

Rules of ACFA (2023)

1) Association Name

- a) The Association shall be known as the Association of Christian Financial Advisers also ACFA. In these rules ACFA may be referred to as the Association.
- b) The main correspondence address will be the address of the Administrator.

2) Background

- a) The Association of Christian Independent Financial Advisers (ACIFA) was formed in June 1988 when a handful of Christians in the profession decided to draw together for fellowship, support and encouragement following the introduction of regulations under the Financial Services Act 1986. b) Following depolarisation in June 2005, it was agreed to change the name and emphasis of the association to more widely reflect the makeup of the financial advice community. This decision was ratified by the current members at the AGM on 24th November 2005.

3) Aims and Objectives of ACFA

- a) To provide a network and forum for Christians in Finance, sharing experiences and knowledge, encouragement, and prayer
- b) To be a point of referral for anyone seeking a Christian financial adviser or a Christian who works within the financial advice sector.
- c) To uphold the standards of the Gospel and promote a high level of professionalism.
- d) To encourage spiritual growth of our members.
- e) To combat isolation within the profession and provide mutual support.
- f) To be a resource for biblical financial teaching to both members, and the public through members.
- g) To co-ordinate initiatives by members or their associates to promote advice within the Christian community.
- h) To encourage the nurturing of new Christian workers within the financial advice sector to develop their careers and to encourage and train these workers regarding biblical principles relating to money advice.

4) Statement of Faith

a) All members must read the Statement of Faith and tri-annually renew their membership through the signing of a declaration stating they have read, understood, and agree to the Statement of Faith.

5) Membership

a) All members must in some way be connected with the providing of financial advice or be employed within the financial services sector

b) There are 2 categories of membership:

- i) Member (Voting) – subscription reviewed from time to time
- ii) Associate member – subscription reviewed from time to time

c) The distinction is drawn between those who are offering advice or services directly to members of the public (Voting Member) and those who are either in a support role or not involved in client contact (Associate Member).

6) Sponsors

a) Sponsors will be companies or organisations who wish to advertise with a weblink on the website or contribute to an ACFA event such as the conference. These organisations must have the same Christian ethos as the association.

7) Membership Requirements

a) Anyone wishing to become a member of the Association must fulfil the following criteria:

- i) Have read and agreed with the Statement of Faith shown in Appendix I, with their annual membership renewal.
- ii) Subscribe to the Rules of Association
- iii) Subscribe to the Code of Conduct included as part of these rules
- iv) Provide references from their church or fellowship
- v) Pay the relevant membership fee

b) Members will be deemed to have resigned their membership if they do not comply with the renewal requirements. A period of grace of 2 months will be given from the date of expiry.

8) Membership Fees

a) All Members will be required to pay an annual membership fee, as prescribed by the Executive Chairman and published from time to time.

b) The association does not operate a specific membership year and so anyone joining the association will join for a period of 1 year, paying annually as required.

9) Compliance

- a) All members shall adhere to the Code of Conduct. If there is any reason to question a member's conduct or professional behaviour, this matter will be dealt with in accordance with the guidelines laid out in: Members - Discipline.
- b) Non-compliance with the requirements of membership will result in forfeiture of membership.

10) Complaints

- a) Members will be expected to fully support the activity of the Association. If any member feels concerned about any of the activities of the Association, they should raise this with the Chairman in writing. If they are still unhappy, they may exercise their right to call an extraordinary special meeting or to resign from the Association. (see: Executive Chairman – Accountability)

11) Resignation

- a) Any member wishing to resign from the Association should do so in writing.
- b) Members will automatically be deemed to have resigned from the association if they do not renew their membership or pay their membership subscription or if they remove themselves from regular fellowship with other believers.

12) Code of Conduct

- a) As Christian financial advisers, money advice workers and workers within the financial services sector we all are ambassadors for Christ. Our ethics and work standards help to formulate our client's and peer's opinion of 'Christians'. This is a responsibility that we take seriously and therefore endeavour to excel in every area of our professional life.
- b) Our professional relationships should always be permeated with our Christian ethics and these ethics should not be compromised in any way to material advantage.
- c) We will not force our Christian beliefs upon our clients or peers but rather be led by the spirit in good deeds and words where appropriate.
- d) We will respect our client's right to their own religious beliefs
- e) We will ensure that the financial well-being of our clients is not prejudiced by conflicts of interest or by failure to disclose facts or affiliations relevant either now or as they arise in the future.
- f) We will act with the highest integrity in our professional lives and ensure fair dealing as we seek to provide the best solution for each of our clients.
- g) We will, where appropriate, endeavour to maintain sufficient levels of financial and spiritual resources to meet our business and spiritual commitments.

h) We will seek, at all times, to be emulating Christ and therefore act with fairness and professionalism towards our employees, employers, and associates.

i) When given permission, we will liaise on behalf of our clients with other agencies who are committed to meeting the needs of those clients.

j) We will treat with respect and recognise the authority of the relevant regulatory authorities.

k) We will endeavour to observe the letter and the spirit of the relevant professional regulations, keeping ourselves well informed of new developments and avail ourselves of training, as and when it becomes necessary. We act honourably towards regulatory agencies and bodies, ensuring they are fully informed of relevant details at the appropriate time.

13) Use of Logo

a) The ACFA logo, which will be updated and changed from time to time, is for the use of ACFA in a corporate and spiritual setting. Permission will be granted for the inclusion of the ACFA logo in any member's web site or publicity or marketing material subject to the Terms and Conditions in Appendix II.

b) Many members choose to provide a link to ACFA to help Christians be directed to a more geographical Christian adviser, but this will be done by text hyperlink rather than the inclusion of the logo.

14) Discipline

a) Should a member fail to behave in a way deemed inappropriate i.e., by failing to adhere to the Code of Conduct, or for some other clearly explained reason, the Association shall consider the following actions:

i) A written clear warning to the member concerned

ii) Suspension of membership until such time as the matter has been resolved

iii) Expulsion of the member, due to an unwillingness or inability to resolve the matter

iv) Should the member wish to be re-admitted at a later date, an interview will be arranged between the member and a group of members selected by the Executive Chairman. The decision of this group will determine the outcome for the member concerned.

15) Conducting Association Business

a) The Association shall where possible hold a general meeting in each year, which will incorporate the Annual General Meeting, in addition to any other meetings in that year.

b) The Annual General Meeting shall be organised by the Executive Chairman.

c) The Executive Chairman is given the responsibility to run ACFA on a day-to-day basis and make decisions on behalf of the association.

d) The Executive Chairman will report to the membership at least annually probably at the annual Conference but if not, in writing.

e) Decisions that need to be taken by the association can be made at the annual Conference by a show of hands or at any other time. Where decisions are required, a minimum of a quarter of the membership must register a vote or abstention. A vote will be carried if at least 2/3rds of the voting members are in favour.

f) Electronic voting using online media will at times be used to improve efficiencies, where a vote from amongst the membership is deemed necessary. The same rules for majority votes are applicable to online voting as to voting at meetings.

g) Notes of all association meetings will be retained by the Executive Chairman and the Administrator.

16) Executive Chairman Powers and Duties

a) The Executive Chairman is a member elected from among the voting members and will serve for as long as they want to and as long as they have the full confidence of a majority of the members. However, every two years the membership will be asked if there is someone willing to stand as Executive Chairman. If no member comes forward, the Executive Chairman may stand again for a further two years. If an alternative member comes forward whilst the Executive Chairman is still willing to stand, a vote will take place amongst the members to determine the outcome.

b) The Executive Chairman shall have authority as granted by the members to make decisions pertaining to the function of the Association, including but not exclusively:

i) That the Association operates in accordance with any and all legal requirements appropriate to its function

ii) That the Association adheres to its own Rules

iii) That any members who do not adhere to the Association Rules are dealt with according to the rules.

iv) That the Chairman keeps a full account of all meetings, votes, and resolutions

v) That the Association continues to be financially secure and operates as efficiently and effectively as possible

vi) That the Association continues to support its members and respond appropriately to their needs

vii) All financial issues including fundraising

viii) The setting of annual fees and the authority to canvas the members for extraordinary financial support, should the need arise

ix) The Advertising and promotion of the Association

x) Correspondence between the Association and any other bodies, organisations, or individuals

xi) The calling and arrangement of meetings, both Committee level and wider level

xii) The admittance of new and care of existing members

xiii) The Executive Chairman has the power to delegate duties where it is prudent to do so but retains overall responsibility for such delegated duties.

17) Treasurer and Accounts

- a) The Treasurer is a member elected from among the voting members and will serve for as long as they want to and as long as they have the full confidence of a majority of the members. However, every two years the membership will be asked if there is someone willing to stand as Treasurer. If no member comes forward, the Treasurer may stand again for a further two years. If an alternative member comes forward whilst the Treasurer is still willing to stand, a vote will take place amongst the members to determine the outcome.
- b) A member should examine the accounts annually and provide a written statement of satisfaction. Any concerns over accounting procedure should be addressed to the Executive Chairman.

18) Accountability

- a) The Executive Chairman shall be accountable to the members of the Association for his/her actions and decisions.
- b) The Executive Chairman shall as necessary, gather a group of members to act as a Council of Reference. The Council of Reference can provide advice and assistance and guidance to the Executive Chairman as necessary.
- c) The Council of Reference will hold the Executive Chairman accountable for his/her decisions and actions on behalf of the membership.
- d) If any member has any grievance with the Executive Chairman or his/her actions, any member of the Association may challenge the Executive Chairman at any time.
- e) If sufficiently grievous, the concern should be made in writing to the Executive Chairman who should respond in a timely fashion in a manner which befits the issue. The Executive Chairman may refer such matters to the Council of Reference which will act as Arbiter if necessary.
- f) If the member with concern is sufficiently unhappy with the process of resolution, they may propose a vote of 'no confidence' in the Executive Chairman voided process which will be dealt with by the Council of Reference and subject to the normal voting process if voting is required.
- g) Once the vote has been made, and the Chair declares the result, that shall be noted in the minutes of the meeting and will remain the final result.

19) Ratification of Rules

- a) These rules were updated and amended at the AGM on 24th November 2005. They were adopted by a vote from members present.
- b) These rules were amended and adopted by the membership via an online survey completed in March 2014.

c) These rules were amended and adopted by the membership with an in person vote at the 2023 annual conference on October 10th.

APPENDIX I – STATEMENT OF FAITH

1. There is one God in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
2. God is sovereign in creation, revelation, redemption, and final judgement and is the ultimate owner of all things.
3. The Bible, as originally given, is the inspired and infallible Word of God. It is the supreme authority in all matters of belief and behaviour.
4. Since Adam and Eve disobeyed God, the whole of humankind has been sinful and guilty, so that everyone is subject to God's judgement and condemnation.
5. The Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son, is fully God; he was born of a virgin; his humanity is real and sinless; he died on the cross, was buried, was raised bodily from death, and is now reigning over heaven and earth.
6. We are all sinful human beings and can only be rescued from the guilt, penalty, and power of sin through the sacrificial death once and for all time of our representative and substitute, Jesus Christ, the only mediator between us and God.
7. Those who trust in Christ are pardoned of all their sins and accepted in God's sight only because of the righteousness of Christ credited to them; this justification is God's act of undeserved mercy, received solely by trust in him and not by our own efforts.
8. The Holy Spirit alone enables us to turn to God from our sin and to trust in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit lives in us when we have trusted in Christ's saving work. He makes us increasingly Christ-like in character and behaviour and gives us power for our witness in the world.
9. The one holy universal church is the Body of Christ, to which all true believers belong.
10. The Lord Jesus Christ will return in person, to judge everyone. Each of us will stand either pardoned and belonging to Christ, or under God's condemnation.

APPENDIX II – ACFA LOGO TERMS OF USE

The Logo may be used only by current active Association of Christian Financial Advisers [ACFA] members in good standing, if such use is made pursuant to the terms and conditions of this limited and revocable license. Any failure by a user to comply with the terms and conditions contained herein may result in the immediate revocation of this license, in addition to any other sanctions imposed by ACFA.

The ACFA Logo Must Not Be Physically Altered

The Logo may not be revised or altered in any way and must be displayed in the same form as produced by ACFA though it can be resized according to needs.

Be Honest and Professional When Using the ACFA Logo

While ACFA undertakes a number of checks to ensure that members agree with the Statement of Faith and ACFA Principles, The Logo should not be used in any way to imply accreditation or approval by the Association. The Logo may be used in a professional manner on the user's Web site, business cards, stationery, literature, advertisements, storefront window, or in any other comparable manner to signify the user's membership of ACFA. The Logo may not be used in any manner that discredits ACFA or tarnishes its reputation and goodwill; is false or misleading; violates the rights of others, any law, regulation, or other public policy; or mischaracterizes the relationship between ACFA and the user, including but not limited to any use of the Logo that might be interpreted as an endorsement, approval, sponsorship, or certification by ACFA of the user, the user's business or organization, or the user's products or services.

Where the logo is displayed on a company web site and not all the advisers working for the company are members of the Association, the logo should not be displayed or used to imply that all the advisers who work for the company are members, (for example in these circumstances the logo should not be displayed on the home page) but should only be displayed next to the advisers who are members. Where all the advisers in a company are members, the Logo can be displayed on the company home page.

ACFA Logo is ACFA Property

Use of the Logo shall create no rights for users in or to the Logo or their use beyond the terms and conditions of this limited and revocable license. ACFA reserves the right to request samples of use of the Logo in order to determine compliance with these terms and conditions. Without further notice, ACFA reserves the right to prohibit use of the Logo if it determines that a user's Logo usage, whether wilful or negligent, is not in strict accordance with the terms and conditions of this license, otherwise could discredit ACFA or tarnish its reputation and goodwill, or the user is not a full ACFA member in good standing. The ACFA may revoke this license for any reason it sees fit upon written notification to you.

Limitation of Liability:

Use of the ACFA Logo does not endorse or approve any of the financial advisers or any advice that members may provide. Any decision to transact business with or take up the services of a member should be made on the basis of an individual's own enquiries.

In no event shall ACFA be liable for any loss of any kind, including without limitation any direct, indirect, consequential, special, incidental, or punitive damages, or for any lost profits, savings, data, or use, however caused and on any theory of liability (including negligence or strict liability), arising out of this agreement. Both parties acknowledge and agree that the lack of a requirement of any monetary payment hereunder is based in part upon these limitations, and further agree that these limitations shall apply notwithstanding any failure of essential purpose of any limited remedy. Without limiting the foregoing, ACFA shall have no responsibility for any monetary damages under any contract, tort or other legal or equitable theory, regardless of the form of the action. Such limit shall apply whether or not ACFA has been advised of the possibility of such damages.