

## SPA Complaints Procedure

If any Executive Committee member or Trustee is contacted in any way, be it verbal, digitally, or in writing, by a member of the association with allegations of bullying, harassment, or sexual misconduct, which are defined below, by another member, the following procedure must be followed.

1. If the member contacts an Executive Committee member who is not the Chair or a Trustee with a complaint, that complaint must be passed on immediately to the Chair.
  - a. If the complaint is about the Chair, it must be passed on to a Trustee.
  - b. The Trustee must then inform the Executive Committee members of the allegation.
2. If the complaint is made by a member about another member of the SPA, the following must occur.
  - a. The Chair is required to confirm whether the allegations have been brought to the organisations other than the SPA that would normally deal with the type of complaint.
    - i. This will usually mean a Student's Association, University, and/or the Police.
  - b. If the member has been investigated by one of the previously mentioned bodies, the Chair must share the outcome of that investigation with the Executive Committee and Trustee board.
    - i. If an investigation has occurred and the allegations were seen to require disciplinary action by a body of any sort, the Executive Committee are required to have a vote to decide the future of the member's membership with the SPA.
      1. For a member to retain their membership, there must be a unanimous vote in favour of that course of action.
      2. For a member to lose their membership, there must be a unanimous vote in favour of that course of action.
      3. If unanimity cannot be reached, a vote including all trustees must be undertaken, with a majority vote deciding the course of action.
        - a. The following courses of action are open to such a vote
          - i. Revoke membership and ban member from all SPA related activities including SPANC, Regional Conferences, and their associated awards.
          - ii. Retain membership, but remove member from any influential roles and ban from events that may affect members' feeling of safety (such as organising SPANC or attending SPANC or Regional Conferences)
          - iii. Retain membership and no other action taken.

- iv. Any other appropriate action - provided justification for this action is posted online for transparency (within legal limits).
  - c. If the member has not been investigated by one of the previously mentioned bodies, the Chair is obligated inform the Executive Committee and Trustee board of the complaint
    - i. The Executive Committee and Trustee board must then vote on a course of action.
      - 1. The following courses of action are open to such a vote
        - a. Revoke membership and ban member from all SPA related activities including SPANC, Regional Conferences, and their associated awards.
        - b. Retain membership, but remove member from any influential roles and ban from events that may affect members' feeling of safety (such as organising SPANC or attending SPANC or Regional Conferences)
        - c. Retain membership and no other action taken.
        - d. Any other appropriate action - provided justification for this action is posted online for transparency (within legal limits).
      - ii. If the complaint is deemed to be of significant weight, with permission from the complainant, the committee and trustee board may pass on the details of the complaint to the relevant bodies.
3. If the complaint is made by a member, executive committee member, Regional Officer, Project Officer, or trustee about an Executive Committee member or Trustee, the following must be followed.
  - a. An independent panel made up of long-term associates of the SPA, such as lifetime members, judges, and speakers who do not have a personal relationship with the individuals concerned, and an external panellist, preferably with an HR background, must be created by the executive committee if the complaint is made about a Trustee, and the trustee board if the complaint is made about an executive committee member, which will then decide on the appropriate course of action from the following.
    - i. The Executive Committee member or Trustee must resign from their post and banned from engaging in SPA-related activities.
    - ii. The Executive Committee member or Trustee must write a formal letter of apology to the complainant, who has the option to post the apology online if requested.
    - iii. No action is taken.
    - iv. Any other appropriate action - provided justification for this action is posted online for transparency (within legal limits).
4. In the case of any member, executive committee member, trustee, regional officer, or project officer having a complaint raised against them, in the interests of transparency

the Digital Media Officer or the Chair is required to upload the outcome of the complaints procedure to the SPA Website, within legal limits.

## **Harassment**

Harassment is unwanted conduct whether verbal or not which is related to pregnancy or maternity, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, age, marital or civil partner status, religion or belief, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, or disability which has the purpose or effect of violating that other person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.

It is irrelevant that the harassment was intentional or whether the member that suffers the harassment has the characteristic that is the reason for the harassment.

A single incident can amount to harassment if sufficiently grave.

Examples of harassment would include (but is not limited to) the following:

- Banter of a sexual, racial, religious nature or based upon sexuality, disability or age or some other protected characteristic;
- The display of material with sexual or racial overtones (even if not directed at the complainant);
- Sarcastic personal remarks about colleagues, especially those reporting to you;
- Over-demanding requirements
- Unwanted physical contact, including touching, patting, pinching, brushing against another employee's body or indecent assault;
- Unwelcome sexual advances;
- Derogatory comments, ridiculing or name calling;
- Telling jokes which are based upon sex, race, religious belief, disability, sexual orientation, age or other unlawful grounds; and
- Offensive emails, text messages and social media content (including social media activity).

## **Bullying**

Bullying is also unacceptable.

Bullying is defined as offensive, intimidatory, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. It includes (but is not limited to) the following:

- Direct verbal and/or physical threats;
- Setting impossible deadlines and targets;
- Withholding information essential to do the role properly;
- Excessively tight supervision;
- Public humiliation including being shouted at;
- Persistent and undue criticism including inaccurate accusations about quality of work;
- Undermining responsibility;
- Spreading malicious rumours.

Harassment and bullying does not have to be based on sex, race, sexual orientation, religion or belief or otherwise to be taken seriously by the SPA. Any behaviour of this type, whatever the grounds, is totally unacceptable and will be dealt with appropriately.

Members shall be protected from intimidation, victimisation or discrimination for bringing a complaint or assisting in an investigation into bullying or harassment. Retaliating in any way against a member for complaining about harassment or bullying is a serious issue and will lead to the future of the retaliating member's membership to be decided upon by the Executive Committee.