

American Handwriting Analysis Foundation Code of Ethics

Revised 7/2012



ARTICLE I. Definitions

Analyst:	AHAF member who analyzes handwriting.
Client:	One who requests an analysis, whether paid or not.
Complainant:	Person bringing complaint to Ethics chair.
Defamatory:	Derogatory, untrue, and with malicious intent.
Ethics Committee:	Past Presidents Advisory Board and sitting AHAF president. Chair to be selected by committee, serves on Board of Directors.
Hearing:	Presentation of arguments and written evidence.
Member:	Member of the American Handwriting Analysis Foundation.
Professional Analyst:	Member certified by AHAF or AHAF-reciprocal organization.
Respondent:	Member who is required to respond to a complaint.
Sample:	Handwritten item to be analyzed.
Third party:	A client who requests an analysis of another person's handwriting with or without that person's permission.
Writer:	Person who provides a handwriting sample for analysis.

ARTICLE II. Competence

- A. Members shall maintain high standards of graphological competence through continuing education, which may include, but is not limited to, attendance at seminars, webinars, classes, and conferences.
- B. Members may not use AHAF logo on personal or business stationery, but may make reference to membership and/or certification where appropriate.
- C. Members are encouraged to be certified through AHAF. Member may use the title Certified Graphologist (CG) only after receiving official notice of certification by AHAF or a reciprocal organization.
- D. Members will not conduct any specialized service, diagnosis or treatment (legal, medical, psychological, counseling, etc.) without the necessary qualifications and licenses. If assisted by specialists, analyst will identify such assistants to client.

ARTICLE III. Ethical Responsibilities

A. To writer and client

1. The primary responsibility is to protect the legitimate interest of the client. However, analyst will be sensitive to possible effects of the analysis on the writer, whether the writer is the client or not.
2. Privacy of the writer shall be protected by:
 - a. Maintaining strict confidentiality of records and analyses.
 - b. Obtaining permission from the writer where possible before sharing and/or publishing samples.
 - c. Redacting personal information from samples shared with other analysts.
3. Quality of professional services shall be accorded equally to all clients regardless of race, creed, gender, country of origin, etc.
4. Analyst shall refuse to provide professional services when judging that such services would not conform with ethical standards.
5. Third party analyses
 - a. Analyst shall request permission from the writer to analyze his or her handwriting, except in the following circumstances:
 - 1) Under a contractual agreement, in the case of a third party analysis (e.g., pre-employment analysis), the client refuses to obtain permission from the writer. The analyst is advised to require a hold-harmless agreement from the client.
 - 2) When a parent/guardian requests analysis of a minor child or non-competent person.
 - b. Third party must state a legitimate reason for requesting the analysis.
 - c. Third party client shall agree, preferably in writing, to keep confidential any personal information provided about the writer.
 - d. Analyses should be presented in a timely manner as the analyst's opinion based on the handwriting and not represented as indisputable fact.

B. To the public

1. Member shall not exaggerate or make false claims regarding:
 - a. Personal expertise, background, or competence.
 - b. Validity or uses of graphology.
2. Member shall maintain high standards of personal and professional integrity.
3. Member shall not make defamatory remarks, personal or professional, about other graphological organizations or their members.
4. Member shall stay informed of pending legislation and local, state, and federal ordinances and laws relating to the practice of graphology.

C. To other members

1. Member shall abide by AHAF Bylaws.
2. Member shall not make defamatory remarks, personal or professional, about other AHAF members.
3. Member shall follow procedure for dispute resolution as outlined in this Code.

ARTICLE IV. Dispute Resolution

A. Procedure

1. Member makes complaint of unethical behavior in writing to the Chair of the Ethics Committee, or if there is no current chair, to the President.
2. Chair informs complainant and respondent of their rights and responsibilities according to the AHAF Manual of Operation Procedures for mediation.
3. Chair gathers evidence and arguments from the parties to present to the Committee.
4. Ethics Committee reviews evidence and arguments and sends recommendation to the Executive Board.
5. Executive Board votes on recommendations for resolution of dispute.
6. Respondent may request full Board hearing as appeal.

B. Voting

1. Ethics Committee member or Board member involved in the dispute shall recuse himself or herself from the voting process.
2. A two-thirds vote is required for action.

C. Appeal

1. All evidence, arguments, and recommendations shall be presented to the full Board of Directors.
2. A two-thirds vote is required to overturn a decision.

D. Recommendations for Resolution

1. Unwarranted allegations: dismiss charges.
2. Letter of warning and order to cease and desist.
3. Letter of reprimand.
4. Suspension of membership and/or certification until recognition of error, education, and supervision are completed to the satisfaction of the Ethics Committee, as decided by a two-thirds vote of the committee.
5. Dismissal from AHAF.