



# ISA CODE OF CONDUCT

\* No longer in effect, as of April 8, 2018

## PREFACE

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The purpose of this document is to provide an authoritative statement regarding the expectations for professional conduct for all who participate in ISA meetings and conventions, and it will be especially useful for those who are new to the profession and/or the ISA. It is born out of the ISA's commitment to maintaining and promoting a professional environment at its meetings and other organized activities, and it is guided by the conviction that the advancement of knowledge flourishes most readily in an atmosphere of constructive debate in which all members treat one another with dignity and respect.

The International Studies Association (ISA) brings together professionals from a variety of backgrounds and from a large number of locations around the globe. We share an interest in the various aspects of international studies, but may differ in the conventions of professional interaction and in cultural traditions. This diversity brings with it the potential for fruitful dialogue about research and policy, but also the possibility of disagreements among members.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

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- 1) This code of conduct refers to relations between ISA members and participants in the course of ISA activities.
  - a) ISA activities include the ISA's annual conventions, international conventions, regional meetings, pre- or post-conference workshops, and editing of the Association's journals.
  - b) Some matters of professional ethics are under the purview of specific committees and will be addressed elsewhere. Examples are plagiarism and academic freedom.
- 2) ISA Office Holders, from the President and Executive Director to members of the Governing Council and Editors of ISA journals, have a special responsibility to uphold and observe the Code of Conduct, promoting in the Association's activities a professional environment characterized by constructive debate and the treatment of all members and participants with dignity and respect.
- 3) The ISA recognizes that there is a distinction between victimization through bullying and/or harassment and legitimate, justifiable, and appropriate constructive criticism. Nothing in this document shall be construed as a limitation on the ability of members and participants to constructively evaluate and critique one another's work.
- 4) The ISA recognizes its duty to ensure that members and participants are not bullied and/or harassed. It further recognizes that this duty is of wider application and includes all members and participants, regardless of status (full, postgraduate, or retired) or the period of time.
  - a) Bullying may be characterized as
    - i) Offensive, insulting, intimidating, or malicious behavior targeted at another person or persons;

- ii) An abuse or misuse of power intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate, or injure the person or persons at whom such behavior is targeted.
- b) Harassment may be defined as
  - i) Unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of men and women. It may be related to age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, disability, religion, nationality, or any personal characteristic of the individual, and may be persistent or isolated. The key is that the actions or comments are experienced as demeaning and unacceptable by the recipient.
- 5) The ISA recognizes that members and participants who feel that they have been victims of bullying and/or harassment as defined in this code of conduct are entitled to pursue their case in a safe and non-threatening environment.
- 6) The ISA is committed to ensuring that complaints brought under this procedure shall not lead to the victimization or harassment of any individual.
  - a) The ISA is conscious of the need to avoid escalating disputes when seeking to resolve cases of an alleged breach of this policy.
  - b) The procedures for addressing grievances (detailed below) aim to de-escalate any disputes and resolve allegations through consultation, whenever possible.
- 7) The ISA ensures that procedures are in place to address allegations of bullying and/or harassment. Such procedures shall provide for
  - a) Timely handling of such allegations;
  - b) Fair and impartial handling such allegations; and
  - c) Fair, impartial, and sensitive treatment of all parties affected by such allegations.

## ADDRESSING GRIEVANCES

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- 1) An individual who considers that he or she is a victim of a breach of this code (Complainant) should, if practicable, seek to resolve the matter informally with the person against whom the allegation is made (Respondent). If this is unsuccessful or inappropriate to the situation, then the Complainant may seek redress through the procedures outlined under 2 and 3.
- 2) Formal Complaint**
  - a) If an informal procedure fails to resolve the matter, or in cases where the nature of the allegations renders informal procedure inappropriate, the complainant may bring a formal complaint under this policy.
  - b) A formal complaint should be made in writing to any member of the ISA Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will forward the complaint to the Executive Director for initial review to determine if the complaint falls under the ISA Code of Conduct (i.e., the issue occurred in the context of ISA activities). If the Executive Director is the potential Respondent, the sitting President will make this assessment. Once that determination is made, the Executive Director or sitting President will share a copy of the complaint with the Respondent.
  - c) A written complaint shall be signed by the Complainant and should include the following information:
    - i) The name of the Respondent;
    - ii) The nature of the conduct about which a complaint is made, including, where possible, dates and times;

- iii) The names of any people who may have witnessed the conduct; and
  - iv) Any action that has already have been taken (either under II. above or otherwise) to resolve the matter.
- d) The Complainant may request, prior to a full investigation of the complaint, that the mediation procedure described below (Section 3) be used.
- e) The ISA President will initiate an investigation of the complaint, which will proceed as follows:
- i) This investigation will be undertaken by a committee appointed with at least two-thirds agreement of the ISA Executive Committee;
  - ii) This committee will, in most instances, be the standing Committee on Professional Rights and Responsibilities, but the ISA Executive Committee, in consultation with the Executive Committee, may also refer the matter to a different committee or constitute an ad hoc committee.
- f) The investigating committee may ask the parties and any witnesses (whether or not identified by either party) to present evidence within a reasonable time of their request. All evidence will be given in writing (including e-mail). Individuals may also be called to present an oral statement. Those who provide evidence should be reminded at the outset that it will be used in order to resolve the matter.
- g) The investigating committee will evaluate the evidence using the following criteria:
- i) The allegations involve inappropriate conduct as defined in this Code of Conduct;
  - ii) The evidence suggests the alleged behavior did indeed violate professional norms of dignity and respect;
  - iii) The committee may further determine whether the alleged behavior appears to constitute an isolated incident or a pattern of behavior that has consequences for the ability of the ISA to maintain and promote a professional environment in which all members and participants treat one another with dignity and respect;
- h) The investigating committee will prepare a report for the ISA Executive Committee. The ISA Executive Committee will review the evidence and shall determine resolution of the matter. Resolution may include:
- i) Recommend that on the basis of the evidence that the complaint be dismissed;
  - ii) Make recommendations for informally resolving the matter (without necessarily attributing blame or responsibility). The objective will be to (re-) establish a professional and respectful working relationship between the parties. The committee may use mediation services, as appropriate and as available, to achieve this end;
  - iii) Decide that there is a prima facie case and make recommendations to the ISA Executive Committee for the resolution of the matter.
  - iv) The recommendations suggested under h.ii may include, but are not limited to:
    - (1) A formal letter of censure; and
    - (2) A suspension of membership of the Respondent for a specified period of time.
  - v) The recommendations will have an explicit foundation in the evidentiary findings of the committee;
  - vi) The Respondent's failure to cooperate with the committee may constitute grounds for disciplinary action by the committee.
- i) The Executive Committee shall determine the resolution of the matter.
- j) The ISA Executive Director shall communicate the resolution of the matter to both the Complainant and the Respondent.

### **3) Mediation**

- a) If, as in Section 2 above, the Executive Director or Sitting President has determined that the complaint falls under the ISA Code of Conduct, the Respondent may request that his/her complaint be addressed via Mediation. The following should occur in a mediation situation:
  - i) Request an explanation of the nature of the complaint and a description of any informal efforts at resolution that have taken place. This may be done by e-mail or telephone. Both the Complainant and the ISA President will keep records of these communications.
  - ii) Contact the Respondent, outline the nature of the complaint, and obtain that person's response to the complaint.
  - iii) Appoint a mediator to try to resolve the conflict. This will ordinarily involve consultation with both the Complainant and the Respondent. In addition, the President may consult with the Executive Committee in his or her efforts to identify a suitable mediator. The President may appoint him- or herself but is under no obligation to do so.
  - iv) The mediator will contact both the Complainant and the Respondent. If appropriate and feasible, arrange a joint meeting with the parties to discuss the case.
  - v) The mediator will make recommendations to the parties for resolving the matter, without necessarily attributing blame or responsibility.
  - vi) The objective will be to (re-) establish a professional and respectful working relationship between the parties.
  - vii) The mediator will prepare a brief written report for the President. This report shall summarize the efforts and the resolution of the dispute. Alternatively, the report may summarize the efforts and report that a resolution has not been achieved and is unlikely occur.
  - viii) The report will remain confidential. However, the mediator may share this report with the parties to the complaint, if desired by these parties.
  - ix) If the ISA President is the person against whom the complaint is made, all references above to the ISA President shall be interpreted instead as referring to the ISA Executive Director.
  - x) Note that, while mediation is an option available to any Complainant, it is not a required part of the formal complaint process. That is, a Complainant whose grievance falls under the ISA Code of Conduct, but who does not want to opt for mediation, has a right to request immediate use of the formal process outlined in Section 2.

### **4) An appeal may be made regarding the outcome of the investigation, either by the complainant or by the Respondent, using the following procedures:**

- a) Any appeal should be made in writing to the ISA Executive Committee.
- b) An appeal can be made only on grounds of procedural irregularity or where the outcome of the investigation is seen to be manifestly unreasonable.
- c) The appeal must be made within a reasonable period of time.
- d) The Executive Committee will:
  - i) Review the appeal, its decision regarding the resolution of the matter, and the report by the investigating committee. Draft a response to the appeal. This response will evaluate whether the appeal has merit. If the Executive Committee determines the appeal has merit it may propose to
    - (1) Send the matter back to the investigating committee;
    - (2) Constitute a new investigating committee;

- (3) Dismiss the matter; and
- (4) Suggest an alternative strategy for resolving the matter.
- ii) Forward this response and all documentation to the Governing Council for a final determination.
- e) The Governing Council will
  - i) Review the Executive Committee's response to the appeal and all documentation.
  - ii) Decide the course of action to be followed by voting on the proposal put forward by the Executive Committee.

**5) Additional Provisions:**

- a) A party or witness acting under any stage of this procedure who knowingly makes a statement that is untrue, malicious, frivolous, or in bad faith may be subject to the disciplinary powers detailed under 2e. The investigating committee should investigate any such action and make recommendations as part of its report.
- b) At all stages of this procedure, the Complainant, the Respondent, or a witness in the procedure may be accompanied by a colleague.
- c) All information gathered under this procedure will be treated in confidence, while recognizing that some information may be shared among those involved within the confines of the investigation as part of the evidentiary process.

**6) This Code of Conduct and its procedures for resolving grievances is not intended to and shall not be a substitute for the rights of any of the parties to seek legal redress.**

Any legal action on the part of the Complainant will be exclusively a matter between the Complainant, the Respondent and the authorities in the location where the incident occurred. The ISA will not be a party to such legal action, nor will it accept any financial responsibility for such action.

From "Report of the Rights and Responsibilities Committee, 2017"

Adopted by the ISA Governing Council on March 15, 2011 (Montreal Annual Convention)

Amended by the ISA Governing Council on March 15, 2016 (Atlanta Annual Convention)

Amended by the ISA Governing Council on February 21, 2017 (Baltimore Annual Convention)