



MEETINGS HARASSMENT POLICY

Statement of Policy

It is the policy of the International Commission for Acoustics (ICA) that all participants in ICA activities, particularly the ICA congresses, will enjoy an environment free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. As a professional organization, the ICA is committed to providing an atmosphere that encourages the free expression and exchange of scientific ideas. In pursuit of that ideal, ICA is dedicated to the philosophy of equality of opportunity and treatment for all members regardless of any other reason not related to scientific merit. Harassment, sexual or otherwise, is a form of misconduct that undermines the integrity of ICA congresses. Violators of this policy will be subject to discipline.

Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment refers to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Behavior 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 since individuals with lower rank or status may be reluctant to express their objections or discomfort regarding unwelcome behavior.

Sexual harassment does not refer to occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature. It refers to behavior that is not welcome, is personally offensive, debilitates morale, and therefore interferes with work effectiveness. The following are examples of behavior 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; a display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; sexually explicit jokes; unnecessary touching.

Definition of Other Harassment

Harassment on the basis of any other protected characteristic is also strictly 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 or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group.

Definition of Discrimination

Discrimination refers to a bias or prejudice resulting in denial of opportunity or unfair treatment regarding selection, promotion, or transfer. Discrimination is practiced commonly on the grounds of age, disability, ethnicity, origin, political belief, race, religion, sex, i.e., factors which are irrelevant to a person's competence or suitability.

Definition of Retaliation

Retaliation refers to taking some action to negatively impact another based on their reporting an act of discrimination or harassment.

Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all attendees at ICA activities, including scientists, students, guests, staff, contractors, and exhibitors, participating in the scientific sessions, tours, and social events of any ICA congress or other activity.

Reporting the Incident

Any individual covered by this policy who believes that he or she has been subjected to harassment should contact an ICA Officer which includes President, Vice-President, Past-President, Secretary General, and Treasurer. The individual reporting the incident is not required nor expected to discuss the concern with the alleged offender. All complaints will be treated seriously and will be investigated promptly. Confidentiality will be honored to the extent possible as long as the rights of others are not compromised.

The Investigation

Once a report is received, the Secretary General will inform the President (or other Officer if the complaint involves the President). The Secretary General or President will oversee the conduct of the investigation which may be conducted by the Secretary General, other appropriate staff, legal counsel, or an external consultant.

In most cases, the complainant will be interviewed first and the written complaint reviewed. If the complainant has not already filed a formal written complaint, he or she will be asked to do so.

The details of the complaint should be provided to the alleged offender by the investigator.

The alleged offender should be given a reasonable opportunity to respond to the evidence of the complainant and to provide his or her own evidence.

If the facts are in dispute, further investigatory steps may include interviewing those named as witnesses.

If, for any reason, the investigator is in doubt about whether or how to continue, he or she will seek counsel from the President or Secretary General.

When the investigation is complete, the investigator will report the findings to the President and Secretary General, along with a recommendation for further action.

Retaliation is Prohibited

The ICA 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 disciplinary action.

Disciplinary Action

Individuals engaging in behavior prohibited by this policy as well as those making allegations of harassment in bad faith will be subject to disciplinary action. 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 behavior to their employer. Repeat offenders may be subject to further disciplinary action, such as being banned from participating in future ICA congresses or other activities.

Appeal & Questions

In the event that the individual who reported the incident is dissatisfied with the results of the investigation, he or she may appeal to the President (or another Officer if the complaint involves the President). Any questions regarding this policy should be directed to the Secretary General or other ICA Officer.

Interim policy approved by the ICA Board 31 May 2018 to be based largely on the ASA Harassment Policy (https://acousticalsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/ASA-Meetings-Harassment-Policy_5_7_2018.pdf)