

DRAFT September 2023

Respectful Behavior Policy.

Preamble

The Division of History of Science and Technology of the IUHPST is an international non-governmental organization devoted to international cooperation in the fields of history of science and technology across the world. It is managed by voluntary, unpaid elected officers and an elected council (also unpaid). The main activity of DHST is to organize an international congress every four years and coordinate the activities of numerous commissions. The members of DHST are representatives of 98 nations, each nominated by a national committee for the history of science, and 26 international scientific unions.

Respectful behavior

Freedom of expression and vigorous debate are crucial to scholarly exchange. The Division of History of Science and Technology (DHST) strongly values mutual respect and strives to provide an environment for intellectual exchange that is free from bias and intimidation. DHST is dedicated to securing a safe, hospitable, and productive environment for everyone engaging in our meetings, of any size or form. We expect speakers, questioners, and audiences at DHST International Congresses to demonstrate self-control and civility, even during strong disagreement, and not to engage in *ad hominem* attacks. Furthermore, we expect those participating in DHST events to treat others with respect and not to engage in behavior at any time that is discriminatory, intimidating, threatening, or harassing. This expectation applies to our officers, speakers, volunteers, and attendees at DHST occasions, whether in person, or remotely, via digital media such as Twitter or Zoom.

Commitment

DHST affirms its commitment to building a safe and inclusive environment for all participating individuals, especially students, early career scholars, and individuals from groups that have been, or are currently, historically marginalized. We recognize that people can be vulnerable to power differentials in academic structures and that it can be difficult for individuals to file a complaint. Accordingly, DHST deplors all harassment and is sensitive to the harm suffered by persons who experience it.

Nondiscrimination and Anti-Harassment Standards

DHST prohibits any unwelcome conduct that is based on an individual's sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity, race, color, religion, national origin, age, marital status, disability, or employment status and that creates an environment that a reasonable person would consider intimidating, hostile, or abusive. Harassment may include such actions as:

- (1) inappropriate physical contact;
- (2) demeaning jokes, kidding, or teasing;
- (3) verbal abuse and epithets;
- (4) degrading comments;

- (5) the display of offensive or sexually suggestive objects or pictures;
 - (6) conduct or comments of a lewd or lascivious nature, including subtle pressure for sexual activity;
 - (7) repeated offensive sexual flirtation, advances or propositions;
 - (8) any other conduct that the individual (or group of individuals) might reasonably find to be intimidating, hostile, offensive, coercive, or threatening.
- Sexual harassment does not refer to occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature or consensual personal and social relationships.

Reporting

1. If an individual or group of individuals believes that they have experienced any violation of this policy at events or in media funded or organized by DHST, the person or group should report the incident immediately to the designated Ombudperson or Ombudpersons (abbreviated to Ombud), who are appointed as independent mediators. The Ombud will have a dedicated email address. The Ombud will generally be present in person at International Congresses. Although anyone may seek advice from the Ombud, only the individual or individuals alleging that they have been harassed may file a complaint. The Ombud shall listen to the grievance, describe the policy and procedures, outline issues of privacy and confidentiality, and discuss possible courses of action regarding the filing or non-filing of a formal complaint.
2. The Ombud will not attempt to resolve the complaint nor approach any cited individuals and shall take all reasonable efforts to maintain in strict confidence the identity and privacy of both the complainant and the person or persons implicated in an incident.
3. If an individual elects to file a formal complaint, that person must describe the incident in a non-confidential written statement delivered to the Ombud. There is no time limit on filing a complaint, but it is preferable either immediately or very soon after the incident. The Ombud will provide the statement to a three-person Respectful Behavior Review Committee appointed by Council who will investigate the case. The Chair of the Review Committee shall contact both parties to discuss the incident and determine whether there is a fair resolution. The accused party may elect to file a written response. If no resolution can be found, the Committee shall determine whether the incident constituted harassment under the terms of this Policy.
4. The Committee will aim to expedite the inquiry and respond within three months of receiving the complaint from the Ombud. The Respectful Behavior policy aims to ensure that the process is fair.

Procedure

If the Review Committee determines that the incident constituted harassment, it shall furnish a report with names erased of the incident with the Committee's findings, and a recommended sanction, if any, to the Secretary General within six months of receiving the complaint from the Ombud. The Secretary General will bring the matter to Council, who shall consider the case in confidence. The Secretary General shall determine whether the consideration takes place via email or in person. Special attention will be

paid to the question of private discussion taking place via platforms such as Microsoft Teams.

Sanctions

If a majority of Council concurs with the recommendations of the Committee, the Council Executive Committee shall issue a written reprimand including any sanctions. Possible sanctions include banning an individual from attending one or more International Congresses, banning access to DHST digital media such as Twitter, or, in the case of an elected official, removal from DHST office. The president of DHST will issue a written notification on behalf of Council including any sanctions. Council will decide whether to notify any national committee or commission of their action. The Ombud shall prepare, on a cycle to be determined by Council, an aggregate, anonymized summary of all such reported incidents.

Appointment of Ombudsperson(s) and Respectful Behavior Review Committee

1. Preferably, the Ombud(s) will belong to a qualified international NGO specialized in dealing with harassment. Outsourcing the Ombud is recommended by the International Ombuds Association. Current charges for such a person are recommended as US\$12000 for 10 hours work per month plus expenses for attending on site any annual conference/congress.
2. The DHST President and Council will appoint a committee to obtain an Ombud. If Council decides, it may ask this committee to appoint a DHST member. Special care will be taken to avoid any conflict of interest in the appointment of the Ombudsperson(s).
3. The Ombudsperson or persons will be nominated every four years by the General Assembly to deal with questions related to harassment and any other kind of behavior that is hostile or abusive and that takes place in events organized and/or funded by the DHST.
4. The Respectful Behavior Review Committee will, for the time being, be drawn from Council and nominated every four years. However, it is recommended that the three-person committee should be independent of DHST.

DHST Commissions

We strongly encourage the Commissions supported by DHST to adopt a Respectful Behavior Policy for their own governance activities and events. The DHST policy may be used in lieu.

Notes on Proposed Respectful Behavior Policy

1. The draft includes and accommodates the points raised at online meetings of Council since January 2022 and the exchange of emails. In the interest of a succinct and workable policy some of these comments have been abbreviated and/or merged with others.
2. The independence of the Ombudsperson is crucial to ensure that no conflict of interest will interfere.
3. Please note the recommendation to appoint an independent Ombudsperson. This is considered best practice by the International Ombuds Organization (<https://www.ombudsassociation.org/>).
4. Likely cost would be US\$12,000 per annum for 10 hours input a month plus expenses for attending meetings or congress. It could be more.
5. DHST is composed of unpaid volunteers, not a publicly owned company or university. New budgetary arrangements need careful consideration. A sister organization such as HSS relies on carefully chosen volunteers but pays for expenses.
6. If the review committee is to be drawn from Council, it is important that the Ombud, who determines if there is a case to be answered, should be entirely independent of history of science and technology.
7. If the review committee is to be drawn from Council, it will be preferable to offer a little training (perhaps online). The review committee should be appropriately diverse in its composition and attention to a variety of languages would be helpful.
8. Nominations of ombudsperson. It is recommended that Council proposes a person(s) and that the GA is asked to approve that person(s).
9. Should there be two appointees to ensure neutrality?
10. If we specify a time limit on the initial complaint, almost no complaints will be filed, it often takes time to realize that what might be brushed away as a mere unimportant incident reveals harassment. Per contra, it seems reasonable to require a time frame for the Committee's investigation of a given complaint (3 months) and Council's deliberations (6 months). It could perhaps be shorter, eg two months.
11. Rather than have the accusation given directly to the accused party, it might be more reasonable to have an independent entity conduct an independent investigation. A direct notification to the accused might create pressure on victims and witnesses, and might also be hurtful to those unjustly accused.
12. It might not be a good idea to specify in too much detail how and in which way sanctions and conciliations should be carried out, but rather let these decisions and measures be taken by Council.
13. It seems counterproductive to insist on confidentiality and then require the whole council to consider the case (unless it is strictly anonymized). It may be better that the findings of the Review committee be given to the President (and any other officers as may be determined) for consideration, and that the president brings the results of the case, suitably anonymized, to Council, probably via email, to expedite the procedure

14. How far should the results of the investigation and the sanctions adopted be stated publicly? This would be a strong preventative measure but requires certainty.

Action

1. It is proposed that for an interim period, until the next General Assembly, the Ombudsperson will be an existing member of Council.
2. After that point it is proposed that a separate elected position is created.
3. Council should decide whether the elected Ombudsperson should also be a member of Council, thereby increasing the number of Council members by one.
4. The Ombudsperson should have a dedicated email address.
5. A position of Respectful Behavior Champion is already in the Statutes, due to be ratified at the 2025 General Assembly.
6. Appointment of a three-person Respectful Behavior Review Committee.