

Integrity of the Education System, Professionalism and Disciplinary Action

Like other professions, the actuarial profession demands integrity and ethical behavior. Adherence to the education system rules and regulations and terms and conditions is central to maintaining the integrity of the system and to preserving the value of the credentials.

The education system of the SOA is a very significant component of a candidate's career. Therefore, equitable administration of the examinations and enforcement of the highest standards of conduct cannot be emphasized too strongly. The SOA has a responsibility to maintain these standards in support of the profession and for the vast majority of candidates whose conduct is of the highest caliber. Candidates must attest to [Exam Rules and Regulations](#) when registering for an exam and to the e-Learning [Terms and Conditions](#) when registering for e-Learning and submitting assessments. The rules, regulations, terms and conditions were designed to:

- Make sure that the process provides each candidate with a fair opportunity to demonstrate mastery of the syllabus material.
- Ensure that one candidate doesn't gain an unfair advantage over another.
- Ensure that the individuals who complete the requirements for an SOA designation are, in fact, worthy of that distinction.

Effective December 1, candidates must also agree to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for Candidates](#) when registering for any education system component. The code binds candidates to an actuarial code for ethical behavior within professional relationships.

Cheating and other actions that negatively affect the integrity of education system are not tolerated. The SOA actively checks for violations using various mechanisms including, but not limited to, exam supervisor reports, the use of anti-plagiarism software to review e-Learning submissions against model solutions and other candidate submissions, and the rules infraction report process.

Although the vast majority of candidates respects the system and are professionals, disciplinary action has been taken since the implementation of the Education Redesign beginning in 2005. The SOA has issued disqualifications and bans ranging from one year to life-time. Note that disciplinary actions can be taken even if a candidate has already obtained the ASA, FSA and/or CERA credentials. Infractions for examinations and e-Learning have included:

Exams: writing before and after time, lack of signature, unauthorized calculators, copying and removing questions and answers from the exam room, extremely disruptive behavior, accessing PDAs in restrooms (173 of over 98,000 candidates have been disciplined since 2005).

e-Learning: plagiarizing model solutions or other candidates' work and submitting documents unrelated to end-of-module exercises (24 of over 8,000 candidates in the system have been disciplined since 2006).

Information regarding the number of discipline cases will be provided on a quarterly basis. Inquiries may be directed to education@soa.org.