

POLICY TITLE	CSSHE Code of Conduct
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The Canadian Society for the Study of Higher Education (CSSHE)

Code of Conduct

PURPOSE AND RATIONALE

The purpose of the Canadian Society for the Study of Higher Education's (CSSHE; also referred to as "the Society") Code of Conduct (hereafter "the Code") is to articulate the Society's expectations for the respectful conduct of its members and affiliates. The Code:

- Provides a guideline for behaviour and expectations across the scope of CSSHE's activities.
- Reinforces and informs stakeholders of CSSHE's values and principles.
- Serves as a means to help maintain respectful conduct, minimizing or avoiding actions that bring disrepute to the Society.

Definitions and interpretations of the Code in any case are the sole jurisdiction of the Code of Conduct Ad-Hoc Committee (hereafter "CCAHC") and the Appeals Panel (defined herein).

POLICY APPLICATION AND SCOPE

CSSHE's Code of Conduct applies to all CSSHE members, affiliates, and guests as defined below. Members are held responsible for the conduct of any non-participant guest they invite or bring to a CSSHE activity.

The Code also applies to the Editorial Team, Editorial Advisory Board, and staff of the Canadian Journal of Higher Education (CJHE). Nothing in this Code displaces the existing policies and structures governing the relationship between CJHE and CSSHE.

Staff are expected to abide by the principles and values of the Society in their work. Nothing in this Code displaces the terms of employment for CSSHE staff. Staff-related matters will be governed by their employment agreements and applicable employment policies.

The Code applies to any conduct that may reasonably be seen to affect the integrity, operations, or reputation of CSSHE, whether that conduct occurs in physical or online environments. It also applies to public or professional activities where an individual represents CSSHE or is associated with its work. Behaviour outside CSSHE-hosted settings may be subject to the Code where the connection to CSSHE is clear and the impact on its community is material or reputational. Any proceedings shall be guided by any applicable legislation in the province wherein the conduct is occurring/has occurred.

In the event that a member holds membership at multiple organizations, CSSHE will apply its own Code of Conduct to address behaviours of concern. In the event that multiple codes of conduct are implicated (e.g., during the Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities), additional sanctions may be given by those organizations in their respective jurisdiction.

DEFINITIONS

1. **Applicable legislation:** *Canadian Human Rights Act and Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act.*
2. **Affiliate:** Any organization or individual that has been recognized as a partner, sponsor, or collaborator in a CSSHE Activity. This includes but is not limited to CSSHE staff, directors, volunteers, affiliates, consultants, service providers, the Editorial Team, Editorial Advisory Board and staff of the Canadian Journal of Higher Education (CJHE), and others in similar roles or relations.
3. **Code of Conduct Ad-Hoc Committee:** The Code of Conduct Ad-Hoc Committee (CCAHC) is an ad-hoc committee, established pursuant to the CSSHE By-laws, and charged with overseeing the implementation of the Code of Conduct, including considering matters of compliance as per the Terms of Reference.
4. **Complainant:** One or more initiators of a complaint. A complainant need not have been directly involved in or affected by the matter complained about.
5. **Conduct of Concern:** Any conduct that reflects negatively on the reputation of the CSSHE and may create a hostile environment for members, affiliates, and guests. Conduct of concern violates the standards specified in the Code of Conduct and may be subject to sanctions by the Society.
6. **CSSHE Activity:** Any in-person or virtual event (including the annual conference) or meeting (inclusive of membership meetings) hosted or organized by CSSHE, as well as any activity, discussion, or discourse related to CSSHE events, meetings, mandate, or work, including that of the CJHE.
7. **Guests:** Any registered attendee, speaker, invited guest, sponsor/exhibitor, staff member, or volunteer at a CSSHE activity; as well as those who have accompanied a member or affiliate in CSSHE activity but are not registered to attend.
8. **Jurisdiction.** Jurisdiction relates to the ability of the CCAHC to consider evidence and make a decision on Conduct of Concern.
9. **Member:** Any individual who has been granted membership in CSSHE (as defined in the Bylaws), or was a member at the time of a reported incident.
10. **Respondent:** One or more persons who are subjects of a complaint.

PRINCIPLES

1. All members, affiliates, and guests of CSSHE shall treat others with respect and dignity, ensuring that every interaction reflects courtesy, professionalism, and appreciation for diverse perspectives. The Society expects all members, affiliates and guests to engage in collegial dialogue and promote constructive discourse while engaged in CSSHE's activities.
2. CSSHE values equity, diversity, and inclusion, creating spaces where individuals of all backgrounds and identities are welcomed, respected, and supported.
3. CSSHE is committed to Indigenization and decolonization, and seeks to create an environment in which Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and relating are respected and encouraged.
4. CSSHE is dedicated to maintaining safe and respectful environments, free from harassment, bullying, violence, or any behaviour that threatens the physical or psychological well-being of others.
5. CSSHE recognizes that conflict between members, affiliates and guests of the Society may arise. Whenever possible, all members, affiliates and guests are encouraged to engage in informal conflict resolution to foster a culture of effective conflict management. When informal conflict resolution is not possible, is unsuccessful, or is otherwise inappropriate, complaints and allegations may be dealt with through the formal process.
6. CSSHE will ensure that all processes for addressing complaints and conflicts are fair, impartial, and guided by the principles of natural justice, providing equal opportunity for all parties to be heard.
7. CSSHE members, affiliates and guests shall respect the confidentiality and privacy of individuals and organizations, safeguarding sensitive information and personal boundaries at all times. All parties and witnesses are expected to maintain confidentiality. Breaches of confidentiality may result in disciplinary action. All documents and information (physical or electronic) related to an investigation will be destroyed after three (3) years.
8. No one, including, but not limited to complainants, witnesses, or respondents, will face retaliation or threats of retaliation for participating in any part of the Code of Conduct process. Any form of retaliation may result in separate disciplinary measures under this policy.
9. Respondents have the right to appeal the process and/or outcome of a formal conduct process. All appeals must meet articulated grounds to be considered.

CONDUCT OF CONCERN

The following is a non-exhaustive list of prohibited conduct that may be addressed under the CSSHE's Code of Conduct ("Conduct of Concern").

1. **Bullying and Harassment:** Harassment and bullying refer to any course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known, or ought reasonably to be known, to be unwelcome. This includes:

- a. Sexual harassment and unwanted sexual advances, whether verbal, physical, or implied.
- b. Invasion of privacy of another member or guest in CSSHE activities.
- c. Behaviour that creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment.

Harassment and bullying do not need to be intentional and may occur regardless of whether they are based on a prohibited ground under human rights legislation. Examples include:

- a. Unwelcome, unwanted, or inappropriate jokes
- b. Taunting or mocking
- c. Making another person feel unsafe
- d. Inappropriate comments about physical appearance
- e. Derogatory or dismissive remarks
- f. Offensive or belittling comments or gestures
- g. Displaying offensive or derogatory material
- h. Shunning or exclusionary conduct
- i. Disruption of talks or events

2. **Discrimination:** Discrimination refers to any act, omission, or behaviour, whether intentional or unintentional, that results in denying an individual or group equal treatment, access, or opportunity within CSSHE activities or related contexts.

It includes any statement, remark, or action that is derogatory, exclusionary, or perpetuates stereotypes based on prohibited grounds such as race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital or family status, disability, or any other characteristic protected under Canadian and provincial human rights legislation. Discrimination may occur in person, in writing, or through digital or virtual platforms.

3. **Breaches of Integrity, Misrepresentation, Fraudulence, and Impact to Reputation:** Activities by individuals who have received or will receive awards or distinctions that breach integrity, involve misrepresentation, constitute fraud, and/or negatively impact the reputation of CSSHE are prohibited. Examples include:

- a. Violating professional codes of conduct established by their institution or professional affiliation.
- b. Being convicted of a criminal offense.
- c. Being censured or removed from a professional or regulatory body for an offense directly relevant to the distinction.
- d. Misrepresenting affiliation with, or purported heritage in, an Indigenous community or another designated group.

Note that issues of plagiarism, research ethics, and other academic misconduct related to CSSHE awards, the conference, or CJHE may also be referred to the respondent's institution for investigation. However, these should not form part of a decision by the CCAHC and, as such, fall outside their jurisdiction.

4. **Violence:** Any act of physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, or verbal force, whether actual or threatened, that causes or has the potential to cause harm to another individual. Violence may occur in person, in writing, or through digital platforms and is strictly prohibited in all CSSHE activities and interactions.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Members of the CCAHC shall recuse themselves if they have a perceived or actual conflict of interest in any complaint.

SEVERABILITY

If any provision, section, subsection, paragraph, sentence, phrase, standard, obligation, sanction, procedure, or other part of this Code of Conduct is determined by a court, tribunal, regulator, arbitrator, or other authority of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, illegal, void, or unenforceable, that determination shall not affect the validity, legality, or enforceability of the remaining provisions of this Code of Conduct, which shall continue in full force and effect to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.

RELATED REFERENCES

- [Canadian Human Rights Act](#)
- [Canada Labour Code](#)
- [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#)
- [Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research](#)
- [CSSHE By-Laws](#)

Code of Conduct Process

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to outline CSSHE's process involved in addressing an allegation of any conduct of concern.

PROCEDURES

Making an Allegation

CSSHE's Code of Conduct process begins with someone making an allegation against a CSSHE member, affiliate, or guest. Members, affiliates, guests, and those acting in a formal capacity for CSSHE (e.g., a committee) can make an allegation. The allegations are submitted to the Code of Conduct Ad-Hoc Committee (CAHC) for review via email to cahc_cahcc@csshe-scees.ca, using the [Complaint Form](#).

An allegation is expected to be made within one (1) year of the incident occurring. Complaints filed outside this timeline may not be accepted by CSSHE.

Powers of the Code of Conduct Ad-Hoc Committee (CAHC)

The CAHC, when appointed to investigate and make determinations regarding a complaint, possesses all procedural authority necessary to ensure a fair, thorough, and impartial process. The CAHC may exercise the following powers:

- a. Dismiss the complaint;
- b. Uphold the complaint;
- c. Impose or recommend appropriate sanctions, which may include: (i) A reminder or warning; (ii) Temporary or permanent exclusion from CSSHE activities; (iii) Suspension or revocation of CSSHE membership; (iv) Any other action consistent with ensuring a respectful and safe environment;
- d. Amend or modify any interim measures as deemed appropriate;
- e. Refer the matter for further review or a new investigation, where necessary, by a different composition of the CAHC.

Accordingly, the CAHC has significant discretion in reaching an appropriate resolution in response to the complaint, and this authority is exercised in accordance with the governing policies of the CSSHE.

Initial Review

When an allegation is received, the CSSHE President will convene the CAHC and conduct an initial review to determine if the matter is within the scope of the Code of Conduct. If the matter is not within the scope of the Code of Conduct, the CAHC will consider the matter concluded, inform the complainant, and no further action will be taken.

If the allegation is within the scope of the Code of Conduct, then the CAHC will take further steps outlined in this document. The CSSHE member, affiliate or guest against whom the allegation is being made (the respondent) will be made aware of the allegation.

Informal Process

An informal process is a consensual process between all parties to resolve allegations concerning Conduct of Concern. CSSHE encourages the use of an informal process, at the outset of the complaint, to address issues in a timely manner.

After the CCAHC reviews an allegation, and if appropriate, the complainant and the respondent may be provided with an opportunity to explore resolving any conflict through an informal process.

The informal process will depend on the allegation, information gathered as part of validating the allegation, and will strive to ensure that future Conduct of Concern does not occur. Actions may include, but are not limited to, informal mediation, reminding the respondent of their obligations under the Code of Conduct, or requesting that the alleged conduct cease.

The informal process may involve engaging parties in dialogue to resolve an allegation.

The outcome agreed to through the informal process is not subject to an appeal.

Formal Process

A formal process is initiated by the CCAHC if it determines that the allegations are sufficient to warrant a formal process. The severity of a complaint will be weighed in light of the risk of harm to individuals or the organization as well as the perceived severity of the breach of the Code of Conduct. Generally speaking, moderate to major breaches that are harmful or extremely harmful, or repeated minor breaches may warrant a formal process.

Investigation of a Bona Fide Allegation

If a formal process is initiated, then an investigation will occur by the CCAHC. Generally, prior to an investigation, the respondent will be informed of the substance of the allegation and that an investigation is beginning. In extenuating circumstances, in the interest of maintaining the integrity of the evidence-gathering process, CCAHC may delay informing the respondent until evidence has been gathered.

Once the respondent has been notified of the allegation, investigation, and evidence gathered, the respondent will be provided an opportunity to respond to the allegation.

The Respondent will be entitled to present written submissions to the CCAHC. Written submissions should be submitted in accordance with the timelines provided by CCAHC.

Based on all the information gathered from the complainant, respondents, and other parties, the CCAHC will issue an outcome prescribed under its powers.

Appeal of an Outcome Issued by the CCAHC

An individual who is found to have breached the CSSHE Code of Conduct and has had an outcome imposed may appeal the decision to the CSSHE Executive Committee (i.e., the Officers of the Society) sitting as the appeal panel.

An appeal can only be made based on the following grounds:

1. A substantial procedural error has been made in the process;
2. Evidence, not reasonably available at the time the outcome was determined, is available and the new evidence may change the outcome;
3. The outcome determined is unreasonable or excessive;
4. The conduct of concern adjudicated by the CCAHC is outside its jurisdiction.

Once the respondent has been informed of the outcome issued by the CCAHC, they may file an appeal with the appeal panel within thirty (30) calendar days by sending it directly by email to the Executive Director (ccahec_cahcc@csshe-scees.ca).

The appeal should be supported by relevant documentation and evidence from the CCAHC decision. Generally speaking, a complete appeal application will have the following information:

1. The outcome which is being appealed;
2. The grounds for the appeal (see above)
3. The outcome the respondent is seeking and the reasons why;
4. Any and all documentation and submissions relevant to the appeal.

The Appeal Panel will review the appeal and may take one of the following actions:

- a. Dismiss the appeal;
- b. Confirm the original decision;
- c. Amend or revoke the sanction imposed; or
- d. Refer the matter back to the CCAHC for further review.

Where the complaint is not sustained, the appeal panel may, on behalf of the Board, make reasonable efforts to restore the reputation of the respondent. However, CSSHE has no obligation to provide reparations to either party in relation to the complaint.

All decisions of the appeal panel are final.

Code of Conduct Ad-Hoc Committee (CCAHC)

Terms of Reference

Aim

The CSSHE Code of Conduct Committee (CCAHC) supports the implementation of the Code of Conduct, considers matters of compliance, and ensures that complaints are examined fairly.

Objectives

1. To make the CSSHE Code of Conduct accessible to members, affiliates and guests.
2. To consider compliance issues and agree upon and implement, monitor, and review compliance in relation to the Code of Conduct.
3. To examine complaints (i.e., alleged breaches of the Code) that are received, mediate an outcome where relevant, and make recommendations to the CSSHE Executive Committee on an appropriate course of action.

Membership

The CCAHC shall comprise the following:

1. *Chairperson*, voting (1) – the CSSHE President shall serve as the chairperson of the CCAHC. The chairperson is responsible for ensuring that appropriate records of the meetings and decisions are collected.
2. *Board of Directors representative*, voting (1) – current members of the CSSHE Board of Directors will be nominated to serve during a board of directors meeting.
3. *Member representative*, voting (1) – all current CSSHE members in good standing are eligible for nomination to the CCAHC.
4. *Executive Director* (1), non-voting – While CSSHE contracts the secretariat services of CSSE, the CSSE Executive Director will serve as an ex-officio member in order to provide administrative support to the committee and keep appropriate records of the meetings and decisions.
5. *Legal counsel* (1), non-voting – as needed, and from time to time, the CCAHC may request the assistance of legal counsel through CSSHE in order to assist them with questions and decision making.

Selection of Members

Members may submit their candidacy via an open call after an allegation has been received. The CSSHE Executive Committee will review the applications and select members, including the Board of Directors representative.

Consideration will be given to ensuring the CCAHC has membership that provides diverse representation, including gender, social demographics, academic rank and experience, institutional affiliation, and geography.

In the event that enough members of the CCAHC have a perceived or declared conflict of interest, are involved in the complaint, or are unable to review the complaint in a timely manner to affect quorum, members of the CSSHE Executive Committee may serve as temporary members of the CCAHC.

Term

CCAHC members will be engaged for the duration of the complaint process of that case. Members may submit their candidacy again in subsequent calls.

The CSSHE Board will endeavour to fill any vacancy on the committee as soon as is practical by issuing another call.

Meetings

Meetings of the CCAHC will be normally conducted via an online platform, and usually be called within three weeks of a complaint being received.

Decision Making

1. Quorum for CCAHC meetings shall be all three voting members.
2. Individuals have one vote.
3. Decision making shall be by consensus where possible, otherwise by simple majority.
4. CSSHE empowers, in good faith, the CCAHC to represent the interests of the organization between meetings when required.
5. CCAHC members will declare any potential conflict of interest relating to CCAHC activities. Where a conflict of interest is identified, the Committee member will stand aside from all procedures and deliberations related to that activity.

Confidentiality

Information and discussion regarding members' compliance with the Code of Conduct and any personal information will be treated as confidential and not shared beyond the functions of the CCAHC.