



IVSA Code of Conduct





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1. Mission Statement

The International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA) mission is: "To benefit the animals and people of the world by harnessing the potential and dedication of veterinary students to promote the international application of veterinary skills, education and knowledge."

2. Introduction

This code of conduct has been created for IVSA and all its members.

It aims to formulate behaviour parameters:

- to create a comfortable, positive, and safe environment and atmosphere for all participants of every cultural background.
- to be in accordance with the principles and values of IVSA.
- to achieve the best outcomes for
 - all events organised by IVSA and its subsidiaries [e.g. congresses, symposia, and exchanges]
 - all the IVSA Social media platforms (e.g. Members Portal, Instagrams and Facebook pages of both IVSA Global and MOs, including all other social media platforms).
 - all the opportunities financed by IVSA (e.g. Scholarships, grants, and attendance of events in which the individual is representing IVSA)

In short, each person is required and expected to take responsibility for their actions and to act respectfully, with dignity, and with consideration for each other.

2.1. General rules and behaviour

Be **aware** and **respectful** of other cultures.

Every culture and each individual has different values, personalities, and opinions. Hence, it is important to be open-minded and act in a way that is positive for everyone. For example,





activities involving inappropriate nudity or crude acts during an IVSA event are prohibited.

1. Take **care** of yourself and others

This includes your well-being: try to get enough sleep, eat and drink enough and see that others do the same. Also, try to watch your and other people's belongings.

2. **Participate** in General Assemblies (GA) and be **supportive** of others.

Creating a positive environment in GA is important; help each other out where needed. Participation is obligatory to make good and informed decisions and to ensure that GAs finish on time.

3. Be **on time** for any events being held.

4. Follow the instructions of the Organising Committee (OC) and IVSA Officials

5. Be considerate towards other delegates.

6. Do not cause disruptions at any time during the event.

7. Do not act in any way that may harm the reputation of the IVSA, the hosting Member Organisation, other organisations involved, or fellow veterinary students.

8. Do not act in any way that may cause damage to the venue, and clean up after yourself.

9. Do not post any public videos, pictures, or statements on social media that could damage the reputation of IVSA, its members, or associated organisations. Behaviour in IVSA Social media (MOs social media, IVSA Global/Regional Social media) should be professional and appropriate.

10. Smoking is forbidden within IVSA meetings, including General Assembly, Lectures, Workshops and Hotel Rooms. There will be designated smoking areas for use during breaks.

10.1. Drinking alcoholic beverages is forbidden within IVSA meetings, including General Assembly, Lectures, Workshops and Breaks.





10.2. Consumption of alcohol in the evening programmes should be restricted to Social Activities. If done, it must be in moderation and not affect the participant's involvement in the event.

11. Adhere to the local laws and regulations.

3. Local Laws

1. Every participant must respect and comply with all applicable National, Federal, State, and local laws. Any illegal activity will be reported to the proper authorities and subject to the applicable jurisdictional actions.
2. The following actions or behaviours are forbidden at all IVSA events and may result in removal from the event and alerting the local government:
 - 2.1. Use of illegal drugs
 - 2.2. Alcohol consumption in disagreement with Local Laws
 - 2.3. Damage or theft of property
 - 2.4. Violence or threat of violence, intimidation or harassment to any party
 - 2.5. Discrimination towards any other person, sexual harassment, racial slurs or Sexual Orientation Gender Identity (SOGI) based discrimination

4. Raising Concerns

1. In the case of in-person events, if you think one of these rules is being broken, please talk to someone from the OC, IVSA Officials or EXCO, as they can help you address the issue.
2. You can ask any question or raise any concerns at any time by emailing codeofconduct@ivsa.org, or you can fill out the anonymous form link, which will be available at the IVSA link tree. (this is applicable if it is a suggestion or a complaint from an event but raising it after the event)
3. The person must submit a signed complaint to one person from EXCO, OC or Officials. If the complainants wish to remain anonymous, a representative can sign the Complaint. The complaint will be presented for deliberation to the Core Panel outlined in **Section 6.1** without stating the complainants.





IVSA protects us against retaliation, and the Policy on Reporting Misconducts also contains measures to protect people who file reports.

Remember that this should not be misused and that **misuse can be considered a code of violation.**

5. Who can make a complaint?

- 5.1. IVSA Members that were/are present at the event the complaint is about
- 5.2. Any IVSA member that experiences a violation of the Code of Conduct (If applicable, can file a complaint online or anonymously, which will be considered under Section Online compliant)
- 5.3. All the guests present at the event the complaint is about.
- 5.4. All volunteers present at the event the complaint is about
- 5.5. All the technical and non-technical staff present at the event the complaint is about.

6. Who considers the complaint?

- 6.1. For all in-person events, there should be a Code of Conduct panel including IVSA Global President, OC President, 3 members from the Officials (with the exception of EXCO Members and Trustees) and 3 from the OC, one representative from the complainant or that person itself & one representative of the defendant or that person itself.
- 6.2. For each online event, there should be a Code of Conduct panel with a total of 4 people, where 2 people from the official team (including elected officials non-EXCO or Trustee) and 2 from the Online OC, which makes the core panel, and one representative of the complainant or that person itself and one representative of the defendant or that person itself which make the full panel.
- 6.3. For other Situations in which the COC is valid, there should be a Code of Conduct Panel with a total of 4 people, where 1 person is the IVSA President and 3 Officials (including elected officials non-EXCO or Trustee)





- 6.4. The panel should Strive for maximum Diversity of its members
- 6.5. The list of panel should be announced before the actual event in the Event Booklet
- 6.6. Once the complaint is made, the Code of Conduct panel will be joined by one representative from the complainant or that person itself & one representative of the defendant or that person itself
- 6.7. If a person from the panel is accused, he/she/they will have to step down from the core panel but can represent themselves as a complainant or defendant. They will be replaced by a new member from their respective team by taking suggestions from other team members.
- 6.8. If the defendant or complainant fails to be present in the panel or fails to send a representative, the panel members may provide a representative from the Officials team to replace the absent representative

7. IVSA Anti-Harassment Policy

- 7.1. IVSA is committed to providing an atmosphere of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity (DEI) that encourages the free expression and exchange of scientific ideas, free thoughts, and cultural knowledge.
- 7.2. IVSA is strongly against any form of harassment. Our community culture is a key factor in our success. How we interact, communicate, and behave with each other is paramount to maintaining this success. All members and staff are entitled to an environment that respects their dignity and is free from objectionable conduct.
- 7.3. What is harassment?
 - 7.3.1. Unwanted conduct, either in person or online in written, verbal, visual or physical form, about someone's race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin, citizenship, religion or religious belief, age, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, marital status or family status, disability and/or neurodiversity.
 - 7.3.2. Bullying by intimidatory behaviour.
 - 7.3.3. The following are examples but are not an exhaustive list:
 - 7.3.3.1. Inappropriate use of authority
 - 7.3.3.2. Physical threats, stalking, assault, or insulting behaviours or gestures





- 7.3.3.3. Yelling at, threatening, or personally insulting participants or presenters at a meeting, activity, or event (verbally or physically, whether face-to-face or virtually).
- 7.3.3.4. Display or circulate sexually or racially offensive written or recorded material
- 7.3.3.5. Making unwelcome jokes or comments:
 - That can be interpreted as insults, ridicule, or teasing
 - About someone's race, colour, national or ethnic origin, citizenship, religion or religious belief, age, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or disability, or any other reason not related to scientific merit.
- 7.3.3.6. Verbal conduct of a sexual nature, unwelcome sexual advances, flirtations, or propositions
- 7.3.3.7. Unwanted physical contact
- 7.3.3.8. Retaliation against individuals who raise conduct concerns
- 7.4. Harassment in any form is an offence, and incidents will be dealt with under the IVSA Complaints Procedure.

8. Code violation

- 8.1. The panel will assess the complaint or situation ([Section 6.1 & 6.2](#)) and thoroughly examine the allegations and violations. The panel will adhere to the protocol for discussion ([Appendix A](#), [Appendix B](#))
- 8.2. The core panel will assess the severity of the violation and give their final decision according to protocol.

Consequences of violating the code of conduct may include:

- An official warning
- Removal from the event/Opportunity
- Ban from participation in future IVSA events/Opportunities
- Ban or Suspension from IVSA





Appendix Section

Appendix A -Protocol for panel

This Appendix refers to how IVSA Should act in case of Breaches in the Code of Conduct in the following situations:

- IVSA Global and Regional In-person Events
- IVSA Global and Regional Online Events

Terminology

Full panel : (6.1) Code of Conduct, panel with 10 people, including IVSA President, OC President, 3 members from the Officials (with the exception of EXCO Members and Trustees) and 3 from the OC, one representative from the complainant or that person itself & one representative of the defendant or that person itself.

- For Online Events: Code of Conduct, panel with 4 people, 2 members from the Officials and 2 from the Online OC, one representative from the complainant or that person itself & one representative of the defendant or that person itself.

Core panel: above mentioned panel without the representative from the complainant or that person itself and the representative of the defendant or that person itself. That includes IVSA Global President, OC President, 3 members from the Officials, and 3 from the OC.

- For Online Events: That includes 2 members from the Officials and 2 from the Online OC.

Section 1

- 1.1. Immediate meeting should commence within 24 hours for all the concerns & complaints with the full panel along with the evidence.
- 1.2. The Core Panel should hear both sides privately without discriminating against anyone & fairly, and roughly document both sides as step one.
- 1.3. In the next step, the core panel should take a meeting and assess the severity by comparing the testimonies from both sides and deciding the way of the procession.
- 1.4. The core panel will collect more evidence, eyewitnesses, and statements, if applicable, and evaluate them with respect to the situation.





Section 2

- 2.1. After the collection of the evidence, a meeting shall be conducted by the Core Panel to analyse the evidence.
- 2.2. Then, the Full Panel has to meet again and hear from the complainant and defendant to clarify the analysis from the previous meeting.
 - 2.2.1. If the complainant is unwilling to attend the meeting, the representative can attend the same as in the defendant's case.
 - 2.2.2. The meeting shall be conducted following the standards of the COC ([topic 7](#)); failure to do so can result in a warning from the core panel.

Section 3

- 3.1. After hearing from both sides in [section 2](#) and considering previously documented history (if applicable), the core panel has to have a meeting
- 3.2. After having the meeting, any person in the core panel can suggest a decision out of the listed 2 below. The Core panel's decision on such matters will be final.
 - 3.2.1. An official warning.
 - 3.2.2. Removal from the event.
- 3.3. The decision will be made on voting from the core panel by anonymous voting.
- 3.4. If the vote is a draw, the voted decision will not be applied.
- 3.5. In case the Core Panel approves topic **3.2.2, "Removal from the Event"**, it should discuss and have a second vote regarding the following options.
 - 3.5.1. Ban from participation in future IVSA events and opportunities.
 - 3.5.2. Ban or Suspension from IVSA

Having a Majority of votes from any of the above options (**3.5.1,3.5.2**), the Core Panel must inform EXCO that it will summon an Executive Session within 72 hours to vote on the recommendation made by the Panel (referring only to topics **3.5.1** and **3.5.2**)

- 3.6. EXCO will vote on the Acceptance or Denial of the Recommendation(s) made by the panel:
 - 3.6.1. EXCO will have the final decision regarding topic **3.5.1**.
 - 3.6.1.1. In order to approve topics **3.5.1**, EXCO must have an absolute Majority of the votes in favour (75%)
 - 3.6.1.2. In order to approve topic **3.5.2**, EXCO must have an absolute majority of votes in favour (75%) and consent from the complainant
 - 3.6.1.3. The Votes must be made by anonymous voting
 - 3.6.1.4. The Code of Conduct panel must indicate 1 of its members to attend the Referred Executive Session (besides the IVSA President); this member will be tasked with updating EXCO on the reasons for their





- recommendation.
- 3.7. If recommended by the Core Panel and approved by EXCO, the General Assembly must discuss it at the following Congress or Symposium and will have the final decision regarding topic **3.5.2**.
 - 3.7.1. The defendant can accept the Decision (**3.5.2**) without it going to the General Assembly for discussion.
 - 3.7.2. The complainant can request certain details not be released to the General Assembly
 - 3.7.2.1. The complainant will be informed that a limited release of information can influence the decision of the General Assembly
 - 3.8. A person can have a maximum of 1 warning throughout the event; that is, 2 warnings means the person is removed from the event.
 - 3.9. If the accusation is found to be false, the core panel can consider that the complainant violated the Code of Conduct and vote the decision against the complainant.
 - 3.10. The case documentation should be made available for the future OC, EXCO and Core Panel as a reference, and measures should be taken to avoid such a situation.





Appendix B - Protocol for Other Situations

This Appendix refers to how IVSA Should act in case of Breaches in the COC in the following situations:

- IVSA Opportunities
- Official IVSA Social Media Pages
- Official IVSA Communities through Social Media
- Publications, Posts, Protests, Statements utilising IVSA Name, Logo and/or its variations
- Other relevant situations not related to IVSA Global/Regional in person or Online Events.

Terminology

Full panel: IVSA President, 3 Members of IVSA Team of Officials excluding IVSA Executive Members and Members of Trust one representative from the complaint or that person itself & one representative of the defendant or that person itself.

Core panel: IVSA President, 3 Members of IVSA Team of Officials excluding IVSA Executive Members and Members of Trust

Section 1

- 1.1. A meeting should commence after all the concerns & complaints with the full panel along with the evidence.
- 1.2. The Core Panel should hear both sides privately without discriminating against anyone & fairly, and roughly document both sides as step one.
- 1.3. In the next step, the core panel should take a meeting and assess the severity by comparing the testimonies from both sides and deciding the way of the procession.
- 1.4. The core panel will collect more evidence, eyewitnesses, and statements, if applicable, and evaluate them with respect to the situation.

Section 2

- 2.1. After the collection of the evidence, a meeting shall be conducted by the Core Panel to analyse the evidence and the recordings of the witness.
- 2.2. Then, the Full Panel has to meet again and hear from the complainant and defendant to





clarify the analysis from the previous meeting.

- 2.2.1. If the complainant is unwilling to attend the meeting, the representative can attend the same as in the defendant's case.
- 2.2.2. The meeting shall be conducted following the standards of the COC (topic 7); failure to do so can result in a warning from the core panel.

Section 3

After hearing from both sides in section 2 and considering previously documented history (if applicable), the core panel has to have a meeting

- 3.11. After having the meeting, any person in the core panel can suggest a decision out of the listed 2 below. The Core panel's decision on such matters will be final.
 - 3.11.1. An official warning.
 - 3.11.2. Removal from the event.
- 3.12. The decision will be made on voting from the core panel by anonymous voting.
- 3.13. If the vote is a draw, the voted decision will not be applied.
- 3.14. In case the Core Panel approves topic **3.2.2, "Removal from the Event"**, it should discuss and have a second vote regarding the following options.
 - 3.14.1. Ban from participation in future IVSA events and opportunities.
 - 3.14.2. Ban or Suspension from IVSA

Having a Majority of votes from any of the above options (**3.5.1,3.5.2**), the Core Panel must inform EXCO that it will summon an Executive Session within 72 hours to vote on the recommendation made by the Panel (referring only to topics **3.5.1** and **3.5.2**)

- 3.15. EXCO will vote on the Acceptance or Denial of the Recommendation(s) made by the panel:
 - 3.15.1. EXCO will have the final decision regarding topic **3.5.1**.
 - 3.15.1.1. In order to approve topics **3.5.1** and **3.5.2**, EXCO must have an absolute Majority of the votes in favour (75%)
 - 3.15.1.2. In order to approve topic **3.5.2**, EXCO must have an absolute majority of votes in favour (75%) and consent from the complainant
 - 3.15.1.3. The Votes must be made by anonymous voting
 - 3.15.1.4. The Code of Conduct Anti-harassment panel must indicate 1 of its members to attend the Referred Executive Session (besides the IVSA President); this member will be tasked with updating EXCO on the reasons for their recommendation.
- 3.16. If recommended by the Core Panel and approved by EXCO, the General Assembly must discuss it at the following Congress or Symposium and will have the final decision regarding topic **3.5.2**.
 - 3.16.1. The defendant can accept the Decision (**3.5.2**) without it going to the General Assembly for discussion.





3.16.2. The complainant can request certain details not be released to the General Assembly

3.16.2.1. The complainant will be informed that a limited release of information can influence the decision of the General Assembly

3.17. A person can have a maximum of 1 warning throughout the event; that is, 2 warnings means the person is removed from the event.

3.18. If the accusation is found to be false, the core panel can consider that the complainant violated the Code of Conduct and vote the decision against the complainant.

The case documentation should be made available for the future OC, EXCO and Core Panel as a reference, and measures should be taken to avoid such a situation.





Appendix C - Appealing the Decision

This appendix refers to how IVSA should handle an appeal of decisions made by the Core Panel and/or the IVSA Executive Committee.

1. An appeal can be requested if believed that the protocols were not followed.
2. The Appeal should be brought to the IVSA Executive Committee by the Individual in which the complaint is about, that must summon an Appeal Committee.
3. The Appeal Committee will consist of 3 Trustees that will review and evaluate if the protocols were correctly followed as defined by the IVSA Code of Conduct, Bylaws and Constitution that were valid at the time of the incident.
4. An appeal may be made within 15 days of being informed on the decision and the Appeal committee will review within 30 days after receiving the appeal and report to the Executive Committee.
 - 4.1. In case the appeal is received less than 30 days before the next General Assembly, it must be reviewed and reported to the Executive Committee no more than 24 hours prior to the discussion of the topic at the General Assembly.
5. If the Appeal Committee determines the protocols were not followed the original complaint will be referred to Appendix B.
 - 5.1. The new panel must not contain the 3 officials, other than the IVSA President, that were members of the original Core Panel.
 - 5.2. The new panel may uphold or rescind the decisions made by the original Core Panel.
 - 5.2.1. In case the rescinded decision includes “Ban from the Event”, any monetary expenses incurred and the attendance fee of the event will be reimbursed to the affected party, including the inflation calculations from the Country in which it took place.
6. The decision following the appeal will be final and may not be appealed.

