

AABHL Code of Conduct

Preamble: AABHL is a regional organisation committed to fostering excellence in bioethics, health law, and research, including scholarship, research, education, and practice. Our responsibilities are to each other as members, our students, the larger scholastic and practical academy, and the global community. Our guiding principles are respect, truthfulness, honesty, and fairness; integrity; and professional and social responsibility.

Respect for others: We are led by scholarly civility. We respect each other, acknowledging that we bring a diversity of views and perspectives to the concerns and issues that the association interrogates. We aim to be courteous and civil to one another in all our interactions and we value inclusiveness by treating others with respect.

Truthfulness, honesty, and fairness: We seek truthfulness, honesty, and fairness in our interactions with one another through evidence-based, well-balanced, forthright, honest, and accurate communication. We avoid deception in our research and apply thorough but constructive critiques to the work of others. Our published research documents the unique work found in other published works and provides thorough attribution of those concepts. We accurately describe our education, qualifications, certifications, and knowledge. We strive for consistency, transparency, and fairness in evaluating each other's work.²

Integrity: We are committed to the principle of integrity by applying it to our teaching, research, consulting, and professional activities. We avoid conflicts of interest and situations that would discredit AABHL. We treat all human and non-human research participation according to the relevant national statements and guidelines.

Professional and social responsibility: We seek to fulfil our professional and social responsibilities to peers and our social communities by keeping ourselves competent, advancing knowledge, and sharing truthful and accurate research.

Conduct at conferences and other AABHL events: AABHL convenes and endorses events (in person and online) intended to provide opportunities for participants to share research, learn, network, and converse with colleagues in environments of mutual respect. All participants in these events are entitled to experiences that are free from harassment, bullying, and intimidation.

AABHL does not seek to limit the areas of inquiry of its members or to curtail robust scholarly debate. Its aim is to promote critical and open inquiry that is free of personal harassment, prejudice, and aggression.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to, sexual harassment, such as unwelcome sexual advances or other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature. Harassment also includes behaviours such as stalking, bullying, hostility or abuse based on age, race, sex, ethnicity,

¹ Last revised 25 August 2021 (minor editing only)

² This section of the statement has been adapted from the Professional Code of Conduct from the Association for Business Communication (found here: <https://www.businesscommunication.org/page/ethics>)

national origin, religion, language, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, disability, health conditions, socioeconomic status, marital status, domestic status, or parental status.

Harassment may consist of a single intense and severe act or of multiple persistent or pervasive acts which are demeaning, abusive, offensive, or create a hostile environment. Harassment may also include circulation of written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility toward an individual or group. Such conduct is harmful, disrespectful, and unprofessional, and will not be tolerated.

All participants in AABHL events are expected to abide by this Code of Conduct. This policy will be overseen and enforced by a joint committee made up of the members of the committee overseeing the relevant event and members of the Executive Committee, led by the President.

If participants in AABHL events experience and or witness inappropriate behaviour, they are encouraged to immediately report the behaviour (via email, at president@aabhl.org or secretary@aabhl.org) or in person to the designated committee members introduced at meetings. Reports of inappropriate behaviour will be considered confidential. Details on the event without personal identifiers will be shared with the Executive Committee so that they are informed and can be proactive in updating relevant guidelines and policies as needed.

The joint committee will respond by consulting with the accused to address the issues raised and explore possible solutions and/or remediation, if required. After this process, if the joint committee determines that a reported behaviour at an AABHL event is in violation of this policy and requires further action (beyond the steps outlined above), then they are authorised to issue a reprimand in person and by email, barring the person from further participation in the event, if deemed to be warranted.³ If an attendee is asked to leave the event as a result of the above outlined process, there will be no right to a refund.

This Code of Conduct not intended to contradict but to supplement the provisions outlined in the Constitution (7.17) which permit the chairperson of the Annual General Meeting (typically the President) to expel any member or director if the chairperson reasonably considers their conduct to be inappropriate as outlined in the Constitution.

Removal of membership:

The AABHL Constitution has provisions for the removal of membership (5.4-5.11); violations of this Code of Conduct may serve as the basis for such processes to be initiated in accordance with these provisions.

³ The code of conduct for conferences and meetings was adapted from the 4S conference ethics policy. Available here: <https://www.4s2019.org/ethics/>