

CODE OF ETHICS FOR GRAPHOLOGISTS IN THE UNITED STATES

Preamble*

Graphology is the study of writing as it relates to personality. A graphologist is a person trained in the field of handwriting analysis/graphology over a period of at least two years of intensive study. Graphologists work to develop a valid and reliable body of scientifically acceptable knowledge based on research. They may apply that knowledge to human behavior as it is manifested via handwriting. In doing so, they perform many roles, such as researcher, educator, diagnostician, supervisor, consultant, and expert witness. Their goal is to broaden knowledge of behavior and, where appropriate, to apply it pragmatically, to improve the condition of both the individual and society.

Graphologists respect the central importance of freedom of inquiry and expression in research, teaching, and publication. They also strive to help the public in developing informed judgments and choices concerning human behavior. This Code of Ethics provides a common set of values upon which graphologists build their professional and scientific work.

This Code is intended to provide both the general principles and the decision rules to cover most situations encountered by graphologists. It has as its primary goal the welfare and protection of the individuals and groups with whom graphologists work. It is the individual responsibility of each graphologist to aspire to the highest standards of conduct. Graphologists respect and protect human and civil rights, and do not knowingly participate in or condone unfair discriminatory practice.

The development of a dynamic, meaningful code of ethics for a graphologist's work-related conduct requires a personal commitment to a lifelong effort to act ethically; to encourage ethical behavior by students, supervisees, employees, and colleagues, as appropriate; and to consult with others, as needed, concerning ethics of the profession. Each graphologist supplements, but does not violate, the Code's value and rules on the basis of guidance drawn from personal values, culture, and experience.

Recognizing the different titles the profession of handwriting analysis has had in the United States, for the purposes of this Code, the title GRAPHOLOGIST is used. "Graphologist" shall include therefore, the other known titles, such as analyst, handwriting analyst, handwriting examiner, handwriting professional and graphoanalyst. The choice of graphologist as the name of the professional in no way reflects negatively on the other titles; however, since the profession is known around the world by its generic name, "graphology," we have decided to use this name only.

Code of Ethics

1. The object of this Code of Ethics is to define the rights and responsibilities of graphologists wishing to exercise their profession in accordance with acceptable professional standards and the respective laws of the state in which the graphologist practices.

2. The graphologist is expected to maintain and develop his or her specialized skills by obtaining appropriate professional training. This may be accomplished through such venues as academic seminars, technical training, workshops, or the like. The graphologist is to follow developments in the profession and be aware of the literature relevant to the practice of graphology.

3. The graphologist studies the personality of the writer by examining an original sample of writing. When examining a facsimile or a photocopy of the original sample, the graphologist should have accompanying information regarding the pressure. It is further recommended that when giving a report on a fax or a photocopied sample, a disclaimer be included to indicate that the opinion rendered is qualified until such time as an original is made available.

4. The graphologist shall practice only within his or her area of competence or expertise. Consistent with the laws in the state where the graphologist practices, no diagnosis regarding physical or mental health problems will be given unless the graphologist is a psychologist or a physician.

5. The work undertaken by the graphologist concerning the human person imposes the respect of moral

and professional values. The graphologist must safeguard at all times their own independence, integrity and sense of humanity. The practice of graphology must be free of racial, gender, religious or political biases.

6. The graphologist, as with other professionals, shall not use the information obtained from the handwriting to harm the writer, even if the writer is not the client, but a third party. Furthermore, in conveying their findings, the graphologist should specify that the information contained therein is confidential and should be used for professional purposes only. Graphologists who perform third-party analyses shall request of the client to inform the writer that their handwriting sample is subject to examination by a professional graphologist.

7. The graphologist shall adhere to the highest levels of confidentiality and shall not disclose any information regarding the client without a written release of information signed by the subject/client, or by their legal guardian. In accordance with the laws of confidentiality, the report produced by the graphologist shall be provided only to the client supplying the sample. A disclaimer in the report is desirable, stating that, should the legal owner of the report choose to disseminate said written reports further, it would be at the sole discretion and responsibility of the owner of such reports.

8. The graphologist shall not disseminate or publish texts or analyses without the written agreement of the interested party or the owner of the document. However, handwriting samples may be used as long as the graphologist respects the anonymity and protects the identity of the writers.

9. Being the sole judge of the worth of the documents submitted to him/her, the graphologist shall reserve the right to refuse to provide an analysis without having to give any reason for doing so. The graphologist shall refuse to express an opinion on a document they know or suspect to be stolen, obtained in violation of any state or federal law, or under other questionable circumstances.

10. Each association, or grouping of graphologists, having signed this Code of Ethics, shall undertake to ensure that it is respected and applied by all their qualified members. Each respective association of graphologists signatory to this Code shall establish and maintain a Board of Ethics. The responsibilities of such Board shall be to investigate the complaints made to the Board regarding questionable behavior of the graphologist; meet with the graphologist in question and render a decision on whether or not any rules of the Code of Ethics have been violated. Such a decision shall be made public by listing the name of the graphologist in the publication of said association, to the local association of attorneys, and to the National Board of Ethics of Graphology.

In cases of “flagrant misconduct,” the certifying body of the offending graphologist should consider suspension or revocation of certification and membership. Flagrant cases would include, but are not limited to breach of confidentiality, misrepresentation, fraudulent claims of education, and overstatement of credentials.

Should the state where the offending graphologist practices adopt certification or licensing laws of graphologists, the Board of Ethics, upon finding the Code has been violated, shall relate such findings to the Regulatory authorities of the state.

Signature

Date

If you wish to participate in this Code of Ethics, please sign and return the original document to:
Fax: 805-658-1013. Keep a copy for your records
www.sheilalowe.com

* The preamble was adapted from the code of ethics of the American Psychological Association