

IGGAB C001

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Investigative Genetic Genealogy – Code of Professional Ethics

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Foreword

The Investigative Genetic Genealogy Accreditation Board (“IGGAB” or the “Board”) is an independent, non-profit organization formed to develop standards of practice and requirements for accreditation in the field of Investigative Genetic Genealogy (IGG). The Board is comprised of experts in the field of IGG. The responsibilities of the Board are to:

- a) Develop and promote standards for competency and ethical practice in the field of IGG.
- b) Administer an exam that tests IGG applicant’s knowledge and practice of IGG Core Competencies, best practices, and ethical standards, as promoted by the Board.
- c) Accredite applicants who pass the exam and agree to abide by the standards set by the Board.
- d) Provide an oversight mechanism for Accredited Investigative Genetic Genealogists (“AIGGs”) to ensure continuing competency and ethical practice.
- e) Maintain a registry of AIGGs.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are available from the Board.

This document was prepared by current and former members of the Investigative Genetic Genealogy Accreditation Board as follows:

Board Member	Organization
Bonnie Bossert	Consulting for Financial Services
David Gurney	Ramapo College
Andrew Hochreiter	Highrider Consulting
Michele Kennedy	Solved by DNA
Margaret Press	DNA Doe Project
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Carol Rolnick	Rolnick Research

Input on this document was additionally provided by members of the IGGAB Advisory Board (the “Advisory Board”). All input was considered but not necessarily adopted by the Board. At the time of this document’s publication, the Advisory Board comprised the following members (see www.iggab.org website for current Advisory Board members and their affiliations):

Advisory Board Member	Organization
Blaine Bettinger	PhD, JD, The Genetic Genealogist
Cairenn Binder	Director, Ramapo College Investigative Genetic Genealogy Certificate Program
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Danny Hellwig	Director, Intermountain Forensics
Eric Hendershott	Detective, Twinsburg Ohio Police Department
Trish Hurtubise	Founder, Indigenetics Advisory Society
John Kellner	District Attorney, Colorado 18th Judicial District
Kevin Lord	CEO, Saber Investigations
CeCe Moore	Co-founder, Institute for Genetic Genealogy
Nancy Rissi	Coroner, Riverside County Sheriff Coroner's Office

AIGGs are bound by this document. Although individuals from anywhere in the world may take the accreditation exam and receive accreditation, they are each responsible for complying with the laws of any of the jurisdictions in which they practice or reside.

1. Scope

The *Investigative Genetic Genealogy Code of Professional Ethics* is intended to clarify and guide the ethical conduct of AIGGs and, more broadly, to affirm their ethical responsibilities. AIGGs are expected to be aware of the ethical implications of their professional activities, as reflected in this Code, and to act consistent with its guidelines.

This Code does not supersede relevant laws and regulations. AIGGs are expected to adhere to all laws and regulations that govern their professional activities when acting in the capacity of an AIGG. For AIGGs employed by the Investigating Agency, references to the Investigation Agency in this document refer to the AIGG's employer.

2. Normative References

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For date references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

Investigative Genetic Genealogy Professional Standards and Accreditation Requirements, IGGAB.

Investigative Genetic Genealogy Best Practices, IGGAB.

Investigative Genetic Genealogy Exam Preparation Guide, IGGAB.

Investigative Genetic Genealogy Accreditation Board Standard Operating Procedures, IGGAB.

3. Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions in *Investigative Genetic Genealogy Professional Standards and Accreditation Requirements* apply and are capitalized when used.

4. Confidentiality, Data Security, and Informed Consent

An AIGG conducts professional activities consistent with principles of data privacy and respect for individual autonomy as described in this Section.

4.1. General

- a) An AIGG acknowledges that individuals who take DNA tests have a right to make choices about how their genetic data will be used.
- b) An AIGG endeavors to protect the privacy of individuals whose DNA data is being evaluated.
- c) An AIGG endeavors to safeguard the Genetic Data Files they have access to, including any data obtained directly or indirectly from them, consistent with the choices made by individuals about how their data are used.
- d) An AIGG acknowledges that the Genetic Data File may reveal medical and other visible and non-visible information about an individual and does not acquire or disclose such information unless it is deemed necessary for generating a Lead.
- e) An AIGG stores and transmits Genetic Data Files using robust data security measures to minimize the possibility of unauthorized access or use.
- f) An AIGG maintains strict confidentiality regarding the identities and Genetic Data Files of individuals involved in investigations, sharing information only with authorized parties and within the boundaries of the law.
- g) An AIGG protects confidential case information as mandated by the Investigating Agency or any other legal entity.
- h) An AIGG defers to the Investigating Agency before sharing case information in any form with the DNA Relatives, Reference Test Takers or any other individual encountered in an IGG case, including the public, and will redact any identifying information.
- i) An AIGG acknowledges that all DNA files in any form associated with the Subject in an IGG case legally belong to the Investigating Agency that has custody of the remains or DNA.
- j) An AIGG does not delete, destroy, or remove Genetic Data Files without the prior approval of the Investigating Agency.
- k) An AIGG will provide Genetic Data Files in any of its forms to the Investigating Agency to whom those items belong.
- l) An AIGG develops or follows clear policies for the retention, backup, anonymization, and disposal of Genetic Data Files in compliance with relevant laws and regulations.
- m) An AIGG communicates research progress on a case to the Investigative Agency in a confidential manner.

4.2. Reference Test Takers

- a) An AIGG takes reasonable measures to safeguard information regarding the Reference Test Takers and DNA Relatives to protect their confidentiality and privacy.
- b) An AIGG explains the possibility of discovering unanticipated relatives, unknown medical conditions, unexpected biogeographic ancestry backgrounds, and misinformation about such situations and their potential consequences.

- c) An AIGG recognizes the potential impact of genealogical revelations and exercises discretion in communication with DNA Relatives and other individuals involved.
- d) An AIGG obtains Informed Consent from Reference Test Takers as defined in the *Investigative Genetic Genealogy Professional Standards and Accreditation Requirements* document.
- e) An AIGG explains the options for openness and privacy, how the Investigating Agency accesses the data, and why complete anonymity and privacy can never be guaranteed.

The provisions contained herein do not apply to Reference Test Takers whose DNA the Investigating Agency obtains surreptitiously.

5. Transparency and Accountability

An AIGG follows the standards of transparency and accountability as described in this Section.

5.1. Transparency

- a) An AIGG promptly identifies themselves and their role when communicating with DNA Relatives and Reference Test Takers.
- b) An AIGG is transparent about the methods and techniques used in Investigative Genetic Genealogy if that information will not compromise the investigation.
- c) An AIGG does not profess a higher skill level or knowledge base outside the scope of their role as an AIGG, as defined in the Standard paragraph 3.10 *Investigative Genetic Genealogy (IGG)*.
- d) An AIGG does not inflate the extent of their knowledge about specific techniques and skills within IGG.

5.2. Accountability

- a) An AIGG addresses any errors or misinterpretations promptly and responsibly.
- b) An AIGG responds to IGGAB inquiries into conduct, ethics, and practices, within the timelines specified by IGGAB.

6. Professionalism, Compliance and Continuing Education

An AIGG follows the standards of professionalism and continuing education as described in this Section.

6.1. Professionalism

- a) An AIGG performs Investigative Genetic Genealogy with integrity and objectivity, disclosing any conflicts of interest that could compromise the accuracy or ethical nature of the work.
- b) An AIGG does not actively solicit Investigating Agencies for cases the AIGG knows are being worked by other IGGs.

- c) An AIGG does not engage in conduct that is likely to discredit the profession or jeopardize the public's trust and confidence in the field of Investigative Genetic Genealogy.
- d) An AIGG is courteous and civil in professional dealings with Investigating Agencies, forensic professionals, DNA Relatives, Reference Test Takers, and other individuals.
- e) An AIGG is honest and candid when dealing with Investigating Agencies and the Board.
- f) An AIGG collaborates as necessary with the Investigating Agency and other professionals, such as forensic scientists, law enforcement, and legal experts, to ensure Investigative Genetic Genealogy is conducted in an efficient and ethical manner.

6.2 Types of Cases

- a) An AIGG only works on cases where the Investigating Agency confirms that the goal is to identify a Subject by providing a Lead.

6.3. Compliance with Terms of Service

- a) An AIGG only uploads or works with Genetic Data Files that have been added to Accessible Genetic Genealogy Databases.
- b) An AIGG remains current on and adheres to the terms of service of Accessible Genetic Genealogy Databases unless adherence to those terms restricts the ability of users to share their own data.
- c) An AIGG abides by an individual's self-declared privacy settings in the Accessible Genetic Genealogy Databases.
- d) An AIGG reports issues with the privacy functionality of genetic genealogy tools (including those described in 6.3(c)) to the responsible entity using applicable reporting mechanisms.

6.4. Continuing Education

- a) An AIGG remains current on technical advances in Investigative Genetic Genealogy to promote professional competence.
- b) An AIGG remains current on legal and policy developments relevant to IGG to promote legal and regulatory compliance.