all such Members under its Disciplinary Regulations, it will usually apply its discretion to proceed only against the most senior MRS Member(s) involved.

## **MRS Company Partner Complaints Procedure**

Under the MRS Quality Commitment and its associated Complaints Procedure, MRS Company Partners are committed to comply the MRS Code of Conduct and to co-operate with MRS to assist in the early resolution of any complaints.

### **General**

It is the responsibility of Members and Company Partners to keep themselves updated on changes or amendments to any part of this Code which are published from time to time and announced in publications and on the MRS website. If in doubt about the interpretation of the Code, members may consult the MRS Codeline Service which deals with MRS Code enquiries and advises on best practice.

The MRS Code of Conduct does not take precedence over national law. Members and Company Partners responsible for international research shall take its provisions as a minimum requirement and fulfil any other responsibilities set down in law or by nationally agreed standards.

## **Definitions for the Purposes of the MRS Code of Conduct**

### **Agency:**

Agency includes any individual, organisation, department or division, including any belonging to the same organisation as the Client which is responsible for, or acts as, a supplier.

### **Children:**

Children are defined as those aged under 16. See Section B for full details about children.

### **Client:**

Client includes any individual, organisation, department or division, including any belonging to the same organisation as the Member, which is responsible for commissioning or applying the results from a research project.

### **Company Partner:**

An organisation with MRS Members that has signed the MRS Company Partner Service Quality Commitment which applies throughout the organisation.

### **Consultant:**

Any individual or organisation that provides research services. Consultants can also be a sub-contractor in the research relationship.

### **Data Collection Process:**

A data collection process is any process used to obtain information from or about Respondents. It includes, but is not limited to, interviews, questionnaires, discussion guides, and stimulus materials.

### **Identity:**

The identity of a Respondent includes, as well as his/her name and/or address, any other information which offers a reasonable chance that he/she can be identified by anyone who has access to the information.

### **Incentive:**

Any benefit offered to respondents to encourage participation in a project.

### **Interview:**

An interview is any form of contact intended to obtain information from or about a Respondent or group of Respondents. This can involve passive as well as direct contact.

### **Interviewer:**

Person involved in the collection of data.

### **Member:**

A Member is an individual who has been admitted to membership of the MRS in one of the four categories set out in Article 3 of the Articles of Association (i.e. Nominated Members, Full Members, Associate Members, and Affiliate Members).

**Mystery Shopping:**

Mystery shopping or Mystery customer research are the same activity and can be defined as: The use of individuals trained to experience and measure any customer service process, by acting as potential customers and in some way reporting back on their experiences in a detailed and objective way.

**The Profession:**

The profession is the body of research practitioners and others engaged in (or interested in) marketing, social and opinion research or the application of its techniques.

**Professional body:**

Professional body refers to MRS.

**Publication:**

The communication of information to the public.

**Recruiter:**

Person who identifies and invites Respondents to participate in projects.

**Research:**

Research is the collection and analysis of data from a sample or census of individuals or organisations relating to their characteristics, behaviour, attitudes, opinions or possessions. It includes all forms of market, opinion and social research such as consumer and industrial surveys, psychological investigations, qualitative interviews and group discussions, observational, ethnographic, and panel studies.

**Records:**

The term records includes anything containing information relating to a research project and covers all data collection and data processing documents, audio and visual recordings. Primary records are the most comprehensive record of information on which a project is based; they include not only the original data records themselves, but also anything needed to evaluate those records, such as quality control documents. Secondary records are any other records about the Respondent and the research results.

**Respondent:**

A Respondent is any individual or organisation from or about whom data are collected or who is approached for interview.

**Responsible Adult:**

An individual who has personal accountability for the well-being of a child, for example a parent, guardian, teacher, nanny or grandparent. See Section B for full details about children.

**Sub-contractor:**

Any individual or organisation that undertakes a part of a project .

## **Introduction to Sections A and B**

Sections A and B below set out rules of professional conduct.

Section A sets out general rules.

Section B sets out more specific rules as they apply in different aspects of research.

All rules set out in Sections A and B must be observed and adhered to by all MRS Members with any involvement, or with any responsibility, at any level in a matter. This means that more than one MRS Member might be in breach of a rule in respect of the same matter.

Note that where more than one MRS Member is involved in a matter under complaint, whilst the MRS reserves the right to proceed with an investigation and other relevant processes against all such Members under its Disciplinary Regulations, it will usually apply its discretion to proceed only against the most senior MRS Member(s) involved.

All MRS Members should be aware that if found under the MRS Disciplinary Regulations to be in breach of any of the rules in Sections A and/or B of this Code, he/she will be deemed guilty of unprofessional conduct and disciplinary action may be taken against him/her.

For further information about the MRS disciplinary procedure, MRS Members are referred to the relevant section in the Introduction to this Code and to the Disciplinary Regulations themselves (which are available on [www.mrs.org.uk](http://www.mrs.org.uk))

Participants in the MRS Company Partner Service are also required, in accordance with the terms of the Service, to take steps to ensure that the Code of Conduct is adhered to by all individuals employed or engaged by them (whether MRS Members or not). (The rules of this service are detailed in the Company Partner Quality Commitment.)

## Section A: General Rules of Professional Conduct

- A1 Research must conform to the national and international legislation relevant to a given project including in particular the Data Protection Act 1998 or other comparable legislation applicable outside the UK.
- A2 Members must take reasonable steps to avoid conflicts of interest with Clients or employers and must make prior voluntary and full disclosure to all parties concerned of all matters that might give rise to such conflict.
- A3 Members must act honestly in dealings with Respondents, Clients (actual or potential), employers, employees, sub-contractors and the general public.
- A4 The use of letters after an individual's name to indicate membership of MRS is permitted only in the case of Fellows (FMRS), Full Members (MMRS) and Associate Members (AMRS). These letters must not be used by any individual not admitted in any of these MRS categories of membership.
- Comment: All MRS members may point out, where relevant, that they belong to the appropriate category of the professional body.
- A5 Members must not speak or imply that they speak on behalf of MRS unless they have the written authority of Council or of some duly delegated individual or committee.
- A6 Members must not make false claims about their skills and experience or those of their organisation.
- A7 Members must take reasonable steps to ensure that others do not breach or cause a breach of this Code.
- Comment: This includes:*
- Members taking reasonable steps to ensure that the people with whom they work (including other Members, non-member research practitioners, colleagues, Clients, Consultants, Sub-contractors) are sufficiently familiar with this Code that they are unlikely to breach or cause it to be breached unknowingly or unintentionally, and*
- Members with responsibility for implementing processes, procedures and contracts, taking reasonable steps to ensure that they are such that this Code is unlikely to be breached or caused to be breached by others unknowingly or unintentionally.*
- A8 Members must not act in a way which might bring discredit on the profession, MRS or its Members.
- A9 Members must not disparage or unjustifiably criticise other Members or other non-member researchers.
- A10 Members must take all reasonable precautions to ensure that Respondents are not harmed or adversely affected by their professional activities.

## Section B: Rules of Professional Conduct Applicable to Research

This section relates to specific aspects of work commonly carried out by MRS Members and other research practitioners.

Some of the rules in this section are legal requirements. Members should be aware that this Code does not cover all relevant legislative requirements of Members and it is the responsibility of all Members to familiarise themselves with these. Members should be aware in particular that breaches of the Data Protection Act 1998 or other comparable legislation outside the UK is a ground for disciplinary action under MRS Disciplinary Regulations.

### Designing and Setting up a Research Project

B1 Members must not knowingly take advantage, without permission, of the unpublished work of another research practitioner which is the property of that other research practitioner.

*Comment: This means, where applicable, that Members must not knowingly carry out or commission work based on proposals prepared by a research practitioner in another organisation unless permission has been obtained.*

B2 All written or oral assurances made by any Member involved in commissioning or conducting projects must be factually correct and honoured by the Member.

B3 Members must take reasonable steps to design research to the specification agreed with the Client.

B4 Members must take reasonable steps to design research which meets the quality standards agreed with the Client.

B5 Members must take reasonable steps to ensure that the rights and responsibilities of themselves and Clients are governed by a written contract and/or internal commissioning contract.

B6 Members must not disclose the identity of Clients or any confidential information about Clients without the Client's permission unless there is a legal obligation to do so.

#### *Use of Client Databases, Lists and Personal Contact Details*

B7 Where lists of named individuals are used e.g. Client databases, the list source must be revealed at an appropriate point in the interview, if requested. This overrides the right to Client anonymity.

### *Respondents' Rights to Anonymity*

- B8 The anonymity of Respondents must be preserved unless they have given their informed consent for their details to be revealed or for attributable comments to be passed on.
- Comment: Members should be particularly careful if sample sizes are very small (such as in business and employee research) that they do not inadvertently identify organisations or departments and therefore individuals.*
- B9 If Respondents have given consent for data to be passed on in a form which allows them to be personally identified, Members must:
- ❖ demonstrate that they have taken all reasonable steps to ensure that the data will only be used for the purpose for which the data were collected and
  - ❖ fully inform Respondents as to what will be revealed, to whom and for what purpose.
- B10 If Respondents request individual complaints or unresolved issues to be passed back to a Client (for example in customer satisfaction research), Members must comply with that request. The comments/issues to be passed back to a Client must be agreed with the Respondent and must not be linked back to any other data or used for any other purpose without the explicit consent of the Respondent.

### *Re-interviewing Respondents*

*Comment: A re-contact question asks permission for a follow-up interview, i.e. an interview for which a respondent is selected as a consequence of participating in a previous interview.*

*Any re-contact question should be agreed at the design stage with the client to cover any planned or possible consequential interviews.*

- B11 A follow up interview with a Respondent can be carried out only if the Respondent's permission has been obtained at the previous interview. The only exception to this is re-contact for quality control purposes.
- B12 Any re-contact must match the assurances given to Respondents at the time that permission was gained e.g. when re-contact was to occur, the purpose and by whom.
- B13 Respondent details must not be passed on to another third party for research or any other purposes without the prior consent of the Respondent. The only exception to this is if the Client is the Data Controller of the Respondent data.

### **Designing the data collection process**

- B14 Members must take reasonable steps to ensure all of the following:
- ❖ that the data collection process is fit for purpose and Clients have been advised accordingly

- ❖ that the design and content of the data collection process or instrument is appropriate for the audience being researched;
- ❖ that Respondents are able to provide information in a way that reflects the view they want to express, including don't know/ prefer not to say where appropriate;
- ❖ that Respondents are not led towards a particular point of view;
- ❖ that responses are capable of being interpreted in an unambiguous way;
- ❖ that personal data collected are relevant and not excessive.

## Preparing for Fieldwork

### *Communicating with Respondents*

B15 If there is to be any recording, monitoring or observation during an interview, Respondents must be informed about this both at recruitment and at the beginning of the interview.

*Comment: This does not include monitoring (listening to but not recording) telephone interviews for the purpose of quality control where interviewers have been informed that such monitoring takes place.*

B16 Members must not knowingly make use of personal data collected illegally.

## Fieldwork

B17 Respondents must not be misled when being asked for cooperation to participate.

B18 A Respondent's right to withdraw from a project at any stage must be respected.

B19 Members must ensure that Respondents are able to check without difficulty the identity and bona fides of any individual and/or their employer conducting a project (including any sub-contractors).

B20 Calls for face to face in home interviews and calls to household landline telephone numbers or mobile telephone numbers (including text messages) must not be made before 9am Monday to Saturday, 10am Sunday or after 9pm any day, unless by appointment.

*Comment: The only exception to this is where local rules and customs differ from UK practice.*

B21 Members must ensure that all of the following are clearly communicated to the Respondent :

- ❖ the name of the interviewer (an Interviewer's Identity Card must be shown if face to face);
- ❖ an assurance that the interview will be carried out according to the MRS Code of Conduct;

- ❖ the general subject of the interview;
- ❖ the purpose of the interview;
- ❖ if asked, the likely length of the interview;
- ❖ any costs likely to be incurred by the Respondent.

- B22 Respondents (including employees in employee research) must not be unduly pressurised to participate.
- B23 Members must delete any responses given by the Respondent, if requested, and if this is reasonable and practicable.
- B24 Recruiters/ interviewers must not reveal to any other Respondents the detailed answers provided by any Respondent or the identity of any other Respondent interviewed.

#### *Incentives*

- B25 Where incentives are offered, Members must clearly inform the Respondent who will administer the incentive.
- B26 Client goods or services, or vouchers to purchase client goods or services, must not be used as incentives in a research project.

*Comment: Incentives need not be of a monetary nature to be acceptable to a Respondent as a token of appreciation.*

*With the Client's permission, an offer to supply the Respondent with a brief summary report of the project's findings can sometimes prove a better alternative encouragement to participate in a research project. Other alternatives are for example:*

- ❖ *Charity donations*
- ❖ *Non-monetary gifts*
- ❖ *Prize draws (for Prize draws the rules, as detailed in MRS Regulations on Administering Incentives and Free Prize Draws, must be adhered to.)*

#### *Children*

*Comment: The intention of the following provisions regarding the age of Respondents is to protect children who are potentially vulnerable members of society and to strengthen the principle of public trust.*

- B27 Consent of a parent or responsible adult (acting in loco parentis) must be obtained before interviewing a child under 16.

*Comment: A responsible adult (acting in loco parentis) is an individual who has personal accountability for the well-being of a child, for example, a guardian, teacher, nanny or grandparent. It is not an individual who has a limited or specific responsibility such as a lifeguard, instructor or employer.*

*Under special circumstances, permission to waive parental consent may be obtained, but only with the prior approval of the MRS Market Research Standards Board.*

- B28 Where the consent of a parent or responsible adult is required Members must ensure that the adult is given sufficient information about the nature of the project to enable them to provide informed consent.
- B29 Members must ensure that the parent or responsible adult giving consent is recorded (by name, relationship or role).
- B30 For self-completion postal/paper data collection, Members must ensure that:
- ❖ when it is known, (or ought reasonably to be known) that all or a majority of Respondents are likely to be under 16, these are addressed to the parent or responsible adult; and
  - ❖ when it is known, (or ought reasonably to be known) that all or a majority of Respondents are likely to be under 16, that all questionnaires carry a note or notice explaining that consent is required for all children to participate.
- B31 For projects administered using an electronic communications network or service, where it is known (or ought reasonably be known that) some Respondents are likely to be under the age of 16, Members must ensure that Respondents are asked to give their age before any other personal information is requested. Further, if the age given is under 16, the child must be excluded from giving further personal information until the appropriate consent from a parent or responsible adult has been obtained and verified.
- B32 In all cases, Members must ensure that a child has an opportunity to decline to take part, even though a parent or a responsible adult has given consent on their behalf. This remains the case if the project takes place in school.
- B33 Personal information relating to other people must not be collected from children unless for the purposes of gaining consent from a parent or a responsible adult.

#### *Qualitative Exercises*

- B34 At the time of recruitment (or before the exercise takes place if details change after recruitment), Members must ensure that Respondents are told all relevant information as per rule B21 and:
- ❖ the location of the exercise and if it is to take place in a viewing facility; and
  - ❖ whether observers are likely to be present; and
  - ❖ when and how the exercise is to be recorded; and
  - ❖ the likely length of the exercise including the start and finish time; and
  - ❖ the Member, moderator and/or agency that will be conducting the exercise;
- B35 Members must ensure that completed recruitment questionnaires, incentive and attendance lists, transmissions or recordings or any other information or outputs which identify Respondents are not passed to or accessed by Clients or other third parties without the explicit permission of the Respondents; and

Members must take reasonable steps to ensure that the information or outputs are used only for the purpose agreed at the time of data collection.

- B36 If Members have agreed with Clients that observers are to be present, Members must inform all observers fully about their legal and ethical responsibilities.
- B37 Members must make clear to Respondents the capacity in which observers are present; Clients must be presented as such, even if they are also Researchers and/or Members of MRS.
- Comment: This also applies to Members themselves when an employee of a Client organisation, advertising/design/PR agency etc.*
- B38 There are some situations where observers could adversely affect Respondents' interests and/or wellbeing, and in such instances, Members must ensure that Respondents are told at an appropriate stage the identity of any observer who might be present during the exercise.
- B39 Members must ensure that, in instances where observers may know Respondents (as may occur in business-to-business research), Respondents are informed before the start that their interviews are to be observed, with a warning that the observer may include Clients who already know them.
- B40 The issue of anonymity and recognition is a particular problem in business and employee research. If guarantees cannot be given then Members must ensure that observers are fully introduced before the group/interview begins and Respondents given a chance to withdraw.
- B41 Members must ensure that Respondents on attendance at a venue are informed about the nature of any observation, monitoring or recording and Respondents are given the option of withdrawing from the exercise.
- B42 Members must ensure that any material handed to Clients or included in reports, without consent from Respondents, is anonymised e.g. transcripts containing verbatim comments and projective material.

*Comment: Special care must be taken when the universe is small, as in the case of some business to business exercises.*

### *Mystery Shopping Projects*

*Comment: The objective of a mystery shopping project is to provide management information on processes and/or quality of service, in order to aid training and retraining plans, improvements in service and hence increase customer satisfaction etc.*

*For mystery shopping exercises the 'Respondent' will be a staff member who is subject to the mystery shop and as such there are different levels of allowable disclosure and data usage.*

- B43 For mystery shopping of a Client's own organisation, Members must take reasonable steps to ensure that:
- ❖ the Client's employees have been advised by their employer that their service delivery may be checked through mystery shopping; and
  - ❖ the objectives and intended uses of the results have been made clear by the employer to staff (including the level of reporting if at branch/store or individual level); and
  - ❖ if mystery shopping is to be used in relation to any employment terms and conditions, that this has been made clear by the employer.
- B44 Since competitors' employees cannot be advised that they may be mystery shopped, Members must ensure that their identities are not revealed. Members must ensure that employees are not recorded (e.g. by using audio, photographic or video equipment). This applies in all instances where employees cannot or have not been advised that they could be mystery shopped.
- B45 Where there is mystery shopping of Client's agents or authorised distributors (as well as any organisations which are responsible to a compliance authority), Members must ensure that:
- ❖ the employees to be mystery shopped have been advised by their employer and/or regulator that their service delivery and/or regulatory compliance may be checked by mystery shopping; and
  - ❖ the objectives and intended uses of the results have been made clear by the employer and/or regulator (including the level of reporting if at branch/store or individual level); and
  - ❖ if mystery shopping is to be used in relation to any employment/contractual/regulatory terms and conditions this has been made clear by the employer and/or regulator.
- B46 Members must take reasonable steps to ensure that mystery shoppers are fully informed of the implications and protected from any adverse implications of conducting a mystery shopping exercise.

*Comment: For example, mystery shoppers must be made aware by the Member that their identity may be revealed to the organisation/individual being mystery shopped if they use personal cards to make purchases, loan arrangements, etc., and credit ratings may be affected.*

#### *Observation and Ethnographic Exercises*

- B47 Members must ensure that all of the following are undertaken when observation equipment is being used:
- ❖ Clear and legible signs must be placed in areas where surveillance is taking place.
  - ❖ Cameras must be sited so that they monitor only the areas intended for surveillance.
  - ❖ Signs must state the individual/organisation responsible for the surveillance, including contact information and the purpose of the observation.

*Comment: Rule A10 of the Code requires Members to take all reasonable precautions to ensure that Respondents are not harmed or adversely affected. This may have particular pertinence in an ethnographic and observational setting. Issues to be considered are:*

- ❖ *the need to be sensitive to the possibility that their presence may, at times, be seen as an unwarranted intrusion; here safeguards, and the ability to end the observation quickly, must be built into any ethnographic situation.*
- ❖ *the need to be sensitive to the possibility that Respondents may become over involved with them at a personal level.*
- ❖ *the need to be sensitive to the possibility of 'observation fatigue'; again there is value in having the ability to end the observation quickly within any ethnographic situation.*

#### *Using Research Techniques for Non-Research Purposes*

B48 Members must adhere to the rules in the separate regulations, *Using Research Techniques for Non-Research Purposes*, when conducting exercises which are for purposes in addition to, or other than, research.

#### **Analysis and Reporting of Findings**

B49 Members must ensure that conclusions disseminated by them are clearly and adequately supported by the data.

B50 Members must comply with reasonable requests to make available to anyone the technical information necessary to assess the validity of any published findings from a project.

B51 Members must ensure that their names, or those of their employer, are only used in connection with any project as an assurance that the latter has been carried out in conformity with the Code if they are satisfied on reasonable grounds that the project has in all respects met the Code's requirements.

B52 Members must allow Clients to arrange checks on the quality of fieldwork and data preparation provided that the Client pays any additional costs involved in this.

B53 Members must provide Clients with sufficient technical details to enable Clients to assess the validity of results of projects carried out on their behalf.

B54 Members must ensure that data tables include sufficient technical information to enable reasonable interpretation of the validity of the results.

B55 Members must ensure that reports include sufficient information to enable reasonable interpretation of the validity of the results.

B56 Members must ensure that reports and presentations clearly distinguish between facts and interpretation.

- B57 Members must ensure that when interpreting data they make clear which data they are using to support their interpretation.
- B58 Members must ensure that qualitative reports and presentations accurately reflect the findings of the project in addition to the interpretations and conclusions.
- B59 Members must take reasonable steps to check and where necessary amend any Client-prepared materials prior to publication to ensure that the published results will not be incorrectly or misleadingly reported.
- Comment: This means that Members are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure that any press releases include either final report details (including question wording for any questions quoted) or details of where the information can be obtained (e.g. via a website link).*
- B60 Members must take reasonable steps to ensure that findings from a project, published by themselves or in their employer's name, are not incorrectly or misleadingly presented.
- B61 If Members are aware, or ought reasonably to be aware, that findings from a project have been incorrectly or misleadingly reported by a Client he/she must at the earliest opportunity:
- ❖ refuse permission for the Client to use their name further in connection with the incorrect or misleading published findings; and
  - ❖ publish in an appropriate forum the relevant technical details of the project to correct any incorrect or misleading reporting.

### **Data Storage**

- B62 Members must take reasonable steps to ensure that all hard copy and electronic lists containing personal data are held, transferred and processed securely in accordance with the relevant data retention policies and/or contractual obligations.
- B63 Members must take reasonable steps to ensure that all parties involved in the project are aware of their obligations regarding security of data.
- B64 Members must take reasonable steps to ensure that the destruction of data is adequate for the confidentiality of the data being destroyed. For example, any personal data must be destroyed in a manner which safeguards confidentiality.

## **Appendix**

The MRS Code of Conduct applies to all MRS Members and Company Partners regardless of location. However, Members and Company Partners should be aware of other relevant codes that may apply to the research they undertake. A short selection of codes is supplied here for reference.

### **ICC and ESOMAR**

ICC/ESOMAR International Code on Market and Social Research

[www.esomar.org](http://www.esomar.org)

[www.iccwbo.org](http://www.iccwbo.org)

### **Australia**

AMSRS Code of Professional Behaviour

[www.mrsa.com.au](http://www.mrsa.com.au)

### **Canada**

MRIA Code of Conduct and Good Practice

[www.mria-arim.ca](http://www.mria-arim.ca)

### **Germany**

Declaration for the Territory of the Federal Republic of Germany concerning the ICC/ESOMAR International Code on Market and Social Research

[www.adm-ev.de](http://www.adm-ev.de)

### **Italy**

ASSIRM Code of Professional Ethics

[www.assirm.it](http://www.assirm.it)

### **Japan**

JMRA Code of Marketing Research

[www.jmra-net.or.jp](http://www.jmra-net.or.jp)

### **United States**

CASRO Code of Standards

[www.casro.org](http://www.casro.org)