

## Organizational Principles for Addressing Harassment

We affirm the international principles that free and responsible practice of science is fundamental to scientific advancement and human and environmental wellbeing.<sup>1</sup> As a member of the scientific community and enterprise, we also affirm our organization’s responsibility and obligation to support and reinforce a scientific environment that demonstrates responsibility to carry out and communicate scientific work with integrity, respect, fairness, trustworthiness, and transparency at all organizational levels, and in all scientific endeavors—including our professional interactions and engagement with other scientists, trainees, and members of the public. We recognize the harm to our profession, our scientific credibility and to the wellbeing of individuals caused by not doing so.

We oppose discrimination in scientific learning and practice based on factors such as ethnic origin, race, religion, citizenship, language, political or other opinion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, age or economic class. Discrimination and harassment reduces the quality, integrity, and pace of the advancement of science by marginalizing individuals and communities. We affirm that harassment in any scientific setting is unacceptable. As such, our organizational leadership aspires to and supports the following statement of principles for addressing harassment and other forms of discrimination in the sciences. These recommended principles and practices apply across all sectors of our scientific community—academic, corporate, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and public and private research enterprises alike.

### Definition of Harassment:<sup>2</sup>

*“Harassment due to a person’s sexual identity, gender, race, or other protected class, consists of a single intense and severe act or of multiple persistent or pervasive acts which are unwanted, unwelcome, demeaning, abusive, offensive, and/or create a hostile professional or workplace environment. These acts may include epithets, slurs, or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts; denigrating jokes and display or circulation of written or graphic*

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<sup>1</sup> The International Council for Science (ICSU) Statute 5 is found at <http://www.icsu.org/freedom-responsibility/cfrs/statute-5>

<sup>2</sup> Modified from the American Sociological Association definition of harassment <http://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/savvy/images/asa/docs/pdf/CodeofEthics.pdf> and the EEOC definition of harassment <https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/harassment.cfm>.

**9 September 2016 NSF Sponsored Workshop: *Sexual Harassment in the Sciences: A Call to Respond*  
Common Principles Recommendation from Workshop Participants**

1 *material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or a group identity.*  
2 *Sexual harassment, in addition, may include any unwanted and/or unwelcome sexual solicitation,*  
3 *physical advance, or verbal or non-verbal conduct that is sexual in nature.”*

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5 **The Problem:**

- 6 • We recognize that harassment, bullying and discrimination, that exploit differences in  
7 gender identity and presentation, religion, race, ethnic origin, class, ability, citizenship  
8 and sexual orientation endanger the personal, professional, physical, and emotional  
9 well-being of individuals and their communities. Harassment contributes to the  
10 marginalization of individuals and groups, and the unwelcoming and often outright  
11 hostile climate experienced by many groups that feel especially vulnerable or isolated,  
12 and factors into their decisions to leave science and academia.
- 13 • We recognize that harassment is a problem in the scientific community and that a culture  
14 change is needed to create environments for employment and learning where all people  
15 are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of demographic status.
- 16 • We recognize that education is a step in promoting a cultural change where these  
17 behaviors are not only recognized as unacceptable but stopped and prevented.

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19 **Our Roles and Responsibilities**

- 20 • It is the responsibility of the leaders of professional societies, academic institutions,  
21 research funding agencies, corporations and organizations to educate themselves and  
22 their members on the policies and procedures of their societies and institutions. Where a  
23 policy is lacking or weak, work will be undertaken to address those weaknesses, while  
24 referencing policies available in other organizations.
- 25 • Science and education are social endeavors. Professional societies, academic  
26 departments, organizations that fund research, and government agencies should have a  
27 comprehensive code of conduct to guide ethical behavior in the conduct of research,  
28 which includes treatment of people as well as data.

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2 **Code of Conduct Best Practices**

- 3       • A professional code of conduct provides a structure for handling ethical violations  
4       regarding the practice of science and relations of and among society members.
- 5       • A rich and inclusive professional code of conduct should lay out principles of the  
6       profession, standards for ethical behavior, and procedures for enforcement, including a  
7       clear process for reporting and investigating, and agreements to resolutions of violations,  
8       disciplinary action, and appeals.
- 9       • A professional code of conduct should include clear guidelines for behavior at meetings  
10      and meeting-related events, on campus and at work-related functions, in field schools  
11      and field research stations or sites, and any and all places of training or employment.  
12      Harassment concerns should be clearly spelled out in professional codes of conduct.
- 13      • A professional code of conduct should be clearly accessible to the public, and to all  
14      members of the scientific organization, which includes both scientists and non-scientists.
- 15      • Professional codes of conduct apply to all members of an organization, regardless of the  
16      member's geographic location, or that member's public or scientific stature or status.
- 17      • A professional code of conduct should be revisited regularly to maintain its relevancy  
18      and be updated as needed. The organization should also regularly evaluate how well it  
19      is implementing the code of conduct and using it to address violations.