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## Confidant's Code of Ethics Study Association Storm

This Ethical Code is a directive for the confidants' act of Study Association Storm (hereinafter referred to as 'Storm' or 'The association'). The Ethical Code serves as information provision for the members who approach a confidant, as well as a code of conduct for the confidants' integrity. Moreover, the Ethical Code can be used as a benchmark for the Board to assess the method in which the confidants execute their tasks.

When a 'member' is being mentioned in the code of conduct this refers to the person who approaches a confidant regarding undesirable forms of interaction, suspected misconduct within the association, or personal situations.

The 'Board' as described in this document refers to the current board of Storm, excepting the board member that holds the position of confidant.

### Professional ethics and integrity

A confidant behaves in a manner as would be expected from a proper confidant, meaning that a confidant lives up to general social and ethical norms and values<sup>1</sup>, and upholds these norms and values; even when external pressures urge a confidant to do otherwise. A confidant operates as a competent confidant, who acts reasonably and with the greatest diligence. A confidant is aware of the fact that under adhering to social and ethical norms falls, amongst others, not accepting gifts and not redirecting cases in which the confidant, in any way, is directly involved.

### Core values and competences

A confidant is an integer and reliable person and uses their best efforts to fulfill the role in their function. For this, personal qualities are of the greatest essence; a confidant is expected to be well-balanced, flexible, decisive, and to have great empathic capacity. A confidant is a subject-matter expert (SEM), has communicative skills, and has knowledge of the Dutch and Storm's social roadmap ('De sociale kaart'<sup>2</sup>), and social services. The main function of a confidant is to carefully listen to and comfort members. A confidant actively contributes to expanding the available knowledge and operates solely when the confidant is qualified, meaning that the confidant has the right knowledge and skills concerning the nature of the problem. If a confidant does not have the right competencies, the confidant will at all times redirect a member to professional assistance. A confidant is willing to continuously retrain and develop in the role of confidant. If a situation requires legal action a confidant can advise

a member to report to a legal institution, and in consultation, offer to support the member in the process. However, a confidant is not obliged to partake in this process but may recommend alternative options.

## Confidentiality

A confidant has a duty of confidentiality, which stays intact also after the termination of a member's guidance, with respect to what they hear in the role of confidant. This duty of confidentiality may be ignored when statutory regulations say otherwise or when there is a conflict of duties which brings a confidant in a distress of conscience. More in particular about a confidant's integrity, in case a member makes a confidential notification concerning suspicion of malpractice or inconsistency and the member wants to remain anonymous, the confidant will bring this notification to the Board or the Advisory Board as an intermediate person. A confidant does not have a legal evidentiary privilege. The duty of confidentiality of a confidant becomes due when the confidant needs this in order to be able to counter in (pre-)legal procedures or a formal complaint procedure. A confidant informs a member of the nature and extent of the duty of confidentiality at the beginning of the first meeting. Besides this, a confidant is obligated to immediately inform a member when a situation arises in which the confidant cannot stick to the duty of confidentiality as a result of distress of conscience, legal provisions, or otherwise. The confidant makes notice of this to the Board.

## Independency

A confidant takes an independent stance. A confidant should always be guided by a member's interests and never by their own interests, as well as possibly the association's interests. A confidant stands by, guides, and supports a member. No actions can be taken against the wishes of a member, unless legal provisions determined differently or when there is a conflict of duties which brings a confidant in a distress of conscience. A confidant does not act as a mediator. A confidant is no researcher and does not participate in truth establishment.

## Transparency

The confidants clearly inform Storm and its members about their roles, tasks, and positions as confidants, and what involved persons can expect from them. Moreover, the confidants will, at all times, clarify the extent of their confidentiality and notify when this extent is exceeded. They will indicate the extent of their knowledge to a member and promptly notify the member when the matter goes beyond their qualifications.

## Documentation

A confidant must store the dossiers that he/she prepares for approaching members in such a way that it is not accessible to third parties. Established dossiers from a confidant will remain confidential unless disclosure is necessary for the virtue of legal provisions and/or as part of a formal complaint procedure for the Board. Confidants are not allowed to discuss the dossier of a member unless the person in question has given permission to do so. An ongoing dossier can only be handed over to a newly assigned confidant with the consent of the concerning member. The retention period of dossiers whereof the case has been finished is one year. After this year all details in the archive of a confidant will be deleted and destroyed. A member can at all times request the stored information about their contact, and/or commission a confidant to destroy any documentation.

## Guidance termination

The confidants can, based on their own responsibility and in accordance with the principles of reasonableness and fairness<sup>3</sup>, (intermediary) terminate the support and guidance of a member. When a confidant considers intermediary termination, this must be discussed with the member prior to the termination. The former does not apply in a situation where this, in all fairness, can not be asked from the confidant. Furthermore, it is a confidant's duty to take care of redirecting the member to another confidant or counselor.

## Complaint handling

The confidants are subject to the Code of Ethics. The board is obliged to assess the functioning of a confidant when a complaint is submitted thereon by a member. The confidant in question is obliged to respond to the appeal of the Board and to hand over the requested inquiries regarding the complaint handling to the board. The confidant must make it a primary effort to resolve a complaint with the member in person. The confidants must always inform a member of the possibility to file a formal complaint with the board. The board must make it a primary effort to resolve the complaint and to adopt a stabilising role as mediator between the confidant and the member. The board maintains the right to terminate the appointment of the confidant when a serious violation of the Ethical Code is observed. A member must write to the Board in order to start a formal complaint procedure. In this email, the member is required to include the following:

- The member's name
- The name of the confidant in question
- The nature of the complaint
- A statement of consent that the dossier can be read
- If the above-mentioned statement cannot be read by single or multiple board members due to serious reasons, a restriction can be imposed on which board members can assess the dossier

The Board has the duty to have individual conversations with the member and the confidant as long and as frequently as the situation requires. When hearing both parties, the Board maintains the right to suspend the confidant indefinitely. The complaint handling will be

completed within a reasonable period, after which the board proceeds to the above-mentioned measures if a serious violation of the Ethical Code is observed.

### Changing the Confidant's Code of Ethics

The board, and the confidants in consultation with the board preserve the right to change the Ethical Code if there is a decent reason for this. The confidants will be informed in writing when the Ethical Code has changed. It is the board's duty to promptly notify the confidants of the changes in the Ethical Code. It is a confidant's duty to always be aware of the content of the Ethical Code.

### Contact

Contacting a confidant can be done at all times. However, it is not expected from a confidant to be available 24/7. A confidant aims to respond within one office day, and outside working days a confidant will respond as soon as possible. When a confidant is out of office for a longer period of time (e.g. due to vacation or personal circumstances), members will always be notified through an automatic reply and redirected to another Storm confidant or other contact options within the association or University. Members can reach a confidant via email or mobile phone (i.e. WhatsApp, text message, or calling). The contact information of the current confidants can be found on the Storm website under 'The Association'. After contacting a confidant, a member can make an online or physical appointment. When meeting in person, a suitable location will be chosen based on mutual consultation.

1. General social and ethical norms and values (comment toevoegen)
2. De Nederlandse 'sociale kaart' is a website for citizens and professionals, providing information regarding formal and informal organisations and activities surrounding living, care and wellbeing, work and income, and children and youth.  
<https://www.socialekaartnederland.nl>
3. Reasonableness and fairness is not a concrete standard but will be filled in depending on the circumstances. The factors can be found in:  
[https://www.russell.nl/Uploaded\\_files/Zelf/Publicaties/good-governance-reasonableness-and-fairness-of-directors-and-supervisors.6588a8.pdf](https://www.russell.nl/Uploaded_files/Zelf/Publicaties/good-governance-reasonableness-and-fairness-of-directors-and-supervisors.6588a8.pdf)