

Meeting Conduct Policy of the Society for Text and Discourse

The Society for Text and Discourse (“Society”) is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and productive environment for “Society Meetings” that fosters open dialogue in the areas of focus for such Meetings, promotes full participation and belonging for all participants, and is free of harassment and discrimination. The Society expects panels, exhibits and speakers to reflect the diverse, inclusive community that the Society’s mission seeks to advance. This is the responsibility of Society Meeting organizers and session leaders. “Society Meetings” mean: annual and other Society-sponsored or -organized meetings, conferences, workshops and other events and gatherings, wherever located. This Meeting Conduct Policy applies to all “Participants” in Society Meetings, meaning organizers, attendees, speakers, exhibitors, award recipients, staff, contractors, volunteers and guests.

The Policy’s overarching objective is advancing productive outcomes, with safety, full participation and belonging for all Participants. This Policy pertains only to Society meetings. Other ethical or conduct issues fall under the Society’s general ethics policy, which is the Code of Ethics of the American Educational Research Association (adopted July 15, 2020).

A. Conduct Requirements

1. Requirements for ethical, professional and inclusive conduct:

Participants’ conduct at Society Meetings must meet these requirements to satisfy the Meetings’ purpose of advancing excellence by enabling equitable and full engagement and contributions by all Participants, rejecting discrimination and exclusion, and gaining the benefit of a full range of perspectives:

DO...

Demonstrate respect and consideration for all people;
Listen well to others. Make room for a diversity of voices in group discussions, on panels, and the like;
Be collaborative. Be mindful not to exert dominance over others. Consider the effect of relationship, position, experience, privilege, power differentials, and other factors to avoid dominance;
Demonstrate that differing perspectives are valued—critique ideas (not people);

DO NOT...

Engage in biased, demeaning, intimidating, coercive, or harassing/hostile conduct or commentary, whether seriously or in jest (e.g., based on power differential, gender [sex, identity, expression], sexual orientation, race, ethnicity or national origin, religion, marital status, veteran status, age, body size or other physical appearance, disability, or other identities);
Engage in personal attacks; verbal, physical, or sexual;

Demonstrate welcome for a diversity of individuals and their identities— pay attention to whether individuals of many identities are included on panels, leading sessions, being called on when they raise their hands, and having their points considered;

Report conduct concerns to a Meeting official so that concerns can be addressed responsibly and in a timely manner.

Respect confidentiality of the identities of any individuals involved in a conduct concern while it is being reviewed and addressed;

Answer questions about conduct concerns in a forthright and complete manner;

If any leader or facilitator of an activity/session, any official of the venue, or any Society official directs a Participant to stop a behavior or comment, immediately comply. Directions are made to implement this Policy or the venue's policies. After Participants comply, they may raise any questions or concerns to a Meeting Official or Safe Meeting Ally;

Retaliate against or disadvantage anyone for reporting a conduct concern or assisting in its resolution;

Engage in threats of any kind;

Bring weapons to any meeting venue:

Unless the law of the Meeting locale requires otherwise, firearms, knives and other weapons are not allowed at Society Meetings;

Invade the personal privacy of individuals. Do not view, photograph, audio- or visual- record, or distribute photographs or recordings of, individuals (in any medium), at times or in places where people can reasonably expect privacy (e.g., bathrooms, breastfeeding rooms, etc.);

Additional Conduct Requirements:

Note About Differences of Opinion and Offense. To achieve the purposes of a Society Meeting in the limited time provided, with the intended benefit of contributions made by all Participants, discussions should be focused on the Meeting topic at hand and all Participants must be able and welcome to equitably and effectively participate. It is not a violation of the Society Meetings' Conduct Policy to express an opinion, raise research or describe an experience ("articulation") that is at odds with the opinions of or is offensive to others—if the articulation is part of an on-point discussion of the Society Meeting topic at hand and is offered in a manner that does not interfere with others' reasonable ability and welcome to participate fully. That means expressing differing positions on a topic at a Meeting with respect and consideration for all. That means making the articulation in a manner that is demonstrably mindful of minimizing, as reasonably possible, its potential adverse effect on others' ability to

participate. It also means not making an articulation that is reasonably expected to cause offense gratuitously (unrelated to the Society Meeting topic at hand or unnecessary for the work on that topic). It means not directing the articulation as a personal attack or put-down of an individual, and not dominating the discussion with one articulation. It further means demonstrating consideration for anyone who appears to be in distress by promptly stopping the cause and demonstrating caring, while pursuing a way to still share pertinent information with assistance from the session facilitator or another Society official.

Personal space: Be aware of and do not enter others' personal space, without **explicit** invitation/consent. However, the warmth of friendship shared between individuals with an understanding of mutuality and consent (e.g., a hug hello between old friends) is appropriate, so long as those involved have every reasonable belief that it is reciprocal.

Seeking explicit consent can be as simple as saying, "It's **so** good to see you; is a hug okay? — Fine if it's not," and then waiting for the other person to hug you or to say "yes" with happy affect and without hesitancy (no uncomfortable pause, frown, down-turned eyes, fidgeting). When in doubt, assume the absence of consent. Getting beyond awkwardness when explicit consent is requested but the response is doubtful or even is a "no" can be as easy as saying, "It really **is** good to see you—I'm a hugger and have to keep myself in check—thanks for helping me do that!" and then going on to other topics.

Be aware that a significant power differential between individuals is a good reason for the more powerful individual to be particularly respectful of the need to avoid coercion and assumed consent.

Explicit consent is appropriate when individuals are first meeting or when colleagues are not also friends (i.e., more than just professional colleagues).

Photos / recordings / social media: A reasonable expectation of privacy should be considered when making recordings or taking pictures, and in decisions about what to share on social media. Do not record or photograph people in settings in which privacy can be expected. Do not photograph items that are not related to the mission of the conference such as personal items of conference attendees without permission. When photographing or recording people, consider whether there is a reasonable expectation of being photographed or recorded. For example, a photo of a keynote speaker at a lectern giving an address is reasonable (and consented to upon registration), but a photo of a person by themselves in a hallway is not. If there is a question about consent, then seek permission from the subject.

2. When the Policy applies:

This Policy applies to all Participants at a Society Meeting. It also applies to activities and at locales that are associated with a Society Meeting. "Associated with" means, e.g.:

- in transit to and from a Society Meeting,
- at the Society Meeting site, and

- in activities at other sites, whether or not the activities or sites are part of an official Society or Society Meeting activity, in the general time frame of a Society Meeting, if any Participant is affected.

3. Registration requirements:

Participants are required to complete a registration form to attend a Society Meeting. Registration constitutes consent to audio and visual recording (and use and alteration of the recording) by the Society (or those it authorizes) at a Society Meeting for non-commercial purposes aligned with the Society's mission. Participants need to indicate they have read and agree to the policy.

4. What to do if you have a conduct concern within the reach of this Society Meetings Conduct Policy:

- **Call Emergency Response Number (e.g, 911, 999, 112) if an immediate and serious public safety concern exists or is threatened.**
- **Act if there is a conduct concern.** The following is a list of meeting officials/committees and their duties at the conference. Any official can be contacted by a person in distress. The selection, training, and authority of these positions are described in the Appendix to this Conduct Policy.
 - **“Safe Meeting Allies”:** Volunteers trained to intervene, when it is safe for them to do so, to help try to prevent conduct concerns from arising and stop conduct concerns at their inception from escalating. They call for help when it is not safe for them to intervene. Safe Meeting Allies are not authorized to investigate or resolve a conduct concern. Safe Meeting Allies do not substitute for Participants' own efforts to stay safe at Society Meetings, but they volunteer to help support Participants' efforts. Safe Meeting Allies also can provide information about how to seek further action to address a conduct concern if one does arise. They can help to connect an individual most directly involved to a member of the Representation, Advocacy, and Outreach Committee, who is authorized to take initial steps in response to a conduct concern. Safe meeting allies can be identified by a badge they wear throughout the duration of the meeting. Safe Meeting Allies are not current members of the Society Governing Board.
 - **“Representation, Advocacy, and Outreach Committee”:** This is a standing committee made up of current members of the Governing Board. The Committee plays the role of fact finding when an incident is reported. The chair of the Committee will be introduced at the opening ceremony of the annual meeting and will be identified as a person to contact with any questions or concerns.
 - **“Ethics Review Committee”:** The current members of the Society's Governing Board (not including the Representation, Advocacy, and Outreach Committee members) make up the Ethics Review Committee. The Ethics Review Committee reviews evidence gathered by the Representation, Advocacy, and Outreach Committee

pertaining to a case and makes a decision. A minimum of three Ethics Review Committee members must be present in order to decide an action related to an incident.

- **Confidential action.** If an individual most directly involved asks the Representation, Advocacy, and Outreach Committee to maintain confidentiality of that person's identity, reasonable steps will be taken to do so. However, the Society may not maintain confidentiality if, in its judgment and discretion, safety or law requires otherwise.
 - **All Society Meeting Participants are required to respect confidentiality of the identities of any individuals involved in a conduct concern while it is being reviewed and addressed.** Failure to do so is a violation of this Meetings Conduct Policy.
 - An "individual most directly involved" means the Participant who raises a conduct concern, any witness, the identified Target, or the accused Participant.
 - If an accused Participant is determined to have violated this Meetings Conduct Policy, the Society may make that disclosure, at the Society's discretion.
 - Limited disclosure of the identity of individuals most directly involved may be needed for the Society to carry out various options to resolve a conduct concern.
 - Before raising a specific conduct concern, a Participant may ask a member of the Representation, Advocacy, and Outreach Committee up front about the options for resolution of certain types of conduct concerns and the disclosures that may be necessary to pursue them, if that is a worry.

B. Process and Consequences

1. Process to Address Conduct Concerns During a Society Meeting:

- **Conduct concerns should be reported to a member of the Representation, Advocacy, and Outreach Committee or via an online portal through the Society for Text and Discourse website: [url].** The Society intends to monitor reports made online regularly throughout a Society Meeting. However, it is important to connect with a member of the Representation, Advocacy, and Outreach Committee if you do not receive a prompt response to an on-line report to ensure a timely response.
- Reports can be filed anonymously. However, the person filing the report should note that anonymity may limit the extent to which the Society can investigate and/or respond to the concern.
- **Initial fact-finding.** When a conduct concern is raised to the Representation, Advocacy, and Outreach Committee or reported via the website, a Committee member will identify and speak to the individuals most directly involved (if possible, with information provided). The Committee member(s) will assess the situation in an area that may be on the site of, but is separate from, the main Society Meeting activities. The Committee member(s) will determine if the situation is one that can (and should) be diffused by discussion with the individuals most directly involved ("simple resolution"), or whether the facts present a possibility that a person

might need to leave the Society Meeting and/or be subject to other consequences, or that police involvement may be required at the time.

- **Representation, Advocacy, and Outreach Committee members are fact-finders** and do not decide whether violations have occurred or what consequences should be imposed, beyond simple resolutions.
- **A simple resolution is appropriate when it is apparent that:** misunderstandings occurred and are corrected or lessons have been learned by those in need of learning; there is an authentic commitment to avoid a repetition of the cause of the conduct concern; and (considering all of this and the nature of the conduct concern) a sense of safety and inclusion has been restored without the need for further action.
- **Additional fact-finding.** If further fact-finding during the Society Meeting is necessary to determine the facts and/or whether a simple resolution is appropriate, the Representation, Advocacy, and Outreach Committee will conduct further discussions with individuals who may have information.
- **Documenting fact-finding.** The Representation, Advocacy, and Outreach Committee will document the conduct concern; the date(s) and approximate time(s) when the conduct concern arose and was reported (and who reported it, with a notation of whether confidentiality has been requested); the relevant facts found (with sources and contact information); and any actions taken by the Representation, Advocacy, and Outreach Committee (including arriving at a simple resolution and why that is appropriate). Documentation may be in the form of notes, recognizing the time constraints of a Society Meeting.
- **Notice to the Ethics Review Committee for decision-making.** The Representation, Advocacy, and Outreach Committee will provide their documented fact-finding to the Ethics Review Committee, amplifying orally as needed due to Meeting time constraints. (Supplementary notes will be provided to reflect amplification as soon as it is feasible to do so.) This notice will include whether the Representation, Advocacy, and Outreach Committee believes there are consequential gaps in facts that they are unable to fill during the Meeting Period, and that may require fact-finding to extend beyond the Meeting Period.
 - **Decisions will be made as follows:**
 - **At least three members of the Ethics Review Committee must meet to decide an action.**
 - **During the Meeting Period, the Ethics Review Committee may or may not determine that it can decide whether a violation of this Meetings Conduct Policy occurred** (given the Society Meeting venue, the complexity and level of activity at the Meeting, and the staffing and available time).
 - **Except for providing facts found, the Representation, Advocacy, and Outreach Committee's fact-finding process will be separate from the Ethics Review Committee's decision-making process.**
 - **Notice of a decision.** If a decision is made during the Meeting Period, the Ethics Review Committee will notify the accused Participant and the identified Target of the decision. A determination of a violation must be based on fact-finding conducted by

the Representation, Advocacy, and Outreach Committee during the Meeting Period; but may only be made if the Representation, Advocacy, and Outreach Committee or Ethics Review Committee has given (at least) the accused Participant and the identified Target an opportunity to provide relevant facts. See Part B.3 below regarding appeals of a decision, which will be referenced in the notice.

- **The Ethics Review Committee will make a record of all conduct concerns reported during the Meeting Period of a Society Meeting and how they were handled (with copies of relevant documents).**
 - This record will enable follow-up if needed, and allow the Society to track the types and numbers of conduct concerns that arise and ways in which conduct concerns are handled. The Society will report-out the number of cases handled in a year at the annual Business Meeting.
 - The Ethics Review Committee may choose to complete their investigation after the Meeting Period, when more fact-finding and/or a determination of any further action/consequences may be needed to address the conduct concern. The Target and accused Participant will be informed if any further action is being taken by the Society.
2. Consequences that may be imposed by the Ethics Review Committee for violations of this Conduct Policy are as follows:

- **Restorative or other community-building action or remedy.** A restorative resolution is pursued if the Ethics Review Committee determines in its discretion that it is in the best interests of the Society's mission under the circumstances, and the individuals most directly involved consent. A restorative or community building resolution to a concern is preferred when feasible.
- **Requirement to leave the Society Meeting and notice to home institution.** The accused Participant may be compelled to leave a Society Meeting at the Participant's own cost. The Ethics Review Committee will make the determination, in that Committee's discretion, to serve the best interests of the Society's membership and mission as reflected in this Meetings Conduct Policy. The Committee also may notify the Participant's home (employing) institution of a violation of this Policy if, in the Committee's discretion, the nature of the violation causes concern about safety or disruption in other settings (beyond the Society Meeting). When giving any notice to Participant's home institution, the Society will copy the Participant.
 - In any notice to a Participant's home institution of an **allegation**, the following will be stated:
 - *"The Society for Text and Discourse received an allegation that [Participant's name] violated the Society's Meeting Conduct Policy and required [Participant's name] to leave the meeting to avoid disruption, but no determination (one way or the other) has been made about the allegation. In determining that a Participant must leave a Society Meeting or that the Participant's home institution should be notified*

based on an allegation, the Society is not making a judgment that the accused Participant violated this Policy. Any statement or action to the contrary is not authorized by the Society. In these circumstances, the Society prioritizes preventative safety and non-disruption measures in the interest of many Participants, over the interests of one or a few, if the two must be weighed. It is not always feasible during a Society Meeting (given the venue, level of activity, staffing and available time) to timely conduct and complete fact-finding or take other steps needed to reach a conclusion.

- The Society will be clear about these points (but will not state the accused Participant's name) in any communication that may become necessary about the matter.
 - **Other/additional consequences** for violation of this Conduct Policy, to be determined by the Ethics Review Committee after the Meeting Period, may include, without limitation, being banned or suspended from participation in Society Meetings in the future and/or loss or suspension of Society membership or membership privileges.
3. Appeal of a decision on whether a violation occurred, or regarding consequences imposed during a Meeting Period:

An appeal of a decision on whether a violation occurred, or regarding the consequences imposed, during the Meeting Period may be made by either the accused Participant or the identified Target. An appeal is available only due to newly surfaced, consequential facts that were not previously available when the decision was made; consequences grossly disproportionate (in leniency or stringency) to the violation found, considering how similar situations were handled, if any, under current Society policies (i.e., not under prior policies); lack of facts to support the decision; a conflict of interest by the decision-maker; a failure to fulfill process requirements with consequential effects on the appealing person's ability to address important considerations. In the case of an appeal, all parties involved will be notified in writing and have the opportunity to participate in the appeal process. As a result, only one appeal is available for each incident.

However, the only remedy for an accused Participant's successful appeal of a requirement to leave a Society Meeting and notice to the accused's employing institution is (a) a waiver of a future similar Meeting's registration fee (if the accused Participant paid a fee for the Meeting the accused was required to leave) and (b) providing a copy of the finding on appeal to the employing institution as an update. A copy will also be provided to the identified Target.