

Standards of Conduct for the NMNH Department of Mineral Sciences

Scope

This document outlines expectations for conduct for members of the Department of Mineral Sciences (including staff, contractors, fellows, interns, volunteers, visitors, research associates, and other affiliated persons) at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History. It applies to conduct in both the workplace (including laboratory spaces and research groups) and work-related events (including talks, conferences, workshops, and fieldwork, as well as off-duty events where inappropriate conduct is likely to have a negative effect on the work environment).

The standards of conduct are based on the [Smithsonian's policies about diversity, anti-harassment, and professional behavior](#). By summarizing and providing relevant examples of these policies, it seeks to help department members better understand expectations for their conduct with the goal of creating an accessible, just, inclusive, and diverse department. While every effort has been made to ensure that the content of this document is consistent with Smithsonian policy, department members should always defer to Smithsonian policy if there is a conflict.

Purpose

The purpose of this Standards of Conduct is to create a positive work environment whose culture centers around safety, inclusivity, equity, and community and to give guidance on how to prevent and address inappropriate conduct. Department members are expected to ensure that all activities within the scope of this document are conducted in a professional manner in which all participants are treated with dignity and respect.

Guiding Values

The Department seeks to create and foster a safe and welcoming work environment that treats individuals with dignity and respect and is free from harassment, discrimination, and violence. To do so, the Department has established the following core values:

- Respect for the dignity and worth of all individuals.
- Professionalism, honesty, and integrity in our work and responsibilities.
- Free and open exchange of scientific ideas.

Expectations

Each department member is essential to the health, productivity, and success of the Department, and their actions are integral to creating a positive work environment that treats everyone with respect. Department members are expected to:

- Behave according to professional standards and in accordance with Smithsonian policies on appropriate workplace behavior.
- Treat others with dignity, respect, and equity.
- Be accountable for their actions, words, and decisions.
- Communicate with respect and civility in both verbal and nonverbal responses.
- Consider the unique experiences and opportunities that shape their colleagues' perspectives and access to resources.
- Refrain from practicing, inciting, encouraging, or condoning inappropriate conduct (as defined below).
- Ensure that the employees and affiliated persons that they supervise, sponsor, or host understand the expectations for their conduct.

Inappropriate Conduct

To create a work environment that is safe, welcoming, and free from discrimination and harassment, department members are expected to refrain from inappropriate conduct, including (1) unwelcome conduct that adversely affects the work environment or that must be tolerated in order to work in the Department and (2) any act that endangers, harms, or threatens to harm employees, affiliated persons, or property. Such conduct includes but is not limited to:

- Discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex (including pregnancy, sexual stereotyping, sexual orientation, and gender identity), religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, marital status, political affiliation, or conduct which does not adversely affect the performance of the applicant or employee (including sexual orientation), or in retaliation for protected EEO activity.
- Harassment, intimidation, or threats in any form (including bullying, [microaggressions](#), aggressive language, and physical violence).
- Written or verbal comments that exclude people on the basis of membership in a specific group.

- Sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, ageist, religiously intolerant, classist, or exclusionary jokes and office decor.
- Nonconsensual or unwelcome physical contact.
- Consistent misuse of pronouns/misgendering.
- Retaliation (including firing, demoting, harassing, or otherwise taking any personnel action against an individual) for reporting misconduct, providing information about misconduct, or declining a sexual advance or other unwanted contact.
- Exploitation of one's position to harass or intimidate someone with less power or authority.
- Sustained disruption of talks, events or communications.
- Dissemination or publication of private communication (personal, scientific, or otherwise) or intellectual property without consent.
- Failure to stop inappropriate or unwelcome conduct when asked.

Reporting

The Smithsonian provides several channels to report or discuss inappropriate conduct. Department members (including applicants for employment) who experience, witness, or know of inappropriate conduct are *encouraged* to document and report the conduct. [Management officials](#) who witness or receive an allegation of inappropriate conduct are *required* to report the conduct.

If the behavior involves a crime in progress or imminent bodily harm, individuals should contact the local police department (911) and/or OPS (202-633-2086) immediately.

Department members can report inappropriate conduct to:

- their supervisor
- the supervisor of the person engaging in the behavior
- a management official
- [Office of Equal Employment & Supplier Diversity \(OEESD\)](#) (intranet only)
- [SI Civil](#)

Reports will be evaluated and investigated by the appropriate office. If substantiated, corrective action may include discipline (including reprimands, suspension, demotion, or removal), reassignment, coaching, facilitated dialogue, or mediation.

Reports to management officials, SI Civil, and OEESD are not strictly confidential.

Department members wishing to discuss an incident before making a formal report can do so confidentially by contacting one of the following offices:

- [Smithsonian Ombuds](#) (intranet only)
- [Smithsonian Employee Assistance Program](#) (intranet only)

Department members without access to the intranet sites above can find contact information for these offices on the [SI Civil Support Resources page](#).

Revisions

This document will be reviewed annually to ensure that it is up to date and consistent with Smithsonian and NMNH policy. It was originally written by the NMNH Geosciences URGE Pod and was last reviewed in March 2024 by Adam Mansur.

Policies and Directives

Most policies and directives are only available through the Smithsonian intranet site. Department members without a Smithsonian network account should contact their host or another staff member to obtain copies of these documents.

- [NMNH Collection Visitor's Code of Conduct](#)
- [SD 103 - Smithsonian Institution Standards of Conduct](#)
 - [Appendix 1: Fourteen Principles of Ethical Conduct for Smithsonian Employees](#)
 - [Appendix 2: Federal Laws Relating to Employee Conduct](#)
- [SD 208 - Standards of Conduct Regarding Smithsonian Volunteers](#)
- SD 212 - Federal Personnel Handbook
 - [Chap. 752 - Disciplinary and Adverse Actions](#)
- SD 213 - Federal Personnel Handbook
 - [Chap. 752 - Adverse Actions](#)
- [SD 214 - Equal Employment Opportunity Program](#)
- [SD 217 - Workplace Violence Prevention Policy](#)
- [SD 225 - Anti-Harassment Policy](#)
- [SD 604 - Misconduct in Research](#)
 - [Attachment A: Timeline for Handling an Allegation of Misconduct in Research](#)
- [SI Civil Program Handbook](#)
- [SI Equal Employment Opportunity Policy Statement](#)
- [SI Equal Opportunity Handbook](#)
- [SI Statement of Values and Code of Ethics](#)

Glossary

Management official

An individual employed by an agency in a position the duties and responsibilities of which require or authorize the individual to formulate, determine, or influence the policies of the agency (5 USC § 7103(a)(11)). At the museum, this category includes department chairs and members of the executive team, among others.

Microaggression

Frequent derogatory actions or comments based on a person's race, gender, age, or similar. Often subtle and sometimes unintentional, these interactions can nonetheless create an unpleasant or hostile environment.