

# IOHA Harassment Policy and Procedures<sup>1</sup>

## Statement of Policy

It is the policy of the International Oral History Association (IOHA) that all participants in our activities will enjoy a safe environment free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. As a professional society, the IOHA is committed to providing an atmosphere that encourages the free expression and exchange of ideas. In pursuit of that ideal, the IOHA is dedicated to the philosophy of equality of opportunity and treatment for all members, regardless of gender, gender identity or expression, race, color, national or ethnic origin or culture group, religion or religious belief, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disabilities, veteran status, or any other reason not related to merit. Harassment, sexual or otherwise, is a form of misconduct that undermines the integrity of our international community. Violators of this policy will be subject to discipline. While IOHA recognizes that cultural norms differ across the world, it aligns with the following definitions of harassment.

## Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment has been defined generally as including unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature whenever:

1. Submission to the conduct is either an explicit or implicit term or condition of employment;
2. An individual's reaction to the conduct is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting that individual;
3. The conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with the individual's work performance;  
or
4. The conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

No member, volunteer, or attendee should be subjected to sexual harassment or unsolicited and unwelcome sexual overtures, nor should any member, volunteer, or attendee be led to believe that any benefit will in any way depend upon "cooperation" of a sexual nature.

Sexual harassment is not limited to demands for sexual favors. It also may include such actions as:

1. Sex-oriented verbal "kidding," "teasing," or jokes;
2. Repeated offensive sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions;
3. Continued or repeated verbal abuse of a sexual nature;
4. Graphic or degrading comments about an individual or his or her appearance;
5. The display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures;
6. Subtle pressure for sexual activity; and
7. Inappropriate physical contact.

Please see the video link at the end of this policy for examples of in appropriate behavior.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on OHA Harassment Policy and Procedures [OHA Harassment Policy and Procedures \(oralhistory.org\)](https://www.oralhistory.org/IOHA-Harassment-Policy-and-Procedures). Permission for IOHA to use this as a template granted by Stephen Sloan, Executive Director, OHA, Monday, October 14, 2024 via email to Leslie McCartney.

Sexual harassment does not refer to occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature or consensual personal and social relationships without a discriminatory employment or professional effect. It refers to behavior that is not welcome and that is personally intimidating, hostile, or offensive.

### **Other Unlawful Harassment or Conduct**

Harassment on other grounds, including race, color, religion, national origin, age, marital status, gender identity, or disability is also prohibited. Harassment may include such actions as:

1. Jokes or verbal “kidding,” or “teasing;”
2. Verbal abuse and epithets;
3. Degrading comments;
4. The display of offensive objects and pictures;
5. Conduct or comments of a lewd or lascivious nature; and
6. Other conduct that an individual might reasonably find to be intimidating, hostile, offensive, coercive, or threatening.

Please see the video link at the end of this policy for examples of in appropriate behavior.

### **Scope of Policy**

This policy prohibiting harassment, whether sexual or of another nature, is not limited to relationships between and among members and volunteers, but also extends to interaction with attendees and vendors. No officer, Council members, general members, or other volunteer shall subject any-member, volunteer, attendee, or vendor to sexual or other harassment of any nature, including that conduct described above. Any forms of harassment as described in this policy are reportable immediately to the ombudsperson on call at the IOHA Conference or any IOHA Council member.

The International Oral History Association will fully investigate all complaints and will maintain confidentiality to the greatest extent possible. Anyone who is found to have engaged in harassment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include the following:

1. A written reprimand or censure;
2. A request for resignation;
3. Removal of such person from the individual’s position within IOHA; or
4. Suspension or termination of the individual’s membership, engagement, and/or participation in current and/or future IOHA-operated, sponsored and/or affiliated events.

No individual will be retaliated against for making a complaint or assisting with the investigation of a complaint.

### **Informal and Formal Complaint Procedures**

IOHA Conference Organizing Committee, with the approval of IOHA Council appoints an ombudsperson from its membership to serve as a point of contact during the IOHA Conference and is available throughout the calendar year to receive complaints of harassment or unprofessional conduct. Members and attendees at the IOHA Conference who believe themselves to be victims of harassment could initiate complaints in person, by text, email, or other means to the ombudsperson. Complaints could

also be made to any IOHA Council member. Such initial contacts would then be referred to the ombudsperson who would then initiate the investigation process. The person filing the complaint (the complainant) would be informed of two options:

1. Initiate an informal resolution and/or launch a formal investigation. The informal resolution process would be used if the complainant desires a confidential and immediate intervention to stop the harassing behavior.
2. A formal investigation would be employed if the complainant so desires. At the initiation of the complaint and at any subsequent time, the complainant can request a formal investigation. An informal resolution in no way precludes a subsequent formal investigation.

The ombudsperson working with IOHA Council would have the unilateral power to intervene and remove an individual from any IOHA function, or conference, in cases where behavior is egregious, disruptive, or violent, and prevents the normal conduct of IOHA's business.

If the complainant desires a formal investigation, such a process would be initiated by the submission of a confidential written request to the ombudsperson. At the initiation of the complaint, two members of the IOHA Council, the President and Vice President would oversee an investigation in cooperation with the ombudsperson, soliciting written statements from the parties involved. If the complainant lodges an accusation against an individual on Council, the ombudsperson would conduct the investigation with the assistance of two members of IOHA in good standing identified by the President or Vice-President. All materials would then be submitted to the executive committee comprised of the current president, immediate past president, and president elect for adjudication on the basis of the preponderance of evidence and, if warranted, appropriate sanction as indicated under the section "Scope of Policy." Confidentiality to the greatest extent possible would be maintained throughout the process.

### **A Commitment to Education**

IOHA provides this information on its website, explaining this policy and offering educational materials about harassment and appropriate professional conduct. The policy will also be included in the conference program.

For example, IOHA has been given permission to link to a training video created by a member of the American Sociological Association: "Bystander Intervention for Sexual Harassment: A Training for Scholarly Society Members." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DzOWaKs-xS4&t=4s>