

There are many benefits of being an ASEG member- and a sense of community and invaluable networking opportunities are amongst these. We pride ourselves on making any ASEG-associated event a safe place for all to attend, and with a report of recent unpleasant behaviour at an ASEG event, the Federal Executive have taken this opportunity to develop a Code of Conduct, led by ASEG President-Elect Emma Brand. It's important that everyone knows what we deem as acceptable behaviour. Below (and on our website) you will find the draft version of our new Code of Conduct. There will be a consultation period until the end of August 2021; during this time any comments or suggestions can be made by contacting Emma at President-Elect@aseg.org.au or Kate at President@aseg.org.au. During this consultation period, we expect anyone attending an ASEG-associated event or communicating with regards to ASEG-matters to behave in a professional manner in accordance with the draft Code of Conduct.

ASEG Code of Ethics – is a set of principles based on the values of the ASEG and requires the Executive and Members to practice their profession according to agreed professional ethical standards.

ASEG Code of Conduct – complements the Code of Ethics and promotes respectful behaviour and general good conduct. It applies to Members and non-Members when attending or participating in ASEG-based activities or communicating with regards to ASEG matters, including but not limited to meetings, workshops, conferences, field trips, committee or volunteer work that is conducted either in-person or in a virtual environment.

Code of Ethics

No changes are being proposed to our existing code of ethics below, although feedback can be provided.

Section 5.1 of the ASEG Constitution states that "Membership of Society in any class shall be always contingent upon conformance with the Society's Constitution including the By-Laws, Professional Codes of Conduct and Ethics":

1. A member shall conduct all professional work in a spirit of fidelity towards clients and employers, fairness to employees, colleagues and contractors, and devotion to high ideals of personal integrity and professional responsibility.
2. A member shall treat as confidential all knowledge of the business affairs, geophysical or geological information, or technical processes of employers when their interests require secrecy and not disclose such confidential information without the consent of the client or employer.
3. A member shall inform a client or employer of any business connections, conflicts of interest, or affiliations, which might influence the member's judgment or impair the disinterested quality of the member's services.
4. A member shall accept financial or other compensation for a particular service from one source only, except with the full knowledge and consent of all interested parties.
5. A member shall refrain from associating with, or knowingly allow the use of his or her name, by an enterprise of questionable character.
6. A member shall advertise only in a manner consistent with the dignity of the profession, refrain from using any improper or questionable methods of soliciting professional work, and decline to accept compensation for work secured by such improper or questionable methods.
7. A member shall refrain from using unfair means to win professional advancement, and avoid injuring unfairly or maliciously, directly or indirectly, another geophysicist's professional reputation, business or chances of employment.

8. A member shall give appropriate credit to any associate, subordinate or other person, who has contributed to work for which the member is responsible or whose work is subject to review.
9. In any public written or verbal comment, a member shall be careful to indicate whether the statements or assertions made therein represent facts, an opinion or a belief. In all such comments a member shall act only with propriety in criticising the ability, opinion or integrity of another geophysicist, person or organisation.
10. A member will endeavour to work continuously towards the improvement of his or her skills in geophysics and related disciplines, and share such knowledge with fellow geophysicists within the limitation of confidentiality.
11. A member will cooperate in building the geophysical profession by the exchange of knowledge, information and experience with fellow geophysicists and with students, and also by contributions to the goals of professional and learned societies, schools of applied science, and the technical press.
12. A member shall be interested in the welfare and safety of the general public, which may be affected by the work for which the member is responsible, or which may result from decisions or recommendations made by the member, and be ready to apply specialist knowledge, skill and training in the public behalf for the use and benefit of mankind.

Code of Conduct

The code of conduct and process for breaches provided below are newly developed and under consultation.

Section 5 of the ASEG Constitution states that "Membership of Society in any class shall be always contingent upon conformance with the Society's Constitution including the By-Laws, Professional Codes of Conduct and Ethics":

1. When undertaking ASEG-related activities Members and non-Members are expected to respect others, including the community, and protect their health, safety and mental wellbeing.
2. The ASEG and its Members will promote equality of opportunity, regardless of age, race, nationality, gender, sexuality, religion, disability, ethnicity, marital status, political affiliation, culture or any other attribute.
3. The ASEG will not tolerate any form of harassment or bullying, which is defined as unreasonable behaviour directed towards its members, staff or any other person participating in ASEG-based activity. This includes (but is not limited to): abusive or offensive language or inappropriate comments such as those related to gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, religion or national origin; aggressive and intimidating behaviour; practical jokes or initiation rituals, and unjustified criticism or complaint.
4. When undertaking ASEG-related activities in the field, ASEG Members are expected to seek permission for access to sites from relevant landowners and / or caretakers, including Traditional Owners where appropriate and / or applicable.

Breaches of the Code of Conduct

The process with respect to the handling of any reported and alleged breach/s of the Code of Conduct is as follows:

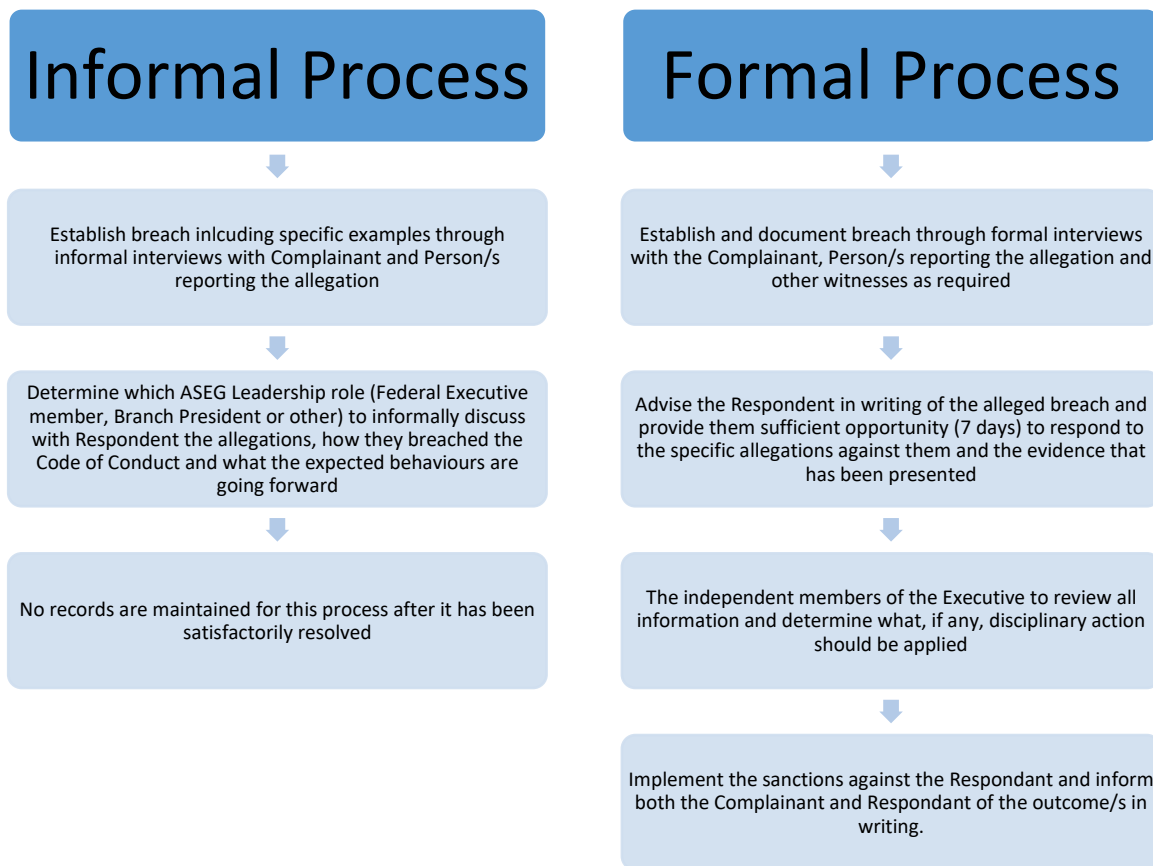
1. Establish two independent members of the Federal Executive to undertake the process
2. Investigate to obtain sufficient information

3. Assess and establish whether a breach of the Code of Conduct has occurred
4. Determine what, if any, disciplinary action(s) will be applied

All alleged breaches will be investigated, assessed and established by two members of the Federal Executive who are deemed independent from the allegation/s. These members shall also determine and recommend to the Directors what, if any, disciplinary action(s) will be applied. The Directors, managing any potential conflicts of interest appropriately, will then agree on the recommended disciplinary action(s). The process for the handling of any reported and alleged breach/s of the code of conduct will be undertaken according to the following principles:

1. All steps shall be undertaken to ensure that the Complainant is empowered
2. The process shall be undertaken in a private and confidential manner
3. The process shall be transparent for both Complainant and Respondent

The process can be undertaken in either a formal or informal manner. The below diagram outlines the high-level processes that are followed for either approach.



Reporting Process

Persons wishing to report alleged breach/s of the Code of Conduct should raise this breach with any member of the ASEG Executive, who will engage with one of the Directors to establish two independent members of the Executive to undertake the assessment of the allegation.

The Person or Persons reporting the alleged breach/s should ensure that they document the alleged breach/s by noting essential factual details such as when and where it occurred, who was involved, if

there were any witnesses, and what happened. All reports of alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct will be dealt with in a private and confidential manner as per obligations under the Privacy Act 1988. Except where public safety is at risk, a Member's privacy is to be strictly observed, and the matter treated confidentially.

The details of the allegation will be first established by the delegated members of the Federal Executive through an informal interview with the Person/s reporting the alleged breach/s and the Complainant (if they are separate people). It should be established what the Complainant's preferred process is, either formal or informal, and this should be taken into consideration by the delegated members of the Federal Executive.

A formal process shall be undertaken based on:

1. The seriousness of the allegations
2. Whether the allegations constitute a pattern of behaviour over a period of time
3. The preferred process of the Complainant

Any alleged criminal activity will be reported directly to the Police.

If an informal process is to be followed the high-level process outlined in Figure 1 should be adhered to. The following outlines the detail regarding the formal process.

Investigation Process

Once the decision has been made to undertake a formal process, the facts of the allegation will be established through formal interviews with the Complainant, Person/s reporting the allegation and other witnesses as required. One of the delegated members of the Federal Executive will be responsible for taking notes during these interviews which will form the basis of the formal notice to the Respondent with respect to the nature of the alleged breach and the elements of the Code of Conduct that they are alleged to have breached.

Once the nature of the alleged breach has been established, it will be the responsibility of the delegated members of the Federal Executive to notify the Respondent in writing and inform them of:

- the nature of the alleged breach
- the elements of the Code of Conduct that they are alleged to have breached
- the possible sanctions that may apply for breaches of the Code of Conduct
- the person(s) who will investigate the alleged breach
- the person(s) who will decide whether a breach has occurred
- how the process will be conducted.

The Respondent will then be provided a reasonable time (usually 7 working days) to respond to the allegation in writing and have their response considered in the Assessment and Sanction process.

If at any time the details of the alleged breach/s change, including if additional documents, materials or witness statements are provided to the delegated members of the Federal Executive then this information will be included in the notification to the Respondent, or the notification to the Respondent will be updated.

Assessment Process

The details of the allegation will then be assessed by the delegated members of the Federal Executive and it will be established whether the Code of Conduct has been breached and to what seriousness. The delegated members of the Federal Executive will use all information available.

Sanction Process

If it has been established that the Code of Conduct has been breached, then the Respondent may be subject to imposed sanctions. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to:

- a reprimand/warning
- removal of committee positions/titles (eg, Fellow, if applicable)
- cancellation of membership for a set period of month(s)/year(s) depending upon the severity of the Code of Conduct breach - the Respondent may reapply at the end of this sanction period
- termination of membership and expulsion from the ASEG - with no future prospects for reapplication
- for non-members, banishment from all future ASEG events.

The delegated members of the Federal Executive will recommend to the Directors what, if any, sanction(s) will be applied. The Directors, managing any potential conflicts of interest appropriately, will then agree to the recommended sanctions(s) or amend as per their discretion.

It is noted that the respondent has three opportunities to provide input or comment on the investigation of the allegations against them. They may respond to the:

1. specific allegations against them
2. evidence that emerges during the course of the investigation and the delegated members of the Executive's interpretation of that evidence
3. proposed sanctions.

Once an investigation has occurred and the Directors have made a decision as to the actions resulting from the alleged breach, both the Respondent and the Complainant will be notified in writing.

Documentation and privacy

Documentation plays an important part of the process bearing in mind that at all stages, all persons involved in an alleged breach of conduct must have their privacy protected. The Federal Executive Committee will formally record the incident to ensure that the responses and outcomes of the investigation are adequately documented for future reference if needed. Access to these documents will be restricted to the Federal Executive Committee.

Secure storage of this documentation is important, as it will allow the Federal Executive to review previous records to see whether similar incidents have occurred previously, and to assist local Divisions and branches with identifying continued breaches of the Code of Conduct.

This document will be updated periodically with improvements and changes to ASEG policies.

ASEG Directors

Emma Brand, Kate Robertson, Leslie Atkinson, Yvette Poudjom Djomani