المجلس العربي للعلوم الاجتماعية
Arab Council for the Social Sciences
Conseil Arabe pour les Sciences Sociales

Code of Ethics and Conduct

Summary
2026

Code of Ethics and Conduct

1. General Provisions and Scope of Application

- Purpose and Geographic Scope: This Code aims to set standards and guide the behavior of all individuals involved in ACSS activities. It seeks to create a safe and stimulating work environment based on mutual respect, without restricting academic freedom, critique, or the expression of personal views. This Code applies across all ACSS workspaces, events, and online platforms, as well as any location whenever conduct is related to the organization's activities, affects its reputation, impairs its ability to perform its duties, or impacts the safety of its members.
- Legal Nature: This Code automatically forms an integral part of all contracts and terms of involvement in ACSS activities. It constitutes an ethical responsibility and is an original contractual provision regardless of whether or not a contract is signed.
- Persons to whom the Code applies: Members of the General Assembly and Board of Trustees, staff, grant and fellowship recipients, committee members, consultants, event attendees/participants, colleagues from partner organizations, and donors.
- Intersecting Relationships: If an individual is involved in more than one relationship with the ACSS, any violation of the Code within one relationship impacts the other relationships.

2. Prohibited Conduct

- Breach of Academic and Professional Integrity Principles: Providing inaccurate information in membership and grant applications (falsification leads to termination of membership/grant); violating scientific integrity rules, research ethics, and accuracy in financial and narrative reporting; failing to acknowledge ACSS support; breach of strict confidentiality by committee members; publishing false or misleading information; and entering into repeated discussions directly related to the ACSS that harm its reputation and ability to perform its duties.
- Unauthorized Representation: Prohibition against speaking in the name of the Arab Council for the Social Sciences, signing petitions in the name of the institution, or applying for grants in a representative capacity without official authorization from the ACSS. Mentioning affiliation with the ACSS is permitted only in CVs.
- Sexual Violations: Sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment are strictly prohibited. Engaging in romantic and/or sexual relationships where one party holds supervisory, evaluative, or financial oversight authority is also prohibited. Such relationships must be disclosed, and the individual must recuse themselves from roles, responsibilities, and decisions affecting work, compensation, and performance, with primary responsibility resting on the party holding authority. Offering or accepting sexual relationships or favors in exchange for benefits, and using pornographic materials in the context of ACSS activities or using its tools and equipment, are strictly forbidden. The ACSS may take disciplinary measures even if the victim is not affiliated with the organization when the individual's behavior affects the institution's reputation, its ability to carry out its mission, or the safety of its members.
- Violence and Harassment: Acts of physical aggression, assault, intimidation, and threats are strictly prohibited, as are coercion, humiliation, bullying, and verbal abuse. Due respect must be shown to the organization's management, staff, and members.
- Discrimination: Unfair treatment or exclusion based on nationality, ethnicity, race, color, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, marital status, political opinions, or other forms of inequality are strictly prohibited.
- Corruption and Conflict of Interest: Prohibition against offering or soliciting gifts and benefits to impede activities or influence decisions; duty to disclose any conflict of interest and recusal from decision-making; prohibition against seeking personal commercial profits from ACSS activities, and accountability for the use of the organization's funds, devices, and resources.

3. Classification of Violations and Disciplinary Actions[1]

Severity Level	Examples of Violation	Disciplinary Actions
Category **(Minor)**	One-off inappropriate comments; delay in paying fees or submitting reports; limited use of ACSS resources for personal purposes.	Verbal or written warning; participation in a mandatory training program; submission of a formal apology; demand for payment of overdue fees.
Category **(Moderate)**	Repeated inappropriate comments; disruption of teamwork; disclosure of limited confidential information; repeated delays in paying fees or submitting reports; failure to acknowledge support.	Formal written warning kept in file; temporary suspension of activities; removal from specific roles; freeze of grant/membership.
Category **(Severe)**	Forgery of documents and reports; systemic discrimination; sexual harassment, exploitation, or assault; physical/verbal violence; practice of corruption; prohibited relationships.	Permanent exclusion; termination of grant/contract; recovery of financial amounts provided by the ACSS; cancellation of membership; referral to legal authorities.

4. Disciplinary Board and Procedures

- Formation and Powers: The Board of Trustees forms an impartial Disciplinary Board for moderate and severe violations (3 or 5 members). The Disciplinary Board conducts the investigation, hears the parties, and prepares a detailed report with recommendations. The final decision rests exclusively with the Board of Trustees by a two-thirds majority of attending members.
- Jurisdiction: The HR officer conducts investigations in minor violations and issues minor disciplinary actions. Complaints against HR are referred to the Director General or Associate Director. If the complaint is against the Director General, Chair of the Board of Trustees, or a Board member, an independent external investigator or committee is appointed, with recusal of anyone with a conflict of interest from investigation, decision, and appeal.

5. Reporting Channels and Investigation

- Reporting: The ACSS considers violations that directly affect its mission or safety of its members. The affected party has the right to report violations and choose the timing of reporting. Reporting can be done via email (reporting@theacss.org), the anonymous online platform (accessible via the QR code below), or directly to a supervisor or HR officer. Incidents occurring within a maximum of three years prior to the reporting date may be reported, with some flexibility for severe cases.
- False Reporting and Protection against Retaliation: Deliberate false reporting in bad faith is considered an ethical violation subject to accountability. Taking any retaliatory action against a whistleblower or complainant acting in good faith is strictly prohibited.
- Investigation Process:
  1. Registration of the report, acknowledgment of receipt within 48 hours, and initial assessment within 5 working days of receipt.
  2. Taking immediate interim measures (within 24-48 hours) such as separating parties, exemption from participation in event, providing medical care, or temporary suspension from work.

1 Severity criteria of the violation, recurrence, impact on the victim and the organization, bad faith, degree of cooperation, and mitigating circumstances (e.g., admitting and apologizing) or aggravating circumstances (e.g., abuse of power or cover-up) are taken into account.

3. Notifying the accused before 10 working days elapse from receiving the report, allowing 7 days for a written response to the allegations.
4. The investigation is completed within 30 working days applying the "preponderance of evidence" standard (greater than 50%).

- Rights of Parties: Ensuring a fair balance between the right of the accused to defense and presumption of innocence, and the complainant's right to protection and confidentiality.

6. Disciplinary Decision and Appeal

- Issuing the Decision: The accused is notified of the Board of Trustees meeting date to discuss the report 21 days in advance, and they have the right to attend and present a defense. The Board of Trustees takes a decision by a two-thirds majority of attending members and notifies the accused in writing within 5 working days.
- Appeal: The accused may appeal within 10 working days based on procedural errors, emergence of new evidence, disproportionate sanction, or insufficient evidence. An appeal committee from the Board of Trustees (distinct from the Disciplinary Board) composed of 3 members reviews the request within 15 working days, and its decision is final.

7. Final Provisions

- Confidentiality and Coordination: All procedures are conducted with strict impartiality and confidentiality. Disclosure of any information by participants in the investigation is prohibited and constitutes a violation of the Code. Records are kept securely and deleted every three years (parties are notified of their right to receive a copy of their file), except for cases leading to permanent sanctions, which are kept for 5 years or more.
- For official inquiries: admin.hr@theacss.org
- Accessing the Full Code: For more details on principles of conduct and ethics, and approved procedures, we invite you to read the full Code of Conduct and Ethics via this link.

For Anonymous Reporting