

B. Code 3.0: Guiding Principles from the Code

Proposal to inform Consultation question 2

Guiding Principles from the Code explain how anyone working with data can put TQV into practice in a wide range of settings, simply illustrated in sets of dos and don'ts. These guiding principles provide a way for anyone working with data and statistics to reassure users about why they, as an organisation, can be trusted, and how they produce robust information that is useful and in line with stakeholders' needs.

Main Audience: For anyone working with data and statistics

Guiding Principles from the Code

For anyone working with data and statistics

Following the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR)'s guiding principles from the Code is a way for anyone, in any setting, to show they can be trusted to produce and use robust statistics that are useful and in line with users' needs.

The guiding principles are grounded in the core concepts of the Code of Practice for Statistics – Trustworthiness, Quality and Value (TQV). The Code sets the standards of practice to deliver statistics that are not just numbers but reliable tools for understanding the world.

Trustworthiness is when users can have confidence in the people and organisations that produce statistics and data

To show you are trustworthy:

Dos	Don'ts
Integrity Work and communicate in ethical, honest, objective and professional ways to provide the public with impartial data and statistics	Don't cherry-pick data and statistics or take them out of context
Transparency Be open about how and when data and statistics are released	Don't restrict the publication of statistics just because it makes for uncomfortable reading
Safe data management Follow all legal and ethical obligations, being respectful of those providing their information	Don't share data without appropriate safeguards

Quality is when users can have confidence that the data and methods produce assured statistics

To show the statistics are of appropriate quality:

Dos	Don'ts
Suitable data Clearly present key information about data sources, highlighting why data are suitable and any important issues	Don't just trust that data are OK to use – find out about the provenance of the source
Sound methods Apply sound methods, explain statistical choices, highlighting key limitations, and be open to innovation to meet emerging needs	Don't hide or ignore quality issues
Quality communication Describe the quality of statistics, including details about uncertainty in estimates, and monitor for changes in quality	Don't assume quality remains static

Value is when users can have confidence that published statistics support society's needs for information

To show the statistics are valuable:

Dos	Don'ts
Relevancy Answer important questions, understand the needs of users and listen and act on their feedback	Don't assume you know your users' needs
Accessibility Ensure equality of access when publishing, meet accessibility standards and keep information available	Don't limit access to information with a public interest
Clear data presentation Ensure data are easy to work with, understandable and meet users' needs	Don't present too much information, confusing colours or 3D charts

Committing to uphold the Guiding Principles

The Royal Statistical Society has suggested that any statistics that benefit society by offering insight on the questions that people want answered, whether they come from official or non-official sources, can be thought of as [public statistics](#) – they are valuable to the public. Producers of public statistics are encouraged to be part of the [voluntary application scheme](#) run by OSR, applying TQV.

Analysts participating in the scheme are among a community of practitioners who want to ensure confidence in how they produce and use data and statistics, supporting the application of the Code standards and providing challenge to show how well the standards are met.

Application of the guiding principles can be enhanced by considering:

Standards for Official Statistics

The **Standards for Official Statistics** build on the guiding principles by setting out the specific statistical practices expected of official statistics producers. Official statistics become **accredited official statistics** when they have been verified by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) to meet these standards.

Other producers beyond official statistics can also consider the standards and see how they can enhance their preparation and release of statistics into the public domain.

Standards for Intelligent Transparency

OSR's **Standards for Intelligent Transparency**, also grounded in the guiding principles, set out how public bodies can support public confidence in the use of data, statistics and analysis, by ensuring that they are communicated in a way that means they can be easily accessed, scrutinised and used appropriately.

Accountability guidance

Producers of statistics should see themselves as accountable to their users and can apply OSR's **accountability framework** to provide reassurance about how they demonstrate Trustworthiness, Quality and Value.

Further information about the core concepts of Trustworthiness, Quality and Value is given in **Understanding the Code and how it supports the public good**.