

AOCS Meetings Conduct Policy

Approved by the AOCS Governing Board on March 10, 2020

The American Oil Chemists' Society ("Society") is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and productive environment for "Society Meetings" that fosters open dialogue in the areas of focus for such Meetings, promotes full participation and belonging for all participants, and is free of harassment and discrimination. Accordingly, AOCS strictly prohibits any intimidating, threatening, or harassing conduct during Society Meetings. This Conduct Policy applies to all Participants in all Society Meetings.

- "Society Meetings" mean: annual and other Society-sponsored or -organized meetings, conferences, short courses and other events and gatherings, wherever located, including all virtual events sponsored or organized by the Society.
- "Participants" includes meeting organizers, award recipients, speakers, volunteers, attendees, guests, staff, exhibitors, and service providers.
- "Harassment" includes, but is not limited to, offensive gestures, misuse of digital communication, or written or verbal comments related to age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, ethnicity, cultural background, religion, professional status, geographic location or political views, deliberate intimidation, stalking, following, harassing photography or recording, sustained disruption of talks or other events, inappropriate physical contact, and unwelcome attention.

The Policy's overarching objective is advancing productive outcomes, with safety, full participation and belonging for all Participants.

A. Conduct Requirements

1. Requirements for ethical, professional and inclusive conduct:

Participants' conduct at Society Meetings must meet these requirements to satisfy the Meetings' purpose of advancing excellence by enabling equitable and full engagement and contributions by all Participants, rejecting discrimination and exclusion, and gaining the benefit of a full range of perspectives. See, [AOCS Statement of Diversity & Inclusion](#).

Expected Behavior

- Respect the rules and policies of AOCS, the convention center, hotels, contracted facility, and any other venue or digital platform.
- Communicate openly with respect and consideration for all people, valuing a diversity of views and opinions.
- Be mindful not to exert dominance over others. Consider the effect of relationship, position, experience, and privilege power differentials, and other factors to avoid dominance.

- Avoid personal attacks or criticism directed toward meeting organizers, award recipients, speakers, volunteers, attendees, guests, staff, exhibitors, and service providers. Critique ideas, not people.
- Turn off any ringers or otherwise disrupting devices during oral or poster sessions.
- Respect everyone’s personal space.
- Report any conduct concerns to a member of AOCS staff, the AOCS CEO, or AOCS President so that concerns can be addressed responsibly and timely. Respect confidentiality of the identities of any individuals involved in a conduct concern, while it is being reviewed and addressed.
- Answer questions about conduct concerns in a forthright and complete manner (e.g., when registering concerns or during a review of concerns).
- If any leader or facilitator of an activity/session, any official of the venue, or any Society official directs a Participant to stop a behavior or comment, immediately comply.
 - After Participants comply, they may raise any questions or concerns to the AOCS CEO or AOCS President.

Unacceptable Behavior, Harassment and Safety:

- Engaging in biased, demeaning, intimidating, coercive, belligerent, or harassing conduct or commentary, whether seriously or in jest.
- Retaliation against anyone for reporting a conduct concern or assisting in its resolution. Do not make bad faith accusations.
- Engaging in violence, threats of violence, or threats of harm of any kind. Do not create/contribute to a safety threat or unsafe situation.
- Invade the personal privacy of individuals. Do not view, photograph, audio- or visual- record, or distribute photographs or recordings of, individuals (in any medium), at times or in places where people can reasonably expect privacy.
- Take pictures or recordings (in any medium) of research posters or other research presentation materials unless explicit permission is granted.

Note About Differences of Opinion and Offense. To achieve the purposes of a Society Meeting in the limited time provided, with the intended benefit of contributions made by all Participants, discussions should be focused on the Meeting topic at hand and all Participants must be able and welcome to equitably and effectively participate. It is not a violation of the Society Meetings Conduct Policy to express an opinion, raise research or describe an experience (“articulation”) that is at odds with the opinions of or is offensive to others—if the articulation is part of an on-point discussion of the Society Meeting topic at hand and is offered in a manner that does not interfere with others’ reasonable ability and welcome to participate fully. That means expressing differing positions on a topic at a Meeting with respect and consideration for all. It also means not making an articulation that is reasonably expected to cause offense gratuitously (unrelated to the Society Meeting topic at hand or unnecessary for the work on that topic). It means not directing the articulation as a personal attack or put-down of an individual, and not dominating the discussion with one articulation.

2. When the Policy applies:

This Policy applies to all Participants at a Society Meeting. It also applies to activities and at locales that are associated with a Society Meeting.

- “Associated with” means, e.g.:
 - in transit to and from a Society Meeting,

- at the Society Meeting site (whether physical or virtual),
- in activities at other sites, whether or not the activities or sites are part of an official Society or Society Meeting activity, in the general timeframe of a Society Meeting, if any Participant is affected, and
- related social media.

3. Registration requirements:

By registering for a meeting., Participants agree to Meeting Terms and Conditions, the [AOCS Privacy Policy](#) and this [Meetings Conduct Policy](#). Registration also constitutes consent to audio and visual recording (and use and alteration of the recording) by the Society (or those it authorizes) at a Society Meeting for non-commercial purposes aligned with the Society’s mission.

4. What to do if you have a conduct concern within the reach of this Society Meetings Conduct Policy:

- **Call 911 if an immediate and serious public safety concern exists or is threatened.**
- **Act if there is a conduct concern.** If you have a conduct concern or are in distress or danger from a conduct concern—or if you see anyone in such distress or danger—**act by:**
 - **Alerting a “Meeting Contact”:** a member of AOCS staff, the AOCS CEO, or AOCS President.
 - **Notify the Society via email, through the Meeting App, or via text message.** You can alert the Society by sending an email to incidents@aocs.org or sending a text message to 217.377.4384. The Society intends to monitor reports made on-line regularly throughout a Society Meeting; however, **it is important to connect with a Meeting Contact if you do not receive a prompt response to an on-line report to ensure timely response.**
- **Confidential action.** If an individual most directly involved asks a Meeting Contact to maintain confidentiality of that person’s identity, reasonable steps will be taken to do so. However, the Society may not maintain confidentiality if, in its judgment and discretion, safety or law requires otherwise.
 - **All Society Meeting Participants are required to respect confidentiality of the identities of any individuals involved in a conduct concern, while it is being reviewed and addressed. Failure to do so is a violation of this Meetings Conduct Policy.**
 - An “**individual most directly involved**” means the Participant who raises a conduct concern, any witness, the identified target, or the accused Participant.
 - If an accused Participant is determined to have violated this Meetings Conduct Policy, the Society may make that disclosure, in the Society’s discretion.
 - Limited disclosure of the identity of individuals most directly involved may be needed for the Society to carry out various options to resolve a conduct concern.
 - Before raising the specific conduct concern, a Participant may ask a Meeting Contact up front about the options for resolution of certain types of conduct concerns and the disclosures that may be necessary to pursue them, if that is a worry.

B. Process and Consequences

1. Process to Address Conduct Concerns During a Society Meeting:

- **Initial fact-finding.** When a conduct concern is raised, the AOCS CEO and AOCS President will be immediately notified. The AOCS CEO and/or AOCS President will identify and speak to the individuals

most directly involved (if possible, with information provided). The AOCS CEO and AOCS President will assess the situation in an area that may be on the site of, but is separate from, the main Society Meeting activities. The AOCS CEO and AOCS President will determine if the situation is one that can (and should) be diffused by discussion with the individuals most directly involved (“simple resolution”), or whether the facts present a possibility that a person might need to leave the Society Meeting and/or be subject to other consequences, or that police involvement may be required at the time.

- **A simple resolution is appropriate when it is apparent that:** misunderstandings occurred and are corrected or lessons have been learned by those in need of learning; there is an authentic commitment to avoid a repetition of the cause of the conduct concern; and (considering all of this and the nature of the conduct concern) a sense of safety and inclusion has been restored without the need for further action.
- **Additional fact-finding.** If further fact-finding during the Society Meeting is necessary to determine the facts and/or whether a simple resolution is appropriate, the AOCS CEO and AOCS President will conduct further discussions with individuals who may have information.
- **Documenting fact-finding.** The AOCS CEO and AOCS President will document the conduct concern; the date(s) and approximate time(s) when the conduct concern arose and was reported (and who reported it, with a notation of whether confidentiality has been requested); the relevant facts found (with sources and contact information); and any actions taken by the AOCS CEO and/or AOCS President (including arriving at a simple resolution and why that is appropriate). This may be in the form of notes, recognizing the time constraints of a Society Meeting.
- **During the Meeting Period, the AOCS CEO and AOCS President may or may not be able to determine that a violation of this Meetings Conduct Policy occurred and may take action accordingly** (given the Society Meeting venue, the complexity and level of activity at the Meeting, and the staffing and available time).
- **Escalation to the AOCS Governing Board for decision-making.** The AOCS CEO and AOCS President may escalate their documented fact-finding to the AOCS Governing Board for decision-making. The AOCS CEO and AOCS President will indicate if they believe there are consequential gaps in facts that they are unable to fill during the Meeting Period, and that may require fact-finding to extend beyond the “Meeting Period” (meaning the days on which a Society Meeting is occurring, and the days of Participants’ transit to and from it) so are outside the scope of this Meetings Conduct Policy.
- **Notice of a decision.** If a decision is made during the Meeting Period, the AOCS CEO and AOCS President will notify the accused Participant and the identified target of the decision. A determination of a violation must be based on fact-finding conducted during the Meeting Period; but may only be made if the AOCS CEO and AOCS President has given (at least) the accused Participant and the identified target an opportunity to provide relevant facts.
- **The AOCS CEO and AOCS President will make a record of all conduct concerns reported during the Meeting Period of a Society Meeting and how they were handled (with copies of relevant documents).**

2. Consequences that may be imposed for violations of this Conduct Policy

- **Requirement to leave the Society Meeting.** A violation of this Society Meetings Conduct Policy may result in an accused Participant being compelled to leave a Society Meeting at the Participant’s own cost. The AOCS CEO and AOCS President may make the determination, in their discretion, to serve the best interests of the Society’s membership and mission as reflected in this Meetings Conduct Policy.
- **Ban from future Society Meetings.** A violation of this Society Meetings Conduct Policy may result in an accused Participant being banned from future Society Meetings. The AOCS Governing Board may

make this determination to serve the best interests of the Society's membership and mission as reflected in this Meetings Conduct Policy.

- **Revocation of AOCs Award or Fellow designation.** A violation of this Society Meetings Conduct Policy may result revocation of any AOCs award or Fellow designation that has been bestowed on an accused Participant. The AOCs Governing Board may make this determination to serve the best interests of the Society's membership and mission as reflected in this Meetings Conduct Policy.
 - **Suspension or Termination of Membership.** A violation of this Society Meetings Conduct Policy may result in suspension or termination of Society membership of an accused Participant. The AOCs Governing Board may make this determination to serve the best interests of the Society's membership and mission as reflected in this Meetings Conduct Policy. See, [AOCs Procedures for Suspension or Termination of Membership](#)
3. **Appeal of a decision on whether a violation occurred, or regarding consequences imposed during a Meeting Period:**

An appeal of a decision on whether a violation occurred, or regarding the consequences imposed, during the Meeting Period may be made under (and subject to the limitations of) the Society's regular conduct policies and processes after the Society Meeting. **However, the only remedy** for an accused Participant's successful appeal of a requirement to leave a Society Meeting and notice to the accused's employing institution is a waiver of a future similar Meeting's registration fee (if the accused Participant paid a fee for the Meeting the accused was required to leave). An appeals must be made in writing and directed to the [AOCs Secretary](#).