

CfA Meetings & Events Conduct Policy

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OVERVIEW

The Center for Astrophysics | Harvard & Smithsonian (CfA) is a joint institution connecting the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory (SAO) and the Harvard College Observatory (HCO). The CfA is a diverse astrophysical institution at which more than 800 staff and students are engaged in a broad program of research and education in astronomy, astrophysics, and earth and space sciences. The CfA is at the forefront, internationally, of the scientific exploration of the universe. Our research covers theoretical astrophysics, observational ground and space-based astronomy, engineering and technology development, and education. The research objectives of the CfA are carried out primarily with the support of government, Smithsonian Institution, and Harvard funds, with additional philanthropic support. At the CfA, the next generation of scientific leaders are being trained and mentored through a broad range of undergraduate and graduate student programs, postdoctoral positions and fellowships.

The CfA strives to run meetings, workshops, conferences and activities where every CfA member can be fully self-expressive without fear of being made to feel uncomfortable, unwelcome, or unsafe based on age, race, gender, ethnicity, religion or ideology, religious non-affiliation, nationality or citizenship status, political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, pregnancy, disability status, education background, socioeconomic status, occupation, seniority, or physical appearance.

The CfA does not tolerate racism, discrimination, bullying, harassment, bias, or intolerance of any kind from anyone in, associated with, or visiting the Center for Astrophysics for CfA- run, sponsored or endorsed meetings, workshops, retreats, conferences and events.

The CfA empowers and supports its members to abide by this policy and to report breaches of this policy through one or more of the multiple reporting channels identified within this document.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all CfA members and visitors. CfA members include all CfA-affiliated Harvard and Smithsonian faculty, federal and trust staff, postdocs, students, contractors, affiliates, associates, volunteers and interns. Visitors include all personnel visiting CfA sites for any time period professionally or personally.

This policy is in addition to, and does not supersede, the Codes of Conduct or conduct policies of a member's university or organization. The member's university or organization Codes of Conduct or Conduct policies override this document if there is a conflict.

This Meeting Code applies to all participants at CfA-run, sponsored or endorsed meetings or activities, including events, retreats, conferences, workshops, CfA-run events and committee meetings.

PURPOSE

This policy has been formulated to provide a clear statement of the CfA's expectations of its members and external meeting participants for their professional and personal conduct at meetings, workshops, conferences and other CfA-related activities. Breaches of this policy will not be tolerated, and will be reported and acted upon according to the HR policies and procedures of the relevant member organizations.

POLICY

It is the policy of the Center for Astrophysics that its members and all participants in CfA activities are able to enjoy a safe environment that is free from discrimination and harassment. The CfA is committed to making its meetings, workshops and events productive and enjoyable for everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, cultural background or tradition, religious affiliation, biological sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, or physical or mental ability.

Expected behavior

All CfA event participants must follow these guidelines for expected behavior:

- **Be considerate and respectful of others** – We gather to be present and exchange our ideas. Please be the audience that you would like to have as a speaker. Do not insult or put down other attendees. Critique ideas rather than individuals. Critiques of ideas must be phrased respectfully. Please be attentive and participate in a respectful manner, and avoid being disruptive when people are speaking. Give other people the opportunity to speak and ask questions.
- **Communication should be appropriate for a diverse audience** – All communication should be appropriate for a professional audience, including people of many different backgrounds. Be mindful of your wording and your tone. Members of the audience may process information differently. For some members of the audience, English may not be their first language.

Unacceptable behavior

- **Sexist, racist, or exclusionary comments or jokes are not appropriate.** Unacceptable behavior includes, but is not limited to comments related to race, ethnicity, cultural background or tradition, religious affiliation, biological sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, physical disability or mental disability.
- **Sexual or sexist comments, language and imagery is not appropriate.**
- **Bullying, harassment, intimidation, and personal attacks are not acceptable.**

The definitions of bullying, harassment, intimidation and personal attacks are provided below in italics, as defined in the Oxford English Dictionary.

Bullying: *To behave in an overbearing, intimidating, or aggressive manner towards someone; usually to seek to harm, intimidate, or coerce, especially persistently or repeatedly.* In the workplace, bullying includes repeated behavior that offends, degrades, insults, or humiliates another person or group.

Harassment: *Unwarranted speech or behavior causing annoyance, alarm, distress, or intimidation, usually occurring persistently over a period of time.* Harassment creates a work environment that can be intimidating, hostile, or offensive. Offensive conduct may include, but is not limited to, offensive jokes, slurs, epithets or name calling, physical assaults or threats, intimidation, ridicule or mockery, insults or put-downs, offensive objects or pictures, and interference with work performance.

Intimidation: *To render timid, inspire with fear; in modern use especially to force to or deter from some action by threats or violence.* Intimidation may cause a loss of courage or

self-confidence. Intimidation can include threats or physical violence, yelling or screaming, ridiculing or insulting a member in front of coworkers or clients, sabotaging a member's work, interference in or prevention of the member's ability to work, insulting or demeaning others in the presence of colleagues or clients, repeated and/or sustained disruption of talks or other events run or presented by a member. Persistent or repeated intimidation can be a form of bullying or harassment.

Personal attacks: *An instance of vehemently expressed antagonism or hostility, or of action intended to undermine or disrupt; especially an instance of fierce public criticism.* Personal attacks can include individual derogatory statements made about a person including, but not limited to, damaging remarks relating to a member's lifestyle or choices. These types of attack can include derogatory comments that question a person's intelligence, values, integrity, motivations or decisions. Ongoing, repeated personal attacks may be classified as intimidation, harassment or bullying, depending on the intent and effect on the victim.

7. Reporting Unacceptable behavior

Meeting organizers are encouraged to assign a meeting ombudsperson or ombudspersons. Anyone who wishes to report unacceptable behavior is asked to speak to a meeting organizer, the meeting-designated ombudsperson or contact, their supervisor, division lead, faculty chair, the HR staff of the member's employing organization (in the case of Harvard or Smithsonian employees), the Director, Deputy Director, or another member of the CfA executive team.

8. Breaches of this Conduct Policy

Immediate action will be taken against individuals found to be engaging in behavior prohibited by this policy. These actions may include verbal warnings, ejection from the meeting or activity without refund of registration fees and the reporting of behavior to their supervisor, leadership, and/or HR department of their employer, depending on the scope of the behavior.

Meeting organizers, ombudspersons, and staff members are encouraged to seek advice from their HR representatives regarding what actions would be appropriate, given the individual circumstances of a complaint.

Repeat offenders may be subject to further action including temporary or permanent barring from CfA meetings and events.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- CfA General Conduct Policy
- CfA On-line Work Behavior Policy
- Smithsonian Institution Standards of Conduct:
<https://www.si.edu/content/ogc/sd103.pdf>
- Smithsonian Statement of Values and Code of Ethics:
https://www.si.edu/content/governance/pdf/Statement_of_Values_and_Code_of_Ethics.pdf
- Harvard Faculty of Science Professional Conduct Policy:
<https://infoforfaculty.fas.harvard.edu/book/conduct>