



# Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct Response Protocol

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This protocol outlines our expectations of members and participants in the activities of the ACA community as well as steps for reporting and responding to unacceptable behaviour.

We are committed to providing a welcoming and inspiring community for all and expect our Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (CEPC) to be honoured. Anyone who violates the CEPC may be banned from a specific ACA event, attendance at the annual conference, participation to a members' meeting, competitions or awards, and/or the association altogether.

## 2. STATEMENT ON DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

In keeping with the core principles stated in its **Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct**, the ACA community strives to conduct our work in a way that does not discriminate against, harass, or take advantage of others. **We conduct ourselves with personal integrity.**

**We actively support plurality, diversity, and inclusion.** The ACA community welcomes and supports people of all backgrounds and identities, including members of all ages, genders, gender identities or expressions, physical and mental abilities, cultures, ethnicities, educational levels, languages, national origins, political beliefs, professions, races, religions, sexual orientations, socioeconomic statuses, sizes, and technical abilities. We come from different backgrounds, career stages, and levels of familiarity with the ACA and the ACA community.

**We conduct ourselves in a collegial manner in professional interactions.** We should listen as much as we speak and remember that colleagues may have expertise we are not aware of. We use welcoming language, accept critique graciously and offer it constructively. We give credit where it is due. We seek ways to make our physical and virtual spaces more accessible. We are alert to the welfare of those around us.

**We seek constructive resolutions to disagreements.** Not all of us will agree all the time, but disagreement is no excuse for poor behaviour and poor manners. We might all experience some frustration now and then, but we cannot allow that frustration to turn into a personal attack. It is important to remember that a community in which people feel uncomfortable or threatened is not a productive one. Be kind to others. Do not insult or put down other participants.

Disagreements, be they philosophical, technical, or other, happen all the time. The fruits of these disagreements could yield new ways of seeing and thinking. The strength of our community comes from its diversity. Not being able to understand why people hold a viewpoint you disagree with doesn't mean that they are wrong. Disagreements do not need to be resolved but different points of view should be accepted. Assigning blame is not constructive. Instead we should focus on helping each other to resolve issues and learn from mistakes.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

- Bias** **Bias** is a pre-formed negative or positive, opinion, attitude or behaviour toward an individual or a group of individuals who possess common characteristics such as age, colour, disability, gender identity or expression, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status.
- Bias Incident** A **bias incident** is an act directed toward an individual or group based upon actual or perceived background or identity, as defined by the term **bias** above. A bias incident can constitute discrimination. These acts can create an unsafe or hostile environment or have an unreasonable negative psychological, emotional, or physical effect on an individual, group, or community. Bias incidents may occur regardless of whether the act is legal, illegal, intentional, or unintentional. The severity of a bias incident, and the ACA's response to these incidents, can vary on the basis of several factors, including location, context, location, pre-meditation, and whether the incident presents a threat to safety. Any ACA response will follow the ACA protocol established below.
- Discrimination** **Discrimination** is an act that either in form or operation, and whether intended or unintended, unreasonably differentiates among persons on the basis of age, colour, disability, gender identity or expression, genetic information, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status. This definition gives the ACA the right to address conduct that is not necessarily unlawful, following the ACA protocol established below.
- Freedom of Speech** With respect to reported bias incidents, the ACA does not seek to discipline individuals for expression of views in a manner that is protected by their rights under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, but may challenge protected speech that conflicts with ACA values by speaking out against it, by providing educational opportunities, and by supporting those negatively affected by such speech.
- Hate Crime** A **hate crime** is generally defined as a criminal offense committed against a person or property that is motivated, in whole or in part, by the offender's bias against the victim's identity or group affiliation. A hate crime can only be determined by law enforcement.

## **4. BIAS RESPONSE TEAM**

The Bias Response Team (or “BRT”) is responsible for applying the Protocol. Bias Response Team core members include:

- i. The ACA President, who acts as the BRT Coordinator
- ii. The ACA Directors

The Bias Response Team meets as necessary to discuss new and open reports of bias incidents and to apply the Protocol. The Bias Response Team also communicates as necessary over email and phone to respond to reports of bias incidents when and as they occur.

The Bias Response Team members may consult with content area experts and partners when necessary or helpful.

## **5. PROTOCOL JURISDICTION**

The Protocol applies to any reported bias incident that occurs at an ACA event or between ACA members in the context of ACA activities, or by ACA members in public conversations (e.g. on a listserv).

## **6. BIAS INCIDENT REPORTING**

Bias incidents may be reported either orally or in writing to a BRT member, who is required to document the receipt of such report or complaint as it occurs or soon after, or by submitting a bias incident report form to the ACA Executive Director for transmission to the BRT.

## **7. RESPONSE PROTOCOL**

- A. BRT member receives incident report or complaint; BRT member communicates it to the other members to evaluate it for immediate action. If immediate safety or health concerns exist, the member of the BRT who receives the report or complaint will contact the appropriate local authorities;
- B. BRT Coordinator or designate sends to the incident reporter an acknowledgement of the report and indication of immediate resources if any is available (e.g. crisis line information), and explains the next steps;
- C. BRT evaluates incident report or complaint and the potential response, and identifies the BRT member who will make contact with impacted party or parties and with the offending party or parties, if the situation warrants it;
- D. Within one week of receipt of report or complaint, BRT identifies members to coordinate response or contact reporter and/or impacted party and/or offending party or parties to:

- a. Gather additional information about the incident
  - b. Determine desired response to report
  - c. Discuss capacity for collaboration in response
  - d. Discuss next steps for response
  - e. Dismiss the complaint if unsubstantiated
- E. BRT liaison follows up and reports information back to BRT.

## **8. OPTIONS FOR IMPACTED PARTY/PARTIES TO CONSIDER AS A NEXT STEP(S):**

- A. Request a trained mediator to help facilitate a conversation between the impacted party/parties and the offending party/parties.
- B. Receive coaching so the impacted party/parties feel able to address the issue directly with the offending party/parties.
- C. Request that the incident and the decision made by the BRT and the action(s) taken be documented for the ACA record.
- D. Request additional support services/ resources.
- E. Other actions to address the incident are at the discretion of the ACA BRT, which will make every effort to respect the reporter's privacy and ensure that the impact on the offending party/parties is proportional to the offence.

## **9. BRT TRACKING AND ASSESSMENT**

The ACA Executive Director (ED) tracks occurrence of reported bias incidents and, together with the BRT, assesses and evaluates trends, needs for training and prevention efforts, for policy development, etc.

## **10. DOCUMENTATION & ACCESS TO DOCUMENTATION**

Where complaints are investigated and remedial action is taken/recommended, records will be kept for a period of 5 years, following which the entire record will be destroyed. Where complaints are investigated but no fault is found, records will be kept for a period of 3 years, following which the entire record will be destroyed. Where complaints are dismissed by the BRT the entire record will be destroyed forthwith. Access to complaint records will be restricted to BRT members involved in the investigation and the ACA ED.

## **11. REVIEW**

The ACA commits to review this protocol and assess outcomes every 3 years.