

Geological Association of Canada

Code of Conduct for GAC® meetings and events

The Geological Association of Canada (GAC®) aims to provide all participants of GAC®-related events with a positive, safe, and harassment-free environment in which diverse participants may learn, discuss, and network in an atmosphere of mutual respect, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, country of origin, age, disability, physical appearance, body size, religion, or culture. We recognize the responsibility to create and maintain that diverse environment for the benefit of all and to be active in promoting meaningful participation of individuals from all underrepresented groups and minorities.

Applicability

GAC® members and all non-member participants (such as visitors, venue staff, or exhibitors) must adhere to the GAC® Code of Ethics and GAC® Code of Conduct in all GAC®-related events. This applies to all GAC® events and events run by the Sections and Divisions of the GAC® including (but not limited to) meetings, field trips, short courses, mentorships, and other supported programs and all virtual events. The GAC® Code of Ethics and GAC® Code of Conduct also apply to events by organizations other than GAC® but held in conjunction with GAC® in public or private facilities. Finally, GAC® members are expected to abide by the standards set in the GAC® Code of Ethics and GAC® Code of Conduct in non-GAC® related events.

Examples of expected behaviour

- Treat everyone with respect and consideration.
- Communicate respectfully and openly with others, critiquing ideas rather than individuals.
- Be considerate of views and opinions that are different from your own.
- Alert a GAC® councilor, an LOC volunteer, or onsite security personnel if you witness unacceptable behaviour or someone in distress.
- Honour instructions if photographs or recordings of presentations are not allowed.
- If you choose to drink alcohol or to consume other legal intoxicants in accordance with Federal and Provincial laws, do it so responsibly and safely. Be mindful of your responsibility to act professionally and to the standards set in the GAC® Code of Ethics and GAC® Code of Conduct.
- Respect the rules and policies of the conference centre and all associated venues, including but not limited to field trip accommodations and pre- and post-conference events (e.g. workshops).
- Standards for respectful behavior and communication apply in any forum or medium, including in-person or virtual conferences and events, any online interactions, any social media, conference presentations, and media interviews.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour

- Harassment and intimidation in any form, including gender-based harassment, and any verbal, written, or physical conduct designed to threaten, intimidate, or coerce.
- Discrimination in any form based on race, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, physical appearance, body size, religion, or culture.
- Use of nudity or sexual images in public spaces or presentations.

- Jokes or remarks that reflect stereotyping and denigrate others.
- Stalking in any form, including on-line trolling.
- Sexual harassment in any form, including inappropriate, unwanted or unwelcome physical contact such as touching, patting or pinching; insulting comments, gestures, or practical jokes of a sexual nature that cause discomfort or embarrassment; and inappropriate enquiries or comments.
- Disrespectful disruption of presentations in all GAC®-related events.
- Disparaging remarks, stereotyping, negative language, and ad hominem attacks.
- Use of online tools such as chat rooms, any social media, or other forms of digital communication to engage in any form of harassment, stalking, discrimination, or any of the behaviours listed above.

Consequences

Anyone requested to stop any form of unacceptable behaviour must comply immediately. If necessary, the Safety Officer or on-site security may take further action, including:

- Verbal warning
- Immediate removal from the event without warning and without a refund
- Submission of a formal misconduct report to the GAC® Council.

Where complaints submitted to the GAC® Council are found to have merit, disciplinary action will be taken against the offender — up to and including prohibiting attendance at any future meeting and revocation of GAC® membership or referral of complaints to the offender’s employer or legal authorities if criminal actions are involved.

Local Organizing Committee Responsibilities

Each Local Organizing Committee (LOC) shall have a Safety Officer who will ensure that the Code of Conduct is included in all meeting materials, prominently displayed during the conference, and ensure that all volunteers know the procedures for reporting incidents. An LOC may choose to work with an external group for incident reporting, such as a Campus Security office, a university ombudsman, or a local legal group. If someone on the LOC has had previous training in dealing with reports of this kind they can be the designated first point of contact but it is recognized that an LOC may prefer to have an external entity be the reporting contact. Contact information for any designated personnel should be available from the event registration desk, meeting website, and conference materials. In other settings such as field trips the safety officer will be identified at the start of the event and in the program.

At the GAC® annual meeting, reports of unacceptable conduct can be made to any LOC volunteer, a GAC® councilor, or on-site security personnel member. These individuals should be readily identifiable on-site using an identification badge or volunteer shirt. All LOC volunteers will be aware of who to contact in case a report is made.

Reporting Unacceptable Behavior

If you experience or witness any form of unacceptable behaviour or have any questions about what is unacceptable behaviour, please contact an LOC volunteer, a GAC® councilor, or on-site security personnel member immediately. If reports are made verbally and dealt with by on-site security

personnel the LOC Chair should be informed by the person receiving the report after the incident. The incident may also be reported to GAC® Council if further action is needed.

Complaints regarding any type of unacceptable behaviour can be made in person on-site or via email to the designated authority for each event, ensuring that the email subject line reflects the urgency of the situation. Complaints submitted to the GAC® Council will be handled confidentially to the maximum extent possible and will be investigated and resolved promptly following the procedure outlined in the GAC® Code of Ethics.

The GAC® Code of Ethics strictly prohibits retaliation against anyone for reporting or inquiring in good faith about what that person believes to be unacceptable behaviour or for participating in any related investigation. GAC® will not tolerate retaliatory behaviour from its members, especially from those in senior positions.

If you experience or witness behaviour or actions that are an immediate or serious threat to you, others, or public safety (for example, physical and sexual assault), first consider your safety and then contact emergency services (911) or on-site security immediately.

Adapted from:

AGU Meetings conduct

GSA Events Code of Conduct

EGU Code of Conduct

Favaro et al., 2016. Your science conference should have a code of conduct. *Frontiers in Marine Science*.

Foxx et al., 2019. Evaluating the prevalence and quality of conference codes of conduct. *PNAS*.