

Code of Conduct & Integrity Agreement for Individuals Qualified for GSTC Auditor Training Requirements

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1. Introduction

This document outlines the responsibilities and commitments of individuals who have successfully completed the GSTC Sustainable Tourism Auditor Training Course and satisfied the requirements, including passing the written exam and mock-audit performance tests. The purpose of this agreement is to ensure that auditors adhere to the highest standards of professional conduct and integrity while performing audits related to the GSTC Certification program.

It is important to note that this qualification is granted to individuals, not organizations, and must not be used to represent your organization or any destination. While this qualification signifies your individual achievement, it does not confer employment or direct engagement with GSTC, and misuse of the qualification could result in disciplinary actions.

2. When Sharing Your Achievement

Qualified individuals are encouraged to share their accomplishments, but must do so with careful consideration of the following guidelines:

- **DO:**

- share your success on personal platforms like blogs or social media, celebrating your individual achievement. You can describe your learning experience and include a photo of your certificate, but always remember that the certificate represents your personal qualification, not a certification for a business or destination. It also does not serve as a credential for a specific profession unless explicitly stated on the certificate.
- Clarify Scope: When discussing your certification, always specify the scope of your qualification, as defined on the certificate. For example, if your certificate is for GSTC Criteria for Industry (Hotels), you are not qualified to audit tour operators or destinations.
- **DO NOT:**
 - Claim to be a GSTC Auditor working for GSTC. GSTC does not perform certifications directly or employ auditors for such purposes.
 - Present yourself as a GSTC Trainer without going through the formal selection process required for that role.
 - Claim to be a GSTC Destination Assessor, as this role is separate from certification audits and involves its own distinct authorization.
- **Social Media Etiquette:** When posting on social media about your certificate or the course, ensure that your posts reflect the accurate scope of your qualification and avoid any misleading statements. If you have any doubts about appropriate expressions or representations, we recommend contacting auditor.training@gstc.org for clarification.
- **GSTC Logo Usage:** Other than the Certificate of Achievement, the GSTC Logo shall not be used without prior permission from the GSTC. Qualified individuals are prohibited from using any GSTC Logo and Symbols for promotional purposes in any format that can be shared or distributed.

3. Code of Conduct

Qualified individuals agree to adhere to the following principles:

- **Professionalism and Integrity:** Qualified individuals must perform audits impartially and with high competence, ensuring alignment with the requirements for the auditor outlined in the GSTC Accreditation Manual. They are required to conduct themselves with honesty, transparency, and ethical behavior in all audit activities, with no

tolerance for unethical behavior. All decisions must be based on fair and objective assessments, free from personal biases.

- **Objectivity:** Maintaining neutrality and avoiding conflicts of interest is essential. Qualified individuals must base all decisions solely on evidence without any external influence.
- **Confidentiality:** All audit-related information must be kept confidential, except when disclosure is required by law or authorized by GSTC.
- **Transparency:** Qualified individuals must conduct their work with complete transparency, providing clear and honest reports. Any situation that may compromise their independence must be reported immediately.
- **Prohibition on Misuse:** Qualified individuals must not misrepresent their qualifications or the nature of their qualification. False claims or misrepresentations will result in sanctions.
- **Continuous Learning:** Qualified individuals are required to participate in additional training and education on a regular basis, as needed, to ensure their skills and knowledge remain up to date with GSTC standards and industry best practices.
- **Independence from Consulting:** When conducting certification audits for a GSTC-Accredited Certification Body, qualified individuals must never offer consulting services, whether paid or unpaid, to the entity they are currently engaging as an auditor. Violation of this principle will result in an investigation and may lead to sanctions against both the auditor and the certification body involved.

4. Responsibility, Compliance, and Possible Sanctions

Qualified individuals are expected to comply with all GSTC Accreditation Manual and related documents when conducting GSTC Certification. Additionally, for any activities related to GSTC outside of certification audits, qualified individuals must adhere to the provisions outlined in this document as well as all applicable GSTC policies and procedures. In cases of violation, GSTC reserves the right to conduct an investigation. Depending on the severity of the issue, possible sanctions that GSTC may impose include:

- Temporary suspension of the qualification for a defined period,
- Permanent revocation of the qualification,

- Limiting or denying opportunities to retake training courses,
- Exclusion from future GSTC auditing activities,
- Investigation into both the auditor and the certification body for violations, particularly related to the independence of consulting,
- Other sanctions deemed appropriate by GSTC.

5. Commitment to GSTC's Reputation

Receiving this qualification does not create an employment relationship with GSTC. Although auditors may perform tasks related to GSTC certification, they are expected to uphold GSTC's reputation in all professional activities. Any action that could harm GSTC's credibility, whether intentional or negligent, will result in appropriate sanctions outlined above.

As individuals representing the values and standards of GSTC, auditors are required to conduct themselves with professionalism and integrity. Any behavior that damages GSTC's reputation will be subject to disciplinary action. While auditors are not GSTC employees, their actions in the field must always reflect positively on the organization.

6. Compliance with GSTC Code of Conduct

Auditors conducting audits under the GSTC Standards shall comply at all times with the GSTC Code of Conduct and Integrity Agreement for Individuals Qualified in GSTC Auditor Training, as amended from time to time. By conducting such audits, the auditors acknowledge their obligation to adhere to the principles of professionalism, integrity, objectivity, confidentiality, independence, and ethical conduct set out therein.

Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct may result in the suspension or revocation of the auditor's GSTC qualification and authorization to conduct audits under the GSTC Standards.