

Best practice for participants of meetings and workshops

The Company of Biologists is committed to providing a safe and productive meeting environment that fosters open dialogue and the exchange of scientific ideas, promotes equal opportunities and treatment for all participants, and is free of harassment and discrimination. We value the participation of each attendee and want them to have a productive and enjoyable experience. Attendees are expected to uphold standards of scientific integrity and professional ethics. The Company of Biologists recognises that there are areas of science that are controversial but our events should serve as an effective forum to consider and debate science-relevant viewpoints in an orderly, respectful and fair manner.

This Code of Conduct applies to all participants, including delegates, speakers, visitors, exhibitors, service providers and staff. It covers all events hosted by The Company of Biologists regardless of whether they are in-person or online.

Expected behaviour:

- Treat everyone with respect and consideration, valuing a diversity of views and opinions.
- Communicate openly and thoughtfully with others, and be considerate of the multitude of views and opinions that are different from your own.
- Avoid personal attacks directed toward other participants.
- Recording (photographic, screen capture, audio and/or video) of another individual's presentation or poster is not permitted without their explicit permission.
- Refrain from intimidating, discriminatory, harassing or demeaning behaviour.
- Be mindful of your surroundings and of your fellow participants. Alert staff if you notice a dangerous situation or someone in distress.
- Respect the rules and policies of the meeting venue and/or hotel, or online platform/s.

Unacceptable behaviour:

For purposes of this policy, harassment means unwelcome and offensive comments or behaviour directed to the participant's sex, race, colour, national origin, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity, disability, or other status protected under applicable law. Harassment can include, for example, unwelcome attention, comments or jokes that focus on gender differences or sexual topics and that distract from the professional topics under discussion, unwelcome advances or requests for dates or sexual activities, and the use of language or images that demean or degrade persons of particular gender, racial, ethnic, religious or national identity.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour include, but are not limited to:

- Harassment and intimidation, including any verbal, written or physical conduct designed to threaten, intimidate, humiliate or coerce another participant will not be tolerated.
- Discrimination or other actions based on race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, physical ability, nationality, age, socioeconomic status or belief.
- Stalking, following or unwelcome or surreptitious photography or recording.
- Sustained or disrespectful disruption of presentations or events.

Retaliation for reporting harassment is a violation of this Code of Conduct, as is reporting an incident in bad faith.

Reporting unacceptable behaviour:

- Anyone experiencing or witnessing behaviour that constitutes an immediate or serious threat to public safety or who feels unsafe or threatened should immediately contact the police, approach venue security staff or contact the appropriate public authorities.

- If you are being subjected to or notice that someone else is being subjected to unacceptable behaviour, or have any other concerns, please report your concerns directly to the Events Organiser (email meetings@biologists.com or workshops@biologists.com).

All reports are confidential and will be treated seriously.

Consequences:

Anyone requested to stop unacceptable behaviour is expected to comply immediately.

- The Company of Biologists, venue staff or security may take any action deemed necessary and appropriate including immediate removal from the event without warning or refund, or reporting to the individual's employer.
- The Company of Biologists reserves the right to prohibit attendance at any future event.

Final message

Remember to enjoy the event and take the opportunity to extend your existing networks. Events can be stressful because they involve travel, disrupted routines and busy schedules. However, events provide a unique opportunity to learn about new research, spend time with existing colleagues outside of the lab and make new connections in your discipline. Even if you do not consider yourself especially outgoing, try to make yourself available and do not hesitate to introduce yourself to others. It is important to treat everyone at the event with respect and dignity. Kindness is always an invaluable trait, so please be on your best behaviour.