

# HBES Code of Conduct

In order to ensure a collegial and respectful conference environment, this Code of Conduct was adopted as a Resolution to the Bylaws of the Human Behavior and Evolution Society (HBES). In accordance with the Society's mission, HBES will not tolerate behavior that discourages the free expression and exchange of scientific ideas. This includes any form of harassment, as well as unequal treatment of any person based on their age, gender, race, gender identity or sexual orientation, or for any other reason unrelated to scientific merit. Violators will be warned and may be subject to further disciplinary actions, as described below.

## Scope

The HBES Code of Conduct covers behavior while at HBES conferences or hbes-sponsored or HBES-funded events. In rare instances, the executive council may respond to egregious violations at other venues with a warning, where these violations have been properly adjudicated, in order to prevent future problems at HBES events.

HBES officers represent the society and have added responsibilities. If an officer fails to carry these out, or commits serious ethical violations, the executive council may, by a 2/3 vote, ask the officer to step down. Examples of such violations would include criminal behavior, violation of research ethics, and sexual harassment.

## Policy summary

Attendees at HBES events must agree to the following as a condition of registration:

- Treat all participants, HBES staff, and vendors with courtesy and consideration.
- Be respectful and collaborative, critiquing ideas rather than individuals.
- Abuse, intimidation, discrimination, and sexual harassment are unacceptable. Sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or sexually directed remarks constitute sexual harassment when such conduct (1) persists despite rejection, (2) is grossly inappropriate, or (3) is made to a subordinate who might reasonably fear that their position would be jeopardized if those advances were rejected. Additional information about harassment is provided in the [Full Code of Conduct - link to this document].
- Be mindful of your surroundings and of your fellow participants, and alert a member of the HBES grievance committee if you need assistance or notice a dangerous situation or someone in distress. The names and contact information of the grievance committee are on the meeting and main HBES websites. The grievance committee may offer advice and may attempt to mediate disputes, and will report formal complaints to the Executive Council. The Council may, at its discretion, issue warnings, ask violators to leave the HBES meeting, or, for serious or repeated violations, revoke membership in the society. The investigative procedure is described in the [Full Code of Conduct - link to this document]
- Respect the rules and policies of the meeting venue, hotels, and any HBES-contracted facility.

## **What is harassment?**

Sexual harassment refers to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other unwelcome sexual conduct. Sexual harassment does not refer to occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature. The following are examples of behavior that may, when unwelcome, 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, sexually-degrading jokes, or unnecessary touching. Those who have positions of authority or higher rank should be aware that subordinates may be reluctant to express objections or discomfort regarding unwelcome behavior or language. Disparaging remarks and behaviors that refer to individual or group characteristics are also unacceptable to the Society. These include stereotyping, slurs, intentionally derogatory jokes or statements, and any hostile or intimidating acts.

## **Grievance committee**

The Executive Council will appoint a grievance committee to serve as a resource and first line of response for people concerned about inappropriate behavior. The committee will include both council and non-council members, and ideally some diversity of life experience and discipline. The names and contact information of the full committee will be posted on the HBES website, and conference organizers will post the names and contact information of committee members who will be at the conference, together with information about how they can be identified on site (e.g., by a notification on the nametag). Grievance committee members may offer advice and may attempt to mediate disputes. They will also assist if a person wishes to make a formal complaint. Grievance committee members can act without consulting other members of the committee.

## **Seeking assistance and reporting an incident**

If an individual at an HBES event believes they have experienced or witnessed harassment, discrimination, or bullying, they should contact a member of the grievance committee, either in person at the conference or by email. If they prefer, they may ask someone else to contact the grievance committee on their behalf, but their identity must be shared with the committee so that the complaint can be investigated. Both the complainant and the accused may bring someone with them for support at any point during the proceedings. The complainant and accused will not be required to meet to discuss the incident. Confidentiality and discretion throughout the process is expected from all parties involved.

HBES members may seek assistance from the grievance committee without making a formal complaint, and if the complainant wishes, grievance committee members may attempt to resolve the dispute through informal mediation. Such a step would not involve either a record of the encounter, or sanctions by HBES. If the person wishes to make a formal complaint, it must be done in writing and will be investigated according to the procedure below. The accused will be given the option to respond to any formal complaint.

## **Formal investigation**

If someone wishes to make a formal complaint, they must give a written description of the incident to the grievance committee member or directly to a society officer. The HBES president, in consultation with the grievance committee, will designate two or three individuals to serve as an ad-hoc investigation committee (“investigators”), and will promptly notify the accused of the complaint. The investigators will usually be HBES officers or council members, and will have no conflicts of interest with either complainant or accused.

The investigators will invite the accused to respond to the complaint and may, at their discretion, interview other witnesses. If the accused wishes to prepare a written response, it will be kept on file with the initial complaint. The investigators will then prepare a draft report and give it to the HBES president for distribution to the executive council, together with the written complaint and written response. The council may contact additional witnesses and amend the report if they wish. The final report will then be given to the complainant and the accused, and kept on file by the HBES Secretary-Archivist.

Although formal complaints will always trigger an investigation, the Executive Council may conduct an investigation without a formal complaint. Such investigations will also conclude with the preparation of a report to the Council, and possible disciplinary action.

## **Disciplinary action**

All disciplinary actions will be decided by the Executive Council. Except in situations requiring police intervention, sanctions will usually be imposed only after violators have first been given a written warning and failed to respond to it. Such sanctions may include any of the following: Violators may be asked to leave the meeting or function, denied permission to attend future HBES events, or, for repeated or very serious offenses, have their membership in the society revoked. The duration of the sanction may vary, at the council’s discretion. The Society will not tolerate any form of retaliation against a complainant, against a person accused, or against those who participated in an investigation. Retaliation will be considered a violation of the Code of Conduct, and treated accordingly. The decision of the council will be final and not subject to appeal.

If you have questions concerning these policies and procedures, please contact the grievance committee members or the HBES officers. Their contact information is available on the HBES website.