

Anti-Harassment Policy for the International Society for Applied Ethology (ISAE)

Preface

The ISAE Code of Conduct states that “Members must abide by the Society’s Ethical Guidelines, Anti-Harassment Policy and other policies (as outlined in the Constitution and Procedural Guidelines), as well as legal requirements. Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct may result in termination of membership of the ISAE and the forfeiture of any membership fees previously paid.” Further, the Procedural Guidelines contain the following statement: “The Society recognises the importance of supporting and promoting diversity in its membership and the wider community, in gender, age, ethnicity, geographical representation and other factors. This should be applied in nomination and selection of officers, representatives, lecturers and recipients of funds, awards and honours” (Procedural Guidelines, page 7). Consistent with the ISAE Code of Conduct and Procedural Guidelines, the ISAE Council has agreed the following Anti-Harassment Policy.

Statement of Policy

It is the policy of the ISAE that all participants in Society activities will enjoy an environment free from all forms of discrimination, harassment and retaliation. As a professional society, the ISAE is committed to providing an atmosphere that encourages the free expression and exchange of scientific ideas. In pursuit of this, the ISAE is dedicated to the philosophy of equality of opportunity and treatment for all members, regardless of gender, gender identity or expression, race, colour, national or ethnic origin, religion or religious belief, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disabilities, veteran status, or any other reason not related to scientific merit. Harassment, sexual or otherwise, is a form of misconduct that undermines the integrity of the Society. Violators of this policy will be subject to sanctions.

Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment refers to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Behaviour and language that are welcome/acceptable to one person may be unwelcome/offensive to another. Consequently, individuals must use discretion to ensure that their words and actions communicate respect for others. This is especially important for those in positions of authority, as individuals with lower rank or status may be reluctant to express their objections or discomfort regarding unwelcome behaviour. Sexual harassment does not refer to occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature. It refers to behaviour that is not welcome, is personally offensive, debilitates morale, and therefore, interferes with personal effectiveness. The following are examples of behaviour that, when unwelcome, may constitute sexual harassment: sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions; verbal comments or physical actions of a sexual nature; sexually degrading words used to describe an individual; display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; sexually explicit jokes.

Definition of Other Harassment

Harassment on the basis of sexual or any other protected characteristic is also prohibited. This conduct includes, but is not limited to the following: epithets, slurs, or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts; denigrating jokes and display or circulation of written, graphic or digital material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group.

Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all people involved in Society activities, including (but not limited to) scientists, students, guests, staff, contractors and exhibitors participating in scientific business, as well as sessions, tours and social events of any ISAE meeting or other ISAE activity.

Reporting an Incident

Any individual covered by this policy who believes that he or she has been subjected to harassment should contact the ISAE President or another Society Officer, as appropriate. He or she will be asked for written evidence (as outlined below), but is not required or expected to discuss the concern with the alleged offender (although this may be an option to be discussed). All complaints will be treated seriously and be investigated promptly. Confidentiality will be honoured to the extent possible.

The advice in the case of perceived harassment is to compile a record of the incident (times, places, nature of the incident and comments made). This can be a written (including emails, notes etc.) or photographic record. It is advisable to tell a trusted person about the incident as soon as possible. A complaints procedure will likely include a signed statement of complaint, documenting the nature of the harassment and/or discrimination, containing as many details as possible. Supporting documentation and statements from witnesses should be submitted with this statement, if these are available.

The Investigation

1. The Council will name two impartial investigators, usually Society Officers or Council members. Any potential investigator who believes they have a conflict of interest should not serve as an investigator. If necessary, an investigator will be appointed from outside the Society.
2. In most cases, the complainant will be interviewed first and the written complaint reviewed. If the complainant has not already filed a formal complaint, he or she should be asked to do so.
3. The details of the complaint can be explained to the alleged offender by the investigators. This step will be discussed with the complainant, although the investigators may decide to take this action in the interest of the investigation, even if a complainant objects.
4. The alleged offender should be given a reasonable chance to respond to the evidence of the complainant and to bring his or her own evidence.
5. If the evidence is in dispute, further investigatory steps may include interviewing those named as witnesses (if these are available).
6. If, for any reason, the investigators are in doubt about whether or how to continue, they will seek appropriate counsel from within or outside the Society, as appropriate. This is especially relevant if a complaint is made about an ISAE member in a leadership position.
7. When the investigation is complete, the investigators should report the findings to the President of the Society or another Society Officer, as appropriate.
8. Cases of harassment will be reported to the Scottish Charity Regulator OSCR, following their procedure for reporting notifiable events (<https://www.oscr.org.uk/managing-a-charity/notifiable-events>).

Retaliation is Prohibited

The ISAE will not tolerate any form of retaliation against persons who file a complaint or assist in the investigation. Retaliation is a serious violation of this policy and, like harassment or discrimination itself, will be subject to sanctions.

Sanctions

Individuals engaging in behaviour prohibited by this policy, as well as those making allegations of harassment in bad faith will be subject to sanctions. Such actions range from a verbal warning to ejection from the meeting or activity in question, without refund of registration fees, and the reporting of their behaviour to their employer or to other authorities as appropriate. Repeat offenders or offenders of serious cases may be subject to further sanctions, such as being banned from participating in future ISAE meetings or other activities. Termination of membership is also possible based on the Code of Conduct.

Appeal and Questions

In the event that an individual is dissatisfied with the results of the investigation, he or she may appeal to the President of the ISAE or another Society Officer. Any questions regarding this policy should be directed to the President of the ISAE or to another Society Officer.

March 2020

