



ISA CODE OF CONDUCT

PREFACE

The purpose of this document is to provide an authoritative statement of the expectations for professional conduct for all who participate in ISA meetings and conventions. It will be especially useful for those who are new to the profession and/or the ISA. The code of conduct is a natural outcome 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 each 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 broadly conceived, but we may differ in our conventions of professional interaction and our cultural traditions. This diversity brings with it the potential for fruitful dialogue about research and policy, but also the possibility of disagreements among members. This code of conduct is designed to ensure that all are treated with dignity and respect; and that sensitivity and consideration guide our interactions while, at the same time, not limiting the substance or arena of our debate.

CODE OF CONDUCT

- 1) This code of conduct refers to relations between ISA members, ISA Headquarters staff, and other participants and their interactions 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 are 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 should be construed as a limitation on the ability of members and participants to constructively evaluate and critique one another's work.
- 4) Nonetheless, 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 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 toward whom such behavior is targeted.
- b) Harassment may be defined as, but is not limited to:
 - i) Unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of people or individuals. It may be related to age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, disability, religion, nationality, citizenship 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 prefers 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 resolve allegations through consultation, whenever possible. At the same time, ISA recognizes that punitive measures may be required to address some violations.
 - c) ISA also is committed to ensuring that those who print complaints under this Code are not subject to retaliation by respondents or third parties.
- 7) The ISA ensures that procedures are in place to address allegations of bullying and/or harassment. Such procedures provide for
 - a) Timely handling of such allegations;
 - b) Fair and impartial handling of such allegations; and
 - c) Fair, impartial, and sensitive treatment of all parties affected by such allegations.

ADDRESSING GRIEVANCES

- 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/or 3.
- 2) Formal Complaint**
 - a) If the matter is not resolved informally, 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 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 to resolve the matter.
 - c) A formal complaint **must** be made in writing to any member of the ISA Executive Committee. The Executive Committee member who received the complaint 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.

- d) Once that determination is made, the Executive Director or the sitting President will share a copy of the complaint with the Respondent.
 - i) If the Complainant expresses concerns that the sharing of a full complaint may lead to retaliation from the Respondent, the Executive Director or sitting President may opt to instead summarize the complaint, perhaps even omitting the identity of the Complainant.
 - ii) The default practice, however, is to share the complaint with the Respondent.
- e) The Complainant may request, prior to a full investigation of the complaint, that the mediation procedure described below (Section 3) be used.
- f) The ISA President will initiate an investigation of the complaint. This committee will typically be the standing Committee on Professional Rights and Responsibilities.
 - i) If a conflict of interest prevents the Committee on Professional Rights and Responsibilities from considering the complaint, the ISA President may refer the matter to a different committee or constitute an ad hoc committee.
 - ii) The latter actions require approval (two-thirds supermajority) from the Executive Committee.
- g) The investigating committee may ask the parties and any witnesses (whether or not identified by either party) to present evidence within a reasonable period of time. All evidence will be given in writing (including e-mail). Individuals may also be called to present an oral statement or to provide documentation. Those who provide evidence should be reminded at the outset that it will be used in order to resolve the matter.
- h) 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;
- i) The investigating committee (typically the PRRC) will prepare a report for the ISA Executive Committee. This report will summarize the committee's deliberations, render a judgment regarding the occurrence of Code of Conduct violations, and recommend a 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.
 - iii) Decide that there is a prima facie case and make recommendations to the ISA Executive Director and sitting President for the resolution of the matter.
 - iv) The recommendations suggested may include, but are not limited to:
 - (1) A private letter of reprimand.
 - (2) A public letter of censure. This letter will be made public after the time frame for appeal has passed.
 - (3) A suspension of membership of the Respondent for a specified period of time. Such a suspension would suspend access to ISA-related funding, and to participation in ISA meetings.
 - (4) A ban from the right to publish in ISA-administered journals.

- 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.
- j) The ISA Executive Director shall communicate the resolution of the matter to both the Complainant and the Respondent. The resolution of the matter, as well as the original complaint, will be held at the ISA Headquarters. Should a Respondent be subject to a future complaint, the Executive Director will share this information with the adjudicating committee.
- k) The ISA Executive Director will report annually on the use of the Code of Conduct process. The report should not name the individuals involved or describe specific allegations. Rather it should summarize the process, in terms of the number of complaints filed; the number of cases referred to committee (and to which committee); the number of complaints upheld and their resolution (censure, membership restrictions or other penalties).

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 first be addressed via Mediation. When such a request is received, the Executive Director or sitting President will ask whether the Complainant is amendable to mediation. If both parties agree to mediation, the ISA will engage the services of a professional mediator.
- b) The mediation process will typically involve the following steps, although the exact structure of the process is left to the professional mediator, perhaps in consultation with the Executive Director or the sitting President. The mediator is asked to keep detailed records of all communication; these records will be placed on file at ISA Headquarters.
 - i) Request an explanation from the Complainant of the nature of the grievance, as well as a description of any informal efforts at resolution that have taken place.
 - ii) Contact the Respondent, outline the nature of the complaint, and obtain that person's response to the complaint. As in 2.iv above, the complaint typically should be shared in full with the Respondent.
 - iii) If appropriate and feasible, arrange a joint meeting with the parties to discuss the case.
 - iv) The mediator will make recommendations to the parties for resolving the matter. Depending on the circumstances of the case, the recommendation may include an attribution of blame or responsibility.
 - v) The objective will be to (re-) establish a professional and respectful working relationship between the parties.
 - vi) The mediator will prepare a brief written report for the Executive Director or sitting 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.
 - vii) The report will remain confidential. However, the mediator may share this report with the parties to the complaint, if desired by these parties.
 - viii) 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 three months of the communication of the decision.
 - d) The Executive Committee will:
 - i) Review the appeal and the report by the investigating committee, and 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:
 - (1) Send the matter back to the investigating committee;
 - (2) Constitute a new investigating committee;
 - (3) Dismiss the matter; or
 - (4) Devise an alternative strategy for resolving the matter.
- 5) **Recordkeeping:** the functioning of this Code, and of the complaints process detailed above, requires the keeping of records regarding previous complaints and the resolution of those complaints. As such, records of all complaints received, and of the disposition of those complaints, are to be kept at ISA Headquarters. When a new complaint is filed, the Executive Director (or, where appropriate, the President) will check these records, and will provide information about past complaints to the PRR Committee or other investigating body. As with all information provided in the complaints process, such information is to be treated confidentially by members of the PRR Committee or other investigating body.
- 6) **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 2. 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. Some information may be shared among those involved within the confines of the investigation as part of the evidentiary process. This Code also acknowledges that, when the investigating body finds the Complainant's code to have merit, the Complainant may wish to share the judgement with a limited set of individuals, such as their department chair. Complainants who wish to do so are asked to consult the ISA Executive Director or sitting President prior to disseminating such information.

This Code of Conduct and its procedures for resolving grievances is not intended to and is not 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, 2018"
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)
Amended by the ISA Governing Council on April 3, 2018 (San Francisco Annual Convention)