



CODE OF ETHICS AND COMMUNICATION POLICY FOR ESRA-DRA DIPLOMA CANDIDATES

EUROPEAN SOCIETY OF REGIONAL ANAESTHESIA
& PAIN THERAPY

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POLICY STATEMENT

The European Society of Regional Anaesthesia and Pain Therapy (ESRA), aims to stimulate research, promote education and training for anaesthesiologists in scientific subjects and advancements relevant to Regional Anaesthesia, Pain Therapy, POCUS, and Peri-operative care, in Europe and globally.

ESRA organizes two different examinations:

- The ESRA European Diploma of Regional Anaesthesia (ESRA-DRA)
- The ESRA European Diploma of Pain Medicine (ESRA-DPM)

Both diplomas were established to set and harmonize high standards in these fields.

The European Society of Regional Anaesthesia and Pain Therapy (ESRA) is committed to ensuring the highest standards of integrity, impartiality, fairness, and professionalism in its examination process.

ESRA is committed to maintaining the integrity and transparency whilst protecting the confidentiality of its examination processes. This policy provides guidelines for candidates taking the ESRA European Diploma of Regional Anaesthesia (ESRA-DRA) on appropriate conduct regarding information exchange, interaction on social media and other communication channels before, during, and after their examinations.

It outlines the communication and ethical standards that examinees must adhere to, before, during and after their exams to maintain credibility and respect of ESRA Society and the applied procedures.

SCOPE

This policy outlines the communication and ethical standards that examinees must adhere to during and after their exams.

This policy applies to all candidates participating in the ESRA European Diploma of Regional Anaesthesia (ESRA-DRA) online and onsite exams, whether conducted in Europe or abroad.

It covers behavior on social media platforms, forums, messaging apps, and any other communication channels, regardless of the examination outcome.

DEFINITIONS

Candidate: A medical professional taking part in the ESRA-DRA examinations.

Confidential Information: Any information related to the examination content, including questions, answers, scenarios, and results.

Examiner: An authorized individual participating, observing and evaluating the examination process.

Inappropriate Conduct: Any behaviour that compromises the integrity, confidentiality, or fairness of the examination process.

Social Media: Online platforms where users create and share content or participate in social networking (e.g., Facebook, Twitter-X, Instagram, LinkedIn ... etc).

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POLICY- CODE OF CONDUCT

– General Principles

Integrity and Honesty: Candidates must act with honesty and integrity throughout the examination process. Any form of cheating, plagiarism, or misrepresentation is strictly prohibited.

Confidentiality: Candidates must maintain the confidentiality of the exam content and process. Disclosure of any part of the exam material or specific questions in any shape or form to others is not permitted.

Respect and Professionalism: All interactions with examiners, staff, and fellow candidates should be conducted with the utmost respect and professionalism.

– Communication Before the Examination

Confidentiality Agreement: Candidates by participating in the examination, acknowledge and agree to abide by the confidentiality policy, which strictly prohibits the sharing of any part of examination-related information.

Social Media Use: Candidates must refrain from discussing examination details or preparation strategies that might lead to the sharing of sensitive information.

– Communication During the Examination

Authorized Communication: Communication with examiners and staff should be limited to procedural or logistical questions. Any attempt to discuss exam content or seek assistance during the exam is strictly forbidden.

Electronic Devices: The use of electronic devices, including (but not limited to) mobile phones, tablets, smartwatches, iPods and/ or headphones (both wired and wireless), is strictly prohibited during the examination unless explicitly allowed by the examiners for specific purposes.

Collaboration: Collaboration with other candidates during the exam is not allowed unless the exam format specifically includes group activities or discussions.

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– Communication After the Examination

Non-Disclosure: Candidates must not disclose their detailed exam results or discuss specific exam questions and answers with others. This includes refraining from sharing information on social media platforms, forums, blogs, or any other public or private communication channels. They can only share the information that they pass/failed the exam / part of the exam and/or share the achievement of becoming an ESRA-DRA Diplomate.

Feedback and Complaints: While constructive feedback is welcomed, public criticism, particularly on social media platforms, that undermines the integrity of the examination process is considered unprofessional conduct and may result in disciplinary measures as outlined in Disciplinary Actions.

Professional Conduct in Case of Failure: Candidates who fail their exams are expected to handle the outcome with professionalism and dignity. They should refrain from making any remarks about the examiners, the organization, or the examination process, particularly on social media or other public forums.

– Use of Social Media

Confidentiality on Social Media: Candidates must not share any **confidential** information about the examination process, content, or results on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, or any other online networks.

Professional Behavior: Any posts or comments made on social media related to the examination process should reflect professionalism and respect. Defamatory, misleading, or unprofessional remarks about the organization, examiners, or fellow examinees are strictly prohibited.

In particular all examinees, staff, members or other people engaging with ESRA and its functions, should adhere to the below principles

- act always with honesty and integrity, treating all people fairly and without discrimination, bullying or harassment,
- treat all people in a way that does not take advantage of their vulnerability or cause them upset or distress,
- it is not allowed to impersonate someone else or to promote any form of illegal conduct/ practice,
- use all forms of spoken, written and digital communication (including social media and networking sites) responsibly
- recognize that if they act in any way that is unprofessional or unlawful through the use of social media including (but not limited to), bullying, intimidating or exploiting people' or by 'inciting hatred or discrimination' that they may face legal and/or professional misconduct sanctions
- will avoid posting personal identifiable data including digital images without the individual's or written consent of ESRA
- accept that they are solely responsible for the content of all information that they contribute, link to, or upload.

Engagement Guidelines: Engage in discussions about the examination process in a constructive

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and respectful manner. If clarification or information is needed, use the official channels provided by the organization instead of social media.

– Enforcement and Consequences

Monitoring: The organization reserves the right to monitor and review the communication of candidates during and after the examination, including social media activity, to ensure compliance with this policy.

Disciplinary Actions: Violations of this Code of Ethics and Communication Policy will result in disciplinary actions:

1. Disqualification from the exam for 3-5 years depending on the degree of violation of the Code of Ethics
2. Reporting to Medical Director of the hospital the candidate(s) work in
3. Reporting to the relevant Medical Board(s)
4. Repeated violation will lead to future ban from taking the ESRA-DRA exam and reporting to the ESRA Executive Board for discussion about expelling/ excluding from ESRA membership (requirement to participate in the examination).

Appeals: Examinees have the right to appeal against any disciplinary actions through the established ESRA appeal procedures (of the organization.).

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The ESRA-DRA Chair

- Oversees the enforcement of this policy.
- Addresses any violations of the policy and takes appropriate action.

The ESRA-DRA Vice Chairs

- Monitor candidate communications for compliance with ethical standards.
- Investigate breaches of ethics and recommend appropriate actions.
- Provide training and support on ethical communication practices.

The ESRA-DRA Board Members

- Support the development and dissemination of this policy.
- Monitor compliance and report any issues to the ESRA-DRA Chair.

The ESRA-DRA Examiners

- Provide guidance and clarification on acceptable conduct.
- Enforce this policy.
- Handle feedback, complaints, and appeals related to the communication policies.

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- Report any violations to the ESRA-DRA Board.
- Advise possible disciplinary actions to the ESRA-DRA Chair and Vice Chairs if necessary/appropriate.

The ESRA-DRA Candidates

- Ensure that they are aware of and understand this policy before the examination
- Adhere to the communication and ethical standards outlined in this policy.
- Report any observed breaches of this policy to the ESRA-DRA Office.

DISTRIBUTION LIST

All ESRA members (global circular email)

Available online for all diploma candidates

FILE KEEPING

Records are retained for at least 5 years.

This document shall enter into force, be revised and distributed in accordance with the applicable procedures for controlled documents of ESRA.

This document:

- ✓ Is the property of ESRA. Any unauthorized disclosure, reproduction or use of this content, either in whole or in part, is prohibited. Additionally, examination materials are not permitted to be used in any shape or form for any work unrelated to official ESRA activities.
- ✓ Is an internally controlled document, distributed according to the distribution list and acknowledged under the responsibility of the recipient.
- ✓ Shall be subject to a review procedure at least once every three years since the last adoption or amendment.

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