



## The American Ceramic Society - Anti-Harassment Policy

### Overview of Policy

The American Ceramic Society (ACerS) is committed to ensuring that all ACerS activities are free from discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation of any form. ACerS seeks to foster an environment promoting the free expression and exchange of scientific ideas. ACerS is committed to ensuring equality of treatment and opportunity and freedom from harassment for all members and participants regardless of race, gender, nationality, religious beliefs, gender identity, color, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disabilities, ancestry, personal appearance, or any other basis not relevant to scientific merit. Violators of this policy will be subject to discipline by the Society.

### Harassment and Sexual Harassment

Harassment involves unwelcome conduct of an offensive nature based upon an individual's race, gender, nationality, religious beliefs, gender identity, color, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disabilities, ancestry, personal appearance, or any other basis not relevant to scientific merit. Examples of harassment include but are not limited to:

- Physical or verbal bullying
- Unwelcome verbal or physical conduct such as slurs, insults, jokes, or other unwelcome comments
- Abuse of power or authority
- Verbal, written, and/or physical intimidation
- Public humiliation

Sexual harassment is harassment, bullying, and/or coercion that is sexual in nature. It includes unwanted sexual advances, inappropriate promises of rewards in exchange for sexual favors, and verbal or physical contact that is sexual in nature. Examples of sexual harassment include but are not limited to:

- Making sexual gestures or displaying sexually suggestive objects, images, etc.
- Unwelcome sexual comments, epithets, slurs, or jokes
- Unwelcome verbal or physical conduct such as sexual advances or propositions, or other sexual comments
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature
- Unnecessary and/or unwanted physical contact such as touching, patting, hugging, or brushing against a person's body
- Comments of a sexual nature about a person's physical appearance
- Comments or speculation about someone's sexual activity or prior sexual experiences
- Coercion of sexual activity by threat of retaliation or punishment
- Sexual assault
- Threatening or implying that a participant's submission to or rejection of sexual advances will in any way influence the recipient's terms or conditions of membership

Harassment does not include occasional compliments or social interactions that are generally deemed appropriate in a professional environment. Since behavior that is acceptable and/or welcome to one

individual may not be acceptable and/or welcome to another, individuals should use discretion to always ensure respectful communication and interactions with everyone.

### **Discrimination**

Discrimination refers to unfavorable treatment of a person based on consideration of a personal characteristic, such as age, ethnicity, national origin, race, disability, sex, sexual preference or gender identity; or a group in which that person belongs or is perceived to belong, such as political affiliation or religion.

### **Other prohibited behaviors**

Other prohibited behaviors include:

- Violence or threats of violence
- Illegal activities under all applicable laws
- Intentional unnecessary and undue interruption of ACerS events, speakers, sessions, etc.
- Causing property damage
- Any intentional actions that endanger the safety, health, and/or well-being of ACerS event participants
- Any other grossly unprofessional behavior

### **Scope of Policy**

This policy applies to all attendees of ACerS meetings, events, and activities, including members, non-members, partnering organizations, volunteers, students, guests, staff, contractors, exhibitors, and all other participants related to ACerS events and activities.

### **Reporting an Incident**

If you are being harassed, notice that someone else is being harassed, or have any other concerns, please contact an ACerS staff member immediately. Incidences of harassment, discrimination, retaliation, or other prohibited behaviors within the scope of the policy may be reported to an ACerS staff member at the meeting or contact:

- 1. ACerS Executive Director, Mark Mecklenborg, ph 614-794-5829 / email: [ExecDirector@ceramics.org](mailto:ExecDirector@ceramics.org)**
- 2. ACerS President, Sylvia Johnson, ph 510-813-8758 / email: [ACerSPresident@ceramics.org](mailto:ACerSPresident@ceramics.org)**

All complaints will be treated seriously and investigated promptly. Confidentiality will be honored to the extent permitted by the investigation and constraints imposed by protecting the rights of others. If the nature of a complaint involves criminal misconduct, please also contact the appropriate authorities directly.

Persons submitting reports are requested to write down all relevant details (times, places, nature of the incident, relevant background information, etc.). You should save emails, notes, images, videos, witness statements, or any other documentary information that will be valuable for an investigation. These documentary details do not necessarily have to be provided during an initial contact to the above e-mail address, but may need to be provided during a follow-up investigation. When writing a complaint, please be as detailed as possible. ACerS can only address incidents that are reported. Those wishing to file a complaint are encouraged to do so as quickly as possible, within the constraints imposed by maintaining one's personal safety.

## **Investigation**

ACerS will promptly and impartially investigate the facts and circumstances of any claim of inappropriate conduct or harassment within the scope of the policy.

Upon receipt of a report, ACerS officers or a designated independent consultant will be tasked with reviewing the complaint, investigating the allegation, and taking appropriate action. The investigator will be free of conflicts of interest or perceived conflicts of interest, and will be charged with acting impartially. In an investigation the following steps will typically be followed in order to make a determination as to an appropriate action or remedy:

- documenting the complaint
- interviewing the complainant
- providing the alleged offender an opportunity to respond to the complaint
- conducting any additional necessary interviews of witnesses
- documenting ACerS findings with regards to the complaint
- recommending any necessary follow-up actions and remedies
- informing the complainant and alleged offender of ACerS findings

If upon receipt of a complaint, if the alleged offender is believed to be an immediate threat to the health, safety, and/or well-being of meeting or activity participants, the alleged offender's participation in the meeting or activity may be suspended immediately prior to completing the steps outlined above.

## **Retaliation and witness harassment**

No reprisal, retaliation or other adverse action will be taken against any member for making a good faith report of harassment or good faith participation in the investigation or complaint of such report.

Reports of retaliation will be investigated as outlined above.

## **Disciplinary Action**

Individuals found to have engaged in prohibited behavior within the scope of this policy or individuals making allegations in bad faith will be subject to disciplinary action. Such actions are at the discretion of ACerS. The nature of the disciplinary action depends on the severity of the offense and could range from verbal warnings to ejection from meetings, activities, or the Society without refund of registration fees or membership dues. Disciplinary actions may also be reported to the offender's employer or university. Repeat offenders may be subject to disciplinary action that increases in severity with each subsequent offense.

## **Appeal**

Individuals dissatisfied with the results of an investigation may appeal to the president of ACerS. It is at the discretion of the president as to whether to convene a secondary investigation in consideration of any new information or perceived impropriety in the initial investigation. In such a case where the president has a conflict of interest, the appeal will be considered by a member of the Board of Directors.