

## **SAPOR Conduct Policy (the “Policy”)**

### **I. Preamble**

As a professional association, SAPOR fully supports and values all participants at SAPOR-sponsored, online and in-person events and activities such as conferences, meetings, and listserv (collectively and as defined further below, “SAPOR Events”). SAPOR Events help establish professional networks and, in the spirit of free inquiry and expression, encourage collegial interactions that include discussions, differing viewpoints, and scientific debates, all of which are important and necessary for advancing the science and practice of public opinion research. We pride ourselves on our professionalism and our respect for others.

SAPOR Events may bring together people from around the world, and from many different cultures. As such, we need to be sensitive to cultural contexts that vary not only among regions of the USA, but also among the various parts of the world. We must also be sensitive to legacies that have produced discriminatory and prejudicial beliefs and practices. SAPOR firmly believes the success of any organization requires a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workforce and a culture that embraces and encourages different perspectives. We recognize the inherent value in cultivating a wide range of experiences and it is our commitment to embrace every person’s uniqueness and to provide a professional work environment where everyone is welcome and treated with dignity and respect.

For these and other reasons, SAPOR is committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment for everyone attending or associated with SAPOR Events. These individuals include all attendees whether they are SAPOR members or non-members, as well as staff, vendors, exhibitors, contractors, and venue staff (collectively, the “Participants”). We are committed to providing an environment that is free from harassment and discrimination, whether sexual or otherwise, based on gender, age, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, language, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, health, socioeconomic status, marital status, domestic status, political affiliation, or parental status. Harassment and discrimination undermine the principles of equality and respect and are serious forms of professional misconduct. Participants at SAPOR Events who are found to violate this policy will be subject to discipline.

Specifically, and as described in more detail below, the Policy outlines expectations, reporting, and procedures for every Participant at a SAPOR Event. For purposes of this Policy, the phrase “SAPOR Event” also includes the following:

- In-person gatherings such as conferences, meetings, short courses or other SAPOR-sponsored events and activities;
- Online, “virtual” events such as webinars or virtual conferences; and

- Emails, texts, telephone calls and any other online or offline communication related to SAPOR business.

## II. Expected Conduct

All Participants are expected to act in a professional manner and treat others with respect while conducting or engaging in SAPOR Events.

All Participants are expected to abide by this Policy in all meeting venues including ancillary events as well as official and unofficial social gatherings. At a minimum, the Participants are required to:

- Follow the norms of professional respect that are necessary to promote the conditions for free inquiry and expression.
- Be proactive in helping to mitigate or avoid any harm, be it physical or psychological, to any event or activity participant that they personally witness.
- Alert law enforcement or venue security personnel or appropriate authorities if they see a situation in which someone might be in imminent physical danger.

## III. Unacceptable Conduct

***What is prohibited?*** Harassment of others will not be tolerated. SAPOR has zero tolerance for any such behaviors.

**Definitions of Harassment:** More generally, harassment consists of a myriad of activities or conduct, including, without limitation, single or multiple persistent or pervasive acts that are demeaning, abusive, offensive, or create a hostile professional environment. Harassment may include sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature; it may also include threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts; circulation of written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility toward an individual or group; epithets, slurs, or negative stereotyping based on group identity. **Such unprofessional behavior is not limited to face-to-face interactions. As such, it also includes any such unprofessional behavior via emails, texts, telephone calls and any other online or offline communication.**

**Sexual harassment** refers to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Behavior and language that are welcome or acceptable to one person or culture may be unwelcome and offensive to another. Personal or cultural acceptance is not a justification for any unwelcome form of behavior. The following are examples of behavior that, when unwelcome, constitute sexual harassment:

- Sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions;
- Verbal comments or physical actions of a sexual nature, including sexually degrading words used to describe an individual;

- Making unwelcome comments about someone's physical appearance;
- A display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures;
- Sexually explicit jokes;
- Unwanted touching; and
- Persistent and **unwelcome** solicitation of emotional or physical intimacy, especially when accompanied by real or implied threat of professional or other type of harm.

**Other Harassment.** Harassment based on any other protected characteristic is also prohibited. This conduct includes, but is not limited to, prejudicial actions or comments related to actual or perceived gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, socioeconomic status, age, or religion that coerce others, foment broad hostility, or otherwise undermine professional equity or the principles of free inquiry and expression.

Verbally or physically abusive behavior by a Participant toward others while conducting or engaging in SAPOR Events will not be tolerated. Examples of such behavior include, but are not limited to:

- Bullying;
- Knowingly communicating false information about someone else;
- Intimidating, harassing, abusive, derogatory or demeaning speech or actions;
- Directing abusive profanity toward others;
- Engaging in behaviors that have the effect of humiliating others;
- Mobbing (i.e., group bullying an individual);
- Damaging property;
- Deliberately intimidating, stalking or following;
- Harassing photography or recording;
- Sustained disruption of talks or other events;
- Physical assault;
- Real or implied threat of physical harm; and
- Engaging in other unprofessional or inappropriate behavior.

**Anti-Competitive Behaviors:** Antitrust laws are designed to prevent any situation from which collusion, price-fixing or other anti-competitive activity can be reasonably inferred. While it is the case that many of our members are affiliated with academic or other non-profit enterprises, a large number are in fact principals, members, employees or contractors of for-profit competitors. Accordingly, discussions of price-setting, attempts to limit competition, or other unreasonable restraints on trade are strictly prohibited.

While not fully comprehensive, the following list sets forth some basic parameters of what is strictly prohibited at SAPOR Events. Agreements among competitors relating to any of these subjects are per se violations of the antitrust laws.

- Any discussions, collaborations, or attempts by Participants regarding fixing, establishing, maintaining, or discounting prices or terms or conditions of sale, for services or products.
- Any collaborations or attempts by Participants to coordinate restrictions for employment opportunities in the industry or to set salaries, wages or other compensation.
- Any discussions of territorial limitations of any kind.

**General Compliance with Applicable Laws.** All Participants are expected to comply with all applicable laws, rules and regulations (collectively, the “Laws”). Any violation by a Participant of the Laws relating to or arising out of its conduct in connection with a SAPOR Event shall constitute a violation of this Policy.

## **IV. Procedures for Addressing Misconduct**

### **A. Notice**

If you believe that you are or have been subjected to harassment and/or you have identified some other violation of this Policy, please speak up. Any such reporting will be reviewed by the appropriate individuals at SAPOR in confidence and in a non-prejudicial manner. Only if you feel it is appropriate, and in your judgment if you can do so without harm to yourself or others, you can of course communicate, in an effective form, to the person whom you believe is acting inappropriately that their behavior is unwelcome and/or potentially in violation of this Policy. Explicitly identifying inappropriate behavior communicates: 1) that one perceives the act as crossing a professional line, and 2) one does not wish it to continue.

If you witness potential harm, such as physical contact or hostile verbal behavior, be proactive in helping to mitigate or avoid any escalations in the activity or other negative consequences. Avoid physical or verbal altercations of any kind. If it poses no immediate safety risk to you, alert law enforcement or venue security personnel.

If you are or have been subjected to harassment and are not comfortable addressing it directly with the individual, if the behavior does not stop, or if you remain concerned about the incident, concerns should be reported in the manner stated below.

More generally, if you experience harassment that results in physical harm, makes you feel physically unsafe, or otherwise requires an immediate response, you should alert law enforcement or venue security personnel.

## **B. Formal Reporting**

1. Submit a report via the online form which goes directly to an Ad-Hoc Conduct Committee, consisting of SAPOR's President, Conference Chair, and Secretary/Treasurer. Should any member of the Ad-Hoc Conduct Committee be involved in a complaint—as the complainant, the accused, or a witness—and therefore needs to be recused due to this conflict of interest, the reporting individual has the option to select which committee members receive the violation report. Should any member be recused from the Ad-Hoc Conduct Committee, the person(s) will be replaced by another person in similar office (e.g., Past President, Past Conference Chair, Associate Secretary/Treasurer). This Ad-Hoc Conduct Committee will report through the President. The President, or a person in a similar office, will serve as the chair of the Ad-Hoc Conduct Committee.
2. Instructions are provided on what to report: (i) a statement describing the alleged action or violation, (ii) the date or dates when the alleged violation occurred, (iii) the SAPOR event/meeting/connection, (iv) the name(s) of the individual(s) alleged to be in violation, (v) any other witnesses to the event(s), and (vi) your first and last name (as the complainant) along with contact information, including telephone number, postal address, and e-mail address.
3. Within two (2) business days (or with one business day during in-person events, such as in the case of a conference), the President will respond to complainant on behalf of the Ad-Hoc Conduct Committee with a message saying that the incident/issue will be investigated within thirty (30) days. The complainant will be told to reach out directly to the President if (1) the person wants to discuss the matter more quickly or (2) if they haven't heard back within the response times as set forth above.

## **C. Review Process**

1. The role of the Ad-Hoc Conduct Committee is to review the written report of violation. The Committee reaches out to the person whose conduct is in question in the complaint and that person can provide their own written account of the incident(s). In its sole discretion, the Committee may reach out to the complainant and/or any other named witnesses as needed. The Committee may secure the service of an independent professional Ombudsperson as deemed appropriate and necessary in any given complaint.

2. The Ad-Hoc Conduct Committee will decide about possible action within 30 days of the complainant report.

#### **D. Decision-Making by SAPOR**

SAPOR reserves the right to have sole discretion over decision-making regarding standards of conduct in its organizational activities and at SAPOR Events and to determine any associated penalties. By agreeing to the terms of registration for a specific SAPOR Event, all Participants are subject to this Policy. SAPOR will have no liability in connection with the stated penalties below; and there will be no refund or compensation of any kind associated therewith.

After a review by the Ad-Hoc Conduct Committee and based on the merits of the complaint and any records of prior complaints, the Ad-Hoc Conduct Committee will seek a consensus on the appropriately judged outcome. Majority opinion will rule if consensus is not achieved. The outcomes include, but are not limited to the following:

- Declination to take action;
- Temporary or permanent removal from SAPOR leadership, committee, or volunteer role;
- Revocation of registration for upcoming SAPOR-sponsored event(s), with refunding of registration fees to be determined by the event's cancellation policy;
- Immediate expulsion from a SAPOR-sponsored event(s) with no refund for any fees paid;
- Temporary or permanent ban from participation in SAPOR-sponsored event(s); and
- Temporary or permanent revocation of SAPOR membership with no refund for any fees paid.

Referral to Law Enforcement: SAPOR members of the Ad-Hoc Conduct Committee will review federal offense-reporting standards (e.g., Clery Act) tied to violent threats, assault, and other related acts. In cases where the behavior could be unlawful, SAPOR will immediately refer the incident to those parties that may have a right to bring a claim, including in the case of criminal claims, referrals to the appropriate law enforcement or prosecution authorities.

#### **E. Referral to SAPOR Board**

The President will report on the Ad-Hoc Conduct Committee decisions, but not the facts or details thereof, at SAPOR's next occurring board meeting. The decisions will be announced (decision information only) not subject to vote but entered into the minutes by acclamation. The "facts" of the complaints will be archived with SAPOR's historical archives with other confidential files, and not made a part of the public minutes. It will be the responsibility of SAPOR event organizers and leadership to review participant lists to identify individuals who are under temporary or permanent restrictions.

All decision information delivered to the SAPOR Board will be kept confidential. The complaint form and all related materials prepared for the Ad-Hoc Conduct Committee, including but not limited to information gathered through interviews with the complainant, the accused, and witnesses, and the outcome of the investigation, will be kept confidential. All Ad-Hoc Conduct Committee discussions related to the specifics of the complaint will be treated as privileged communication with no information recorded that would identify the incident or any individuals involved in the incident.

#### **F. Reinstatement and Appeals**

A person subject to a temporary ban will be automatically reinstated when the ban expires, assuming they meet other criteria for membership and participation, including renewed agreement to the SAPOR Code of Conduct and payment of dues or registration fees.

All decisions rendered by the Ad-Hoc Conduct Committee are subject to appeal by either the complainant or the person whose behavior was the basis of the complaint. The appeal must be submitted in writing to the SAPOR Board stating the justification for the appeal. The appeal must also be submitted within six (6) months of the time the Ad-Hoc Conduct Committee rendered its decision. The enforcement of the decisions and rulings of the Ad-Hoc Conduct Committee shall stay in effect during the pendency of any appeal, subject to the sole discretion and unanimous consent of the members constituting the Ad-Hoc Committee. The appeal will be reviewed by an Appeals Committee consisting of the SAPOR Vice President, Past President, Associate Secretary/Treasurer, Vice Conference Chair, and Past Conference Chair. Should any member of the Appeals Committee be involved in the previously reviewed complaint, or be involved in the complaint, as the complainant, the accused, or a witness, the person(s) will be replaced by another person in a similar office. This Appeals Committee will report through the Past President; the Past President, or person in a similar office, will serve as the chair of the Appeals Committee.

If a majority of the Appeals Committee agree that there is justification for an appeal, then they may review written reports of the violation. This Appeals Committee may reach out to the complainant and/or any other named witnesses as needed to gather additional information. The Appeals Committee may secure the service of an independent professional Ombudsperson as deemed appropriate and necessary in any given complaint. If the Ad-Hoc Conduct Committee used an Ombudsperson in arriving at its original decision, a different Ombudsperson will be selected for the appeals process to ensure fairness and transparency.

The Appeals Committee will render a decision on the appeal within forty-five (45) days. shall be communicated to the accused and the complainant by the Chair of the Appeals Committee.

**Additional Resources**

<https://www.rainn.org/after-sexual-assault>

<http://victimsofcrime.org/help-for-crime-victims/national-hotlines-and-helpful-links>

AAPOR Policy (under About Us and then jump to conduct policy or use this

link: <https://aapor.org/about-us/who-we-are/#1668052732710-8ab88065-5d4a>)