

Conduct Toward Others

All people encountered in professional life should be treated with respect. At no time is abusive, demeaning, humiliating, or intimidating behavior acceptable; abuses of power are unacceptable. Scientists should work to provide an environment that encourages the free expression and exchange of scientific ideas. They should promote equality of opportunity and fair treatment for all their colleagues, regardless of gender, race, ethnic and national origin, religion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, veteran status, etc. Scientific ability must be respected wherever it is found.

More senior members of the profession, especially research supervisors, have a special responsibility to facilitate the research, educational, and professional development of students and subordinates. This includes providing safe, supportive work environments (e.g., free from bullying or harassment), reasonable and fair compensation, appropriate acknowledgment of their contribution to any research results, as well as respect for them as individuals and protection of their academic freedom (e.g., freedom to disagree with or dispute wider community-held positions without fear of retaliation). In addition, supervisors should encourage the timely advance of graduate students and young professionals in their career aspirations, be they in or out of the academic career track.

Outlined below in more detail are examples of unacceptable behaviors, such as bullying and unlawful harassment, sexual or otherwise. The behaviors described may be intentional or unintentional. However, where an allegation is made, it is important to resolve the situation in a way that ensures that the behavior has been appropriately addressed.

Harassment

Harassment because of race, religion, color, gender, age, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity expression, or any other protected class, is expressly forbidden.

Behaviors that, if engaged in because of race, religion, color, gender, age, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity expression, or any other protected class, may give rise to a hostile work environment in violation of applicable laws. These include, but are not limited to, the following: verbal harassment (e.g., comments that are offensive or unwelcome, including epithets, slurs, teasing, and stereotyping), nonverbal harassment (e.g., obscene gestures; distribution, display, or discussion of inappropriate written or graphic material or material that ridicules, denigrates, insults, belittles, or shows hostility or disrespect toward an individual or group), or physical harassment, including unwelcome, unwanted physical contact (e.g., physical assault or violating an individual's personal space).

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted conduct of a sexual nature. There are generally two types of sexual harassment:

“Quid pro quo” harassment, where submission or refusal to submit to unwelcome sexual attention, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature affects decisions such as preferential treatment, hiring, or promotions.

“Hostile work environment,” where harassment creates an offensive and unpleasant working environment. Hostile work environment often includes sexually oriented conduct that is sufficiently pervasive or persistent so as to unreasonably interfere with an individual’s job performance or has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. A hostile work environment can also result from a single egregious act.

Sexually oriented conduct can include verbal sexual harassment (e.g., innuendoes, suggestive comments, jokes of a sexual nature, sexual propositions, lewd remarks), nonverbal sexual harassment (e.g., the distribution, display, or discussion of sexually oriented written or graphic material), or physical sexual harassment (e.g., unwelcome, unwanted, unrequested, or uninvited physical contact). Such behaviors may also give rise to a hostile educational environment for students, in violation of applicable laws.

Bullying

Bullying is defined as unwelcome or unreasonable behavior that demeans, intimidates, humiliates, or sabotages the work of people, either as individuals or as a group. Bullying behavior is most often aggressive, persistent, and part of a pattern, but it can also occur as a single egregious incident. It is usually carried out by an individual but can also be an aspect of group behavior. Exercising appropriate authority, directing the work of others pursuant to their job responsibilities, and respectful scientific debate are not considered bullying behavior.

Examples of bullying behaviors include, but are not limited to, verbal bullying (e.g., threatening, slandering, ridiculing, or maligning a person; making abusive or offensive remarks), physical bullying (e.g., pushing, poking, assaulting, threatening assault, or damaging a person’s work area or property), gesture bullying (e.g., nonverbal threatening gestures), or sabotaging an individual’s work.

Based on the [Code of Ethics of the American Astronomical Society](#).