



CODE OF CONDUCT

The Women4Cyber (W4C) Code of Conduct represents the ethics and values we follow in our actions and endeavours. It is rooted in the recognition that everything we do in relation to our work at W4C will be, and should be, measured against the highest possible standards of ethical conduct.

Please do read the Code and W4C's values and follow them both in spirit and letter, always bearing in mind that each of us has a personal responsibility to incorporate, and encourage others to incorporate, the principles of the Code and values into the work we all carry out together.

Who should adhere to the W4C Code of Conduct (hereafter referred to as “the Code”)?

We expect the Women4Cyber Secretariat, Administration Body and Council members, partners, sponsors, and Chapter representatives and members to know and adhere to the principles of the Code.

The Women4Cyber Foundation

We are a non-profit European private foundation aiming to promote, encourage and support the participation of girls and women in cybersecurity.

We are a multi-level initiative, aiming to grow a diverse community across Europe and beyond, with national and international Chapters.

We are a community of women and men working together towards a more gender-inclusive cybersecurity field.

Our ‘raison d’être’

The cybersecurity field offers a breadth of roles requiring a wide range of skills, both technical and soft.

There is a strong need for cybersecurity experts to be able to face the increasing challenges brought on by the digital transformation of our society, economy, and infrastructures - gender inclusion and diversity is crucial in addressing this gap.

Concrete actions are needed to attract women to a career in cybersecurity and address the expected skills shortage in technical, operational, managerial and leadership positions. The W4C Foundation was established with this goal in mind.

Our Mission

To achieve a gender-balanced cybersecurity field

W4C has four main objectives as laid out in its Charter of Objectives:

- Identify and link a strong community of women in cybersecurity.
- Support the awareness, education, training, and employment of women in cybersecurity.
- Support and shape policies at EU and national levels in line with Women4Cyber messages.
- Structure our communities by creating national Chapters.

Our Ethical Principles

W4C Foundation and Chapter members, as well as W4C partners, shall act in good faith and with due care and diligence and promote a culture of fair and ethical behaviour based on the following W4C Ethical Principles.

- **Cooperation.** The general spirit shall be one of cooperation. Differences and rivalries between private companies, public institutions, professional organisations, Council members, Chapter members etc. that may impair the effectiveness of the Foundation or W4C Chapters shall, when possible, be resolved by consensus. In case resolution by consensus is not possible, the W4C Administration Body, as the central decision-making body, shall intervene and take the necessary measures to resolve any issue (in line with the mission & values of the Foundation).
- **Behave ethically.** W4C Foundation and Chapter members, as well as W4C partners, shall act in good faith and with due care and diligence and promote a culture of fair and ethical behaviour based on the W4C Ethical Principles. The Administration Body of W4C shall take any measure considered necessary and appropriate in case a member of the Administration Body, Council, or Chapters engages in a behaviour that endangers the activities of W4C.
- **Principle of conciliation/mediation in case of conflict.** Any type of conflict among members of the Administration Body, Council or Chapters shall be resolved through conciliation/mediation. W4C strives to avoid and manage potential conflicts throughout its activities in the governance, management and implementation of W4C activities, as well as in the daily implementation of W4C actions. The W4C Stakeholders shall avoid any situation which may give rise to a conflict of interest, or which may reasonably be perceived as such. Women4Cyber members of the Administration Body, Council, and Chapters, as well as the

Secretary General and other W4C Secretariat employees shall declare any relevant financial or other interests or assets which might create a conflict of interest relevant for the performance of their W4C activities. The Administration Body of W4C shall take any measure considered as necessary and appropriate, in light of the information referred to in the previous point or other available information.

- **Integrity.** Integrity is the power of honesty, the alignment and coherence between words and actions, between promises and their fulfilment. We maintain our integrity by acting honestly at all times, by fostering professional courtesy and mutual respect, by being fair when working with others in practices and procedures, as well as in interactions between all players, and by guaranteeing good guidance in working on behalf of others. Integrity can only be attained through the observance of any and all regulations. As such, all those involved in W4C and W4C activities must be aware of both internal and external regulations – national law and regulations and documents governing the functioning of the Women4Cyber Foundation.

- **Equality.** Consistent with its values, Women4Cyber is committed to offer equal opportunity employment, based solely upon individual merit and qualifications directly related to professional competence. We strictly prohibit unlawful discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, religion, sex, gender identity or expression, age, mental or physical disability, medical condition, sexual orientation, or any other characteristics protected by law.

- **Transparency.** The best way to foster integrity and accountability is to ensure transparency in all instances, within the limits of the respect of personal dignity, in compliance with the data protection legislation. Transparency is an essential principle that implies openness, clear communication and accountability.
 - Information transparency: The W4C Foundation and its Chapters should regularly disclose full, accurate and up-to-date information on policies and actions related to the fulfilment of the W4C mission and objectives. Such information should be presented in a way that is clear and accessible to the general public (for non-confidential information).
 - Financial transparency: accuracy and completeness of W4C financial reports and accounting records. As a donation funded organisation established as a Belgian Foundation, W4C provides information on its financial and accounting records according to Belgian laws and usual accounting procedures.
 - Accountability: the readiness or preparedness to give an explanation or justification to stakeholders for one's judgments, intentions and actions.

- **Diversity and inclusion.** The W4C Foundation and its stakeholders shall abide by the principles of diversity, inclusion and non-discrimination, in the workplace as well as in all collaborations, actions and activities carried out by the Foundation in the public, private and academic sectors.

- W4C asks all members participating in its activities to devote their best efforts to nurturing a climate of respect, mutual trust and cooperation

Code of Conduct for sponsors and Chapters

Behave ethically: W4C Foundation and Chapter members, as well as W4C partners, shall act in good faith and with due care and diligence and promote a culture of fair and ethical behaviour based on the W4C Ethical Principles.

Internal practices

All members of the W4C Foundation are committed to avoiding conflicts of interest and ensuring ethical conduct and transparency in the context of any projects, donations and collaborations they may work on in their W4C capacity. Deviations from these principles should be reported to the Secretary General of the W4C Foundation and President of the Administration Body, or to any of the Administration Body Members.

W4C endeavours to be transparent about its commitments, donations received, and partnerships. The W4C Foundation relies on contributions from multiple outside sources but safeguards separation between sponsors and content. While donors may suggest their preference to fund a particular aspect of the activities from the W4C Roadmap of Actions, it is a pre-requisite to accept that the donations will not influence the content beyond the Foundation's objectives.

Women4Cyber takes its responsibilities to comply with laws and regulations very seriously and every partner/sponsor/Chapter is expected to comply with applicable legal requirements and prohibitions.

Data protection

Personal Data is protected in compliance with the European Commission's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Workplace environment

Consistent with its values, Women4Cyber is committed to offer equal opportunity employment, based solely upon individual merit and qualifications directly related to professional competence. We strictly prohibit unlawful discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, religion, sex, gender identity or expression, age, mental or physical disability, medical condition, sexual orientation, or any other characteristics protected by law.

At the same time, Women4Cyber is dedicated to creating a supportive work environment, where everyone has the opportunity to reach their fullest potential.

Stakeholder and community engagement

Women4Cyber stakeholders commit to be honest and transparent in their discussions with potential partners, be they government representatives and officials, private sector, industry, or academia representatives, and to always abide by W4C values and ethical behaviour.

Women4Cyber stakeholders apply the same code of conduct and transparency when addressing or engaging with the W4C Community at large.

All information disclosed in relation to the W4C Foundation is accurate, complete and consistent, and disseminated in accordance with the Women4Cyber rules.

Application of the Code

The Administration Body of W4C shall ensure the proper application of this Code of Conduct.

W4C Stakeholders shall inform the W4C Administration Body or the W4C Secretary General in a timely manner if they have doubts with regards to the application of this Code before acting on the matter.

In case of an infringement of this Code of Conduct, the W4C Administration Body may decide to express a reprimand in the full respect of the Foundation's Statutes and Bylaws. A serious violation of the Code of Conduct may lead to dismissal/expulsion