



An initiative to advance professional and ethical conduct, climate & culture

Example Sheet: “Society Meetings Conduct Policy Easy Reference Guide”¹

Note to Participants: This Easy Reference Guide highlights *some* key conduct requirements under the Society’s Meetings Conduct Policy. It also references *some* of the consequences for violations. The full Policy applies. Prior to a meeting, Participants are expected to read the full Policy at [Insert link to full Society Meetings Policy].² The Policy’s overarching objective is advancing productive outcomes, with safety, full participation and belonging for all Participants.

What to do if you have a conduct concern

- **Call 911 if an immediate and serious public safety concern exists or is threatened.**
- **Act if there is a conduct concern.** If you have a conduct concern or are in distress or danger from a conduct concern—or if you see anyone in such distress or danger—**act by:**
 - **Alerting a “Meeting Contact”:** [Insert name(s) of person(s) to contact, and specific instructions on how to contact those person(s) (e.g., identifiable badge and mobile phone for texts)—also, if a Meeting Contact is an ombudsperson, denote that fact prominently next to the name].
 - [Insert if available: **Alerting a Meeting Contact who is an ombudsperson** (see the contact list above). This Meeting Contact can explain confidential assistance available through an ombudsperson.]
 - [Insert if available: **Making a report on-line via** [Insert as applicable and include a link or instructions: portal, app, hotline, text]. The Society intends to monitor reports made on-line regularly throughout a Society Meeting; however, it is important to connect with a Meeting Contact if you do not receive a prompt response to an on-line report to ensure timely response.]
 - [Insert if applicable: **Making an anonymous report via this link:** [Insert link to an on-line hot line or specify other means]. However, anonymity may limit the extent to which the Society can investigate and/or respond to the concern.]
 - [Insert if available: **“Safe Meeting Allies,”** identified by [insert how Safe Meeting Allies are identified, e.g., badge, button, photograph] are volunteers trained to intervene, when it is safe for them to do so, to try to help 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 Meeting Contact, who is authorized to take initial steps in response to a conduct concern.]

¹ It is important for societies to review the full Model Meetings Conduct Policy for guidance on policy design, including considerations when choosing optional provisions. The full Policy includes additional policy provisions, e.g., the process for handling conduct concerns.

² “Society Meetings” mean: annual and other Society-sponsored or -organized meetings, conferences, workshops and other events and gatherings, wherever located [Insert if the policy applies to the use of Society property by 3rd parties: “and all meetings, events and gatherings in Society owned, leased or controlled property, regardless of the sponsor or organizer”]. “Participants” mean organizers, attendees, speakers, exhibitors, award recipients, staff, contractors, volunteers and guests.

Requirements for Ethical, Professional and Inclusive Conduct

Participants' conduct at Society Meetings must meet the following requirements to satisfy the Meetings' purpose of advancing excellence by enabling equitable and full engagement and contributions by all Participants. These requirements also apply to activities and at locales that are associated with a Society Meeting.³

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, and privilege power differentials, and other factors to avoid dominance;
- **Demonstrate that differing perspectives are valued**—critique ideas (not people);
- **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 timely. **Respect confidentiality of the identities of any individuals involved in a conduct concern, while it is being reviewed and addressed;**⁴
- **Answer questions about conduct concerns in a forthright and complete manner** (e.g., when registering or during a review of concerns);
- **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 [Insert identifier—e.g., badge color].

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, actual or perceived 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); this is the opposite of respect and welcoming conduct;
- **Engage in personal attacks;**
- **Retaliate against or disadvantage anyone for reporting a conduct concern or assisting in its resolution. Do not make bad faith accusations;**
- **Engage in violence, threats of violence, or threats of harm of any kind.** Do not create/contribute to a safety threat or unsafe situation; [Insert if applicable: *Unless the law of the Meeting locale requires otherwise, firearms, knives and other weapons are not allowed at Society Meetings;*]
- **Invalidate 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.);
- [Insert if applicable: **Take pictures or recordings (in any medium) of research posters or other research presentation materials unless explicit permission is granted.**]

³ “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 timeframe of a Society Meeting, if any Participant is affected.

⁴ Refer to the full Model Meetings Conduct Policy at Part A.4 and Part B.2 for further guidance on confidentiality.

Additional Conduct Requirements:

[Insert: Option A or B as the next bullet in the list of conduct requirements:]

Option A: *Be aware of and do not enter others' personal space.*

OR

Option B: *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 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 colleagues are not also friends (i.e., more than just professional colleagues).*

[Insert Option C or D as the final bullet in the list of additional conduct requirements:]

Option C, if the Society wants to prohibit social media, photographs and recordings, other than by the Society:

- *Only the Society and those explicitly authorized by it may (a) take/make (in any medium) pictures or audio- or visual- recordings of Society Meetings or Participants or (b) distribute them (via social media or other means).*

OR

Option D if, as is often the case at science gatherings, the Society wants to allow photographs, recordings, and even encourage use of social media by the Society and Participants, but may want flexibility to prohibit or restrict these activities on occasion:

- *Only the Society and those explicitly authorized by the Society may (a) make (in any medium) audio recordings of Society Meetings or Participants or (b) distribute them (via social media or other means).*
- *Follow any Society instructions that may prohibit or restrict making (in any medium) visual recordings and taking pictures of Society Meetings or Participants or distributing them (via social media or other means).*
 - *In the absence of other Society instructions, taking pictures or visual-recordings of the overall crowd at a Society Meeting is appropriate—as is taking a picture of or making a visual- recording of an individual or small group **after** asking if they mind and getting their consent.*
 - *Examples of inappropriate picture-taking and visual recording include: Taking a picture focused on an individual or small group (as opposed to the crowd) without first asking for and getting consent. Wearing a "Go-Pro" or otherwise taking a picture or making a visual recording focused on a body type or anatomy of individuals. Taking a picture of individuals' belongings (shoes, backpacks, jewelry).*

Note About Differences of Opinion and Offense.⁵ 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. **[Add if the Society philosophy permits: (Offering an advance warning of the potential for impact on others is one way to demonstrate such respect and consideration for all.)]** 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.

Consequences that may be imposed

- A violation of this Society Meetings Conduct Policy, may result in an accused Participant being compelled to leave a Society Meeting at the Participant’s own cost and to maintain distance and separation from other Participants at all sites, or to leave any or all sites, associated with the Meeting during the general timeframe of the Meeting. A Meeting Official⁶ will make the determination, in that official’s discretion, to serve the best interests of the Society’s membership and mission as reflected in this Meetings Conduct Policy. The Meeting Official also may notify the Participant’s home (employing) institution of a violation of this Policy if, in the Meeting Official’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 should provide notice only to those in a position of seniority that can reasonably be expected to maintain confidentiality, and should include a copy of the Society Meetings Conduct Policy. The Society will copy the Participant on the notice.
- **[Insert only if the Society will act on credible questions:**⁷ *The Meeting Official also may exercise the same discretion and impose any of the above-listed consequences on an accused Participant, if the Meeting Official determines, in that official’s discretion, that such action is needed in short order to avoid disruption or safety issues at the meeting.*]
- Other/additional consequences for violation of the Conduct Policy, to be determined in the Society’s regular conduct policies and procedures 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. **[Insert if applicable:** *Instead of or in addition to any of these consequences, the Society may pursue a restorative or other community-building action or remedy. Community building is pursued if the Society determines in*

⁵ Refer to the full Model Meetings Conduct Policy for guidance on this provision and considerations for adapting it to fit a society’s policy goals.

⁶ A “Meeting Official” is a senior official of the Society or a committee that is the authorized Society official during the Meeting Period to decide: (a) whether a violation of the Meetings Conduct Policy occurred (if that decision is made during the Meeting Period) and/or (b) in any event, whether (and what) consequences should be imposed or other action should be taken during the Meeting Period to address a conduct concern (including any need to take further action beyond a simple resolution). “Meeting Period” means the days on which a Society Meeting is occurring, and the days of Participants’ transit to and from it.

⁷ See The Model Glossary of Key Terms which provides a definition, and considerations for determining the existence, of credible questions at: <https://societiesconsortium.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/9.26.19-Model-Glossary-of-Terms-.pdf>

its discretion that it is in the best interests of the Society’s mission and membership under the circumstances, and the individuals most directly involved consent.⁸]

Why the Meeting Conduct Code is Important

The Society places a high priority on 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, including, sexual and intersecting bases of harassment (e.g., based on gender, race/ethnicity, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, identity and expression, disability, and other identities). The Policy contributes to clarity about conduct requirements and expectations to help all Participants align their conduct with the community standards that are necessary for successful Society Meetings. Research based information on the root causes of barriers to participation and the effectiveness of strategies to promote inclusion is important and further information can be found in the text box at the end of Consortium’s Framework Document: <https://societiesconsortium.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/2.-7.26.19-Final-Draft-Framework-for-Strategic-Direction-and-Priorities.pdf>

⁸ See *id.* The Model Glossary of Key Terms provides more detailed information on types of and options for community building.