

## Code of Conduct

### About this Code of Conduct

ISUOG is committed to:

- ensuring a safe and welcoming environment where everyone across ISUOG's international community has a positive experience and is treated with respect when engaging with ISUOG; and
- upholding ISUOG's values of excellence, integrity, respect, inclusiveness and diversity, and passion.

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to set out the standards of conduct that ISUOG expects from everyone in the ISUOG community (**Part 1**), provide some indicative examples of behaviours that are expected, in particular ISUOG roles and activities (**Part 2**), and explain how ISUOG will deal with breaches of this Code of Conduct (**Part 3**).

Everyone in the ISUOG community is expected to have regard for the impact of their behaviour on colleagues, the organisation and the wider public, regardless of their status within ISUOG. This includes ISUOG trustees, members, staff, committee and sub-committee members, ambassadors, award winners, participants in ISUOG events and courses, journal contributors, editorial board members, journal editors (including the editor in chief), suppliers, sponsors, and anyone else participating in or supporting any ISUOG activities.

This Code of Conduct applies to written, verbal and non-verbal behaviour and communication. This may include incidents which happen on or off ISUOG's premises, while on ISUOG business, in correspondence, online or on social media, while attending an ISUOG event or activity, while a person is (or could be perceived as) representing or acting on behalf of ISUOG, or where the conduct otherwise could impact ISUOG.

ISUOG does not accept responsibility for actions of members of the ISUOG community which such individuals undertake in their own capacity outside the framework of ISUOG's activities.

The trustees may amend this Code of Conduct at any time.

## Part 1: General standards of conduct

The following standards of conduct apply to everyone in the ISUOG community:

- **Equality, diversity and inclusion:** ISUOG promotes equality, diversity and inclusion as the basis for positive working relationships and everyone in the ISUOG community is expected to be treated, and to treat others, fairly, with dignity and with respect, regardless of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Unlawful discrimination will not be tolerated in the ISUOG community.
- **Safeguarding:** ISUOG is committed to protecting from harm everyone who comes into contact with ISUOG through its work, in accordance with the [Charity Commission Guidance on Safeguarding and Protecting People for Charities and Trustees](#). Members of the ISUOG community should take reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of those around them.
- **Harassment and bullying:** ISUOG is committed to providing a safe and respectful environment, free from harassment and bullying which will not be tolerated, in accordance with ISUOG's [anti-harassment position statement](#). Harassment is any unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them (for example unwanted physical conduct (e.g. touching, pushing or grabbing); aggressive, intimidating or offensive emails, text messages, correspondence or social media content; or unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour). ISUOG supports the [call of the Charity Commission for respect and tolerance](#) in the charity sector, and encourages the ISUOG community to consider this in both internal and external communications. A person can be harassed even if they are not the intended target – for example, a person may be harassed by racist jokes about a different ethnic group if the jokes create an offensive environment for them. Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving the misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined or threatened (for example physical or psychological threats;

intimidating or overbearing levels of criticism; or inappropriate derogatory remarks about someone's academic opinions or contributions). ISUOG encourages diverse views and robust discussion and debate, but this should never involve aggressive or hostile comments or behaviour.

- **Sexual harassment:** ISUOG is committed to providing a working environment free from sexual harassment, which is unlawful and will not be tolerated. Sexual harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. A single incident can amount to sexual harassment. A person may be sexually harassed even if it was not the intention of the perpetrator to harass them.
- **Third-party harassment:** ISUOG is committed to ensuring the working environment is free from third-party harassment. Third-party harassment occurs where a person is harassed or sexually harassed by someone who does not work for, and who is not an agent of, the organisation, but with whom they have come into contact during the course of their work with ISUOG. Likewise, ISUOG will not tolerate any harassment or sexual harassment by anyone in the ISUOG community against a third party.
- **Academic integrity:** ISUOG strives to maintain the highest standards in all research and other academic activity that it undertakes, including without limitation in research and abstracts/manuscripts submitted to ISUOG. Everyone in the ISUOG community is expected to maintain high standards of academic integrity and should take care not to conduct themselves in ways inconsistent with these standards.
- **Ethical conduct:** Everyone in the ISUOG community is expected to reject any practice which might reasonably be deemed improper (even if it might benefit ISUOG). Bribery, corruption or other financial impropriety is unacceptable and must be avoided. It is important to be open and transparent about any gifts and hospitality provided or received and to avoid giving or receiving any gifts or hospitality that could influence (or be perceived as influencing) decisions or behaviours.
- **Conflicts of Interest:** Everyone in the ISUOG community should act at all times with impartiality and independence and comply with all conflicts of interest policies and procedures relevant to their role. It is important to be mindful of any financial, family, business or other personal interests that may conflict with the interests of ISUOG. Such interests should be declared or reported where appropriate so that any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest can be assessed, and to ensure that individuals are not involved in decisions where there could be a perception of bias.
- **Political activity:** ISUOG is a politically neutral organisation. Nothing should be said, published or done in a manner that could be attributed to ISUOG that supports or opposes: (a) any political party or politician; or (b) (unless appropriate authorisation has been provided from [the ISUOG trustees]) the law or policy of any Government or public body.
- **Reputational harm to ISUOG:** Nothing should be said, done or published that might damage ISUOG's reputation or bring ISUOG into disrepute. This includes anything that occurs in a personal capacity but could damage ISUOG by association. [Members of the ISUOG community will disclose to ISUOG if their name has been removed from the Medical Register in any country, or from membership of any other professional society for any breach of ethical, scientific or professional conduct]. Members of the ISUOG community should not express any opinions on behalf of ISUOG except in the proper conduct of their role or otherwise as authorised from [the Chief Executive] or pursuant to a scheme of delegation, and should take reasonable steps to make sure that anything said, done or published in a personal capacity is not perceived as being on behalf of ISUOG (including on social media).
- **Privacy and confidentiality:** Care should be taken when dealing with confidential information, ensuring compliance with any ISUOG policies or protocols on confidentiality. Personal identifiable information about a living person ("**personal data**") should always be used in accordance with applicable data protection law and good practice. Anyone sharing personal data within the ISUOG community should make sure that their use of the personal data is lawful and fair.
- **Intellectual property:** Members of the ISUOG community must ensure that they have permission to use all documents, records, or other materials shared with the ISUOG community and that they do not infringe the rights (including any intellectual property rights such as copyright, trademarks, patents and moral rights) of any

third party. Anyone using ISUOG branding or other intellectual property in materials they use at ISUOG events or in other activities or forums (outside of ISUOG staff members operating within the normal parameters of their role) must be authorised to do so by [the Chief Executive], except where the use of the ISUOG branding or other intellectual property is used to directly attribute the intellectual property of ISUOG.

- **Drugs and alcohol:** Members of the ISUOG community should avoid using any alcohol, illegal drugs or prescription drugs that have not been prescribed for them during any ISUOG activity or when they are (or could be perceived as) acting on behalf of or representing ISUOG in any capacity. It is permissible to drink alcohol where appropriate in connection with approved social functions as long as performance is not impaired, and behaviour does not cause embarrassment, distress or offence to others.
- **Compliance with ISUOG's constitution and policies:** Members of the ISUOG community are expected to fully comply with [ISUOG's Articles of Association](#) and all ISUOG policies that are relevant to their role/s. This includes complying with this Code of Conduct by engaging constructively and honestly in any investigation process, accepting any consequences (subject to the right to appeal) and not threatening or retaliating against anyone involved in raising concerns about conduct.

## Part 2: Role-specific standard of conduct

The following standards of conduct apply to the roles and activities specified below in addition to the general standards of conduct in Part 1:

### Trustees and committee and sub-committee members, editorial board members and members of other ISUOG groups

ISUOG's trustees have ultimate responsibility within ISUOG and have various duties under charity law and company law. Committee and sub-committee members, editorial board members and members of other ISUOG groups (who are not themselves trustees) do not have the same legal duties as trustees but are expected to meet the same high standards of conduct. All trustees and committee and sub-committee members and the members of editorial boards and all other groups established by ISUOG are expected to:

- Act in the best interests of ISUOG and focus their efforts on furthering ISUOG's charitable purposes for the public benefit.
- Respect the role and collective authority of the ISUOG trustees in having the general control and management of the administration of ISUOG and respect the role of the ISUOG staff team in administering ISUOG's activities day-to-day. Committee and sub-committee members and the members of all other groups established by ISUOG should not seek to attack or undermine decisions of ISUOG trustees or staff. Questions or concerns about any of ISUOG's activities or decisions should be raised in a constructive and polite manner in accordance with the [ISUOG's Complaints Policy](#) or this Code of Conduct.
- Contribute politely to debate and decision-making and challenge constructively, considering the appropriate forum and the impact on others. Concerns should not be publicised in open forums such as via social media or large group email chains. When a collective decision has been made it is important that individual trustees and members of the relevant committee, sub-committee or group do not undermine it, even if they individually did not vote in favour of the decision.
- Comply with the conflicts of interest policies and procedures that apply to them, including by declaring any personal interests and avoiding or managing actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest in accordance with the applicable policy/procedure.
- Act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias. Trustees and committee and sub-committee members and members of all other ISUOG groups should not act or take decisions to further any personal agenda or for the purpose of gaining financial or other material benefits for themselves, their families or their friends.
- Be accountable for their decisions and actions and submit to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this. Take responsibility for ensuring that ISUOG is well run.

- Comply with ISUOG's governing documents, policies and the law and have regard to guidance from the Charity Commission.
- Act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner and not withhold relevant information unless there are clear and lawful reasons for doing so. Confidentiality should not be used as a reason not to disclose matters that should be transparent and open.
- Be honest and truthful.
- Act with tolerance and respect in interactions with each other, staff, members, stakeholders and anyone else they come into contact with through their role. In meetings all participants should accept the authority of the chair, maintain a respectful attitude towards others and contribute in a considered and constructive way, listening carefully and challenging sensitively.
- Promote and robustly support the principles in this Code of Conduct and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.
- Develop and maintain a sound and up-to-date knowledge of ISUOG and how it operates and make their skills, experience and knowledge available to ISUOG.
- Be proactively engaged in their role by striving to attend all meetings and giving apologies in writing (with reasons) if they are unable to attend, setting aside time to fully prepare for meetings (including reading papers), actively engaging in discussion, debate and voting.
- Use the resources of ISUOG responsibly and claim only reasonable expenses actually incurred in connection with their role in line with ISUOG's policies and procedures.
- Participate in collective decision making, accept a majority decision made at a meeting even if they did not vote in favour of it, and not act individually unless they are doing so under the delegated authority of the relevant group.
- Actively contribute towards improving ISUOG's governance, participating in induction and training and sharing ideas for improvement.
- Recognise and respect the distinction between their role and the roles of staff and volunteers.

## Members

ISUOG's members make up a large and very important part of the ISUOG community. Members are expected to engage and collaborate in a constructive and appropriate way to support ISUOG's values of excellence, integrity, respect, inclusiveness and diversity, and passion. Members should:

- Maintain a high standard of personal conduct, as they would towards patients and in the workplace. Promote and role model the behaviours set out in this Code of Conduct.
- Respect the role and authority of the ISUOG trustees in having the general control and management of the administration of ISUOG and respect the role of the ISUOG staff team in administering ISUOG's activities day-to-day. Members should not seek to attack or undermine decisions of ISUOG trustees or staff. Questions or concerns about any of ISUOG's activities or decisions should be raised in a constructive and polite manner in accordance with the [ISUOG Complaints Policy](#) or this Code of Conduct.
- Contribute politely to debate and decision-making and challenge constructively, considering the appropriate forum and the impact on others. Members should not mount sustained campaigns against other individuals within ISUOG, nor publicise their concerns in open forums such as via social media or large group email chains. When a democratic decision has been made it is important that members do not undermine it, even if they individually did not vote in favour of the decision.

- Endeavour to attend ISUOG's AGM and other general meetings of members. At those meetings, members should respect the authority of the chair, raise their hand if they wish to speak, and refrain from behaviour that may disrupt the meeting.
- Be familiar with [ISUOG's Articles of Association](#) and act within its provisions, including the provisions restricting benefits to ISUOG members. Members should act in a way that is consistent with ISUOG's charitable purposes, which are the protection and preservation of health by promoting the science of ultrasound in obstetrics and gynecology and education therein for the benefit of the public.

### **ISUOG events, courses and other educational activities**

ISUOG's events, courses and other activities promote education and collaboration amongst ISUOG's international community of members, faculty and delegates (including sponsors and exhibitors) who attend ISUOG events and partake in other ISUOG activities. When ISUOG refers to faculty, it means people who participate in ISUOG events and courses including speakers, presenters, chairs, co-chairs and moderators.

Events and courses are a core part of ISUOG's community and mission. ISUOG staff, volunteers and faculty will be asked to ensure that this Code of Conduct is followed at ISUOG events and courses. In particular, this means that everyone in the ISUOG community is expected to lead by example in adhering to the general standards, particularly by treating others fairly, with dignity and with respect. Examples of unacceptable conduct at events include:

- Treating others unfairly, differently or disrespectfully due to their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or any other characteristic.
- Carrying out duties (including presentations and seminars) for ISUOG when under the influence of alcohol or non-medically prescribed drugs.
- Failure to follow reasonable instructions and directions, including the rules and procedures of the event, course, activity or venue.
- Recording or photographing, other than for personal professional use (without wider dissemination), presentations or scientific content without permission from ISUOG, other than posting on social media in relation to an ISUOG event in a manner that appropriately references ISUOG and any relevant contributor and which is otherwise compliant with this Code of Conduct.
- Distribution of promotional flyers or materials without prior agreement from [a senior manager of ISUOG].
- Using ISUOG's name, logo, identity, reputation, or public platform for political purposes or to share personal political opinions.
- Disruption to the scientific program or other event proceedings, and
- Destruction of property or the threat of physical force to any person or property.

### **Part 3: Dealing with concerns and breaches**

Unless the factual position is immediately obvious or can be readily ascertained, ISUOG will investigate apparent or alleged behaviour that could breach this Code of Conduct. ISUOG reserves the right to take immediate action where necessary, pending further investigation, where this is in the best interests of the organisation.

Individuals should notify ISUOG's Chief Executive Officer [[ea@isuog.org](mailto:ea@isuog.org)] or the President [[President@isuog.org](mailto:President@isuog.org)] if they believe or suspect that a breach of this Code of Conduct has occurred, or is likely to occur in the future. ISUOG aims to encourage a free and open culture and recognises that effective and honest communication, is essential if concerns are to be dealt with effectively. If individuals wish to raise concerns confidentially, ISUOG will make every effort to keep their identity secret and only reveal it where necessary to those involved in investigating the concern. Whistleblowers will not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a genuine concern.

## **How alleged breaches of this Code of Conduct will be approached and investigated**

Alleged breaches of this Code of Conduct will usually be considered by a panel established by the Executive Committee. The panel may consist of members of the Executive Committee, staff or others as the Executive Committee deems appropriate in each case, taking into account the nature and seriousness of the allegation. Members of the panel should not be involved in the alleged incident and should not have any conflict of interest. The role of the panel will be to consider and investigate the allegation, determine whether there has been a breach of this Code of Conduct, and suggest the appropriate consequence/s, subject to the approval of the [Executive Committee and/or the Trustees].

Sometimes ISUOG may first try to resolve a concern informally, before carrying out a formal investigation. The aim of informal resolution is to identify whether a common understanding can be reached on the circumstances, the standards of behaviour expected, taking account of linguistic and cultural differences and how things may be put right. However, this may not always be appropriate, for example where conduct has not improved following previous concerns, there is a dispute about what happened and/or culpability, or the allegations raised are serious. The panel will decide on a case-by-case basis whether informal resolution is appropriate or not, subject to the approval of the [Executive Committee and/or the Trustees]. Where the factual position is not immediately clear or readily ascertained, a formal investigation will be led by the panel to establish the facts of the alleged incident, with support from staff and advisers as appropriate. This usually involves collecting documentary and witness evidence and preparing a written summary. The person accused of breaching this Code of Conduct will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegations verbally and/or in writing. The investigation will be completed within a reasonable timeframe, taking into account the complexity of the matter, the availability of witnesses, staff resource and timing. The person/s carrying out the investigation should not be involved in the alleged incident and should not have any conflict of interest.

The Trustees rely on transparency, honesty and good faith engagement from any Complainant to pursue any investigative process fairly, diligently and proportionately. If such engagement is not forthcoming, the Trustees may choose to suspend any investigation or reduce the scope of their action accordingly. The panel, subject to the approval of the [Executive Committee and/or the Trustees], may decide to suspend individuals either partially or entirely from ISUOG activities as an interim measure while an investigation is ongoing, for example if the alleged breach is particularly serious, if there are concerns about safety or wellbeing, or where there are significant risks to ISUOG's reputation. Suspension is only an interim measure and does not indicate that a breach of the Code of Conduct has been found.

Once the formal investigation is complete, the panel will decide whether there has been a breach of the Code of Conduct and, if so, what the consequence(s) will be. Where the panel should determine issues of fact, the standard of proof will be 'on the balance of probabilities' in the reasonable opinion of the panel. The panel will also take into account the need to protect ISUOG's reputation. The person accused will be notified of the decision in writing.

Where an investigation is in progress or has been concluded, the panel, [Executive Committee and/or the Trustees] shall not be required to engage in correspondence with the individuals involved or any third parties except where this is considered to be in the best interests of the investigation itself or of ISUOG in the proper and efficient pursuit of its charitable purposes.

ISUOG is a charitable organisation and as such is obliged to utilise its limited resources prudently in pursuit of its charitable objects. ISUOG will engage with complaints and apply the policies and processes set out in this code proportionately, with this in mind. The Trustees reserve the right to enforce this Code of Conduct and/or to amend the process for investigation of complaints set out in this Code, either generally or in relation to any specific allegation, at their discretion in the best interests of the organisation.

## **Appealing against a decision**

An appeal can be made against the panel's decision if the accused individual feels that the decision or consequence(s) are unreasonable given all the circumstances and evidence considered or if they have new evidence which they were unable (for valid reasons) to provide earlier in the process, and which is material to the panel's decision. An individual wishing to appeal should notify the chair of the panel within 20 days of being informed of the panel's decision. All appeals will be escalated to [the Trustees]. The Trustees will decide whether there are proper grounds for the appeal or not and will notify the appellant of their decision in writing.



If the Trustees allow the appeal, they will convene an appeal panel consisting of members of the Board of Trustees, staff or others as the Trustees deem appropriate. Members of the appeal panel should not have been involved in the alleged incident, the original panel or the investigation and should not have any conflict of interest. The appeal panel will consider all the information that was available to the original panel and any additional information provided by the appellant (which may be provided verbally and/or in writing).

The appeal panel will decide whether to uphold the original panel's decision or reach a different decision on whether there has been a breach of the Code of Conduct and/or the appropriate consequence/s. The appellant will be notified of the decision in writing. The decision of the appeal panel is final.

### **Making changes to the procedure**

The Executive Committee or the Trustees may decide to alter the investigation and/or appeal procedure where there is a good reason to do so, for example to manage conflicts of interest, to make reasonable adjustments for participants in the process, or where other policies and procedures need to be followed (e.g. in relation to staff).

There may be situations where the Executive Committee or the Trustees decide that it is not appropriate for us to investigate alleged misconduct. This may be because it occurred outside ISUOG and ISUOG is not able to carry out a meaningful investigation or because it has no relationship to ISUOG or ISUOG's reputation and therefore falls outside the scope of this Code of Conduct.

### **Consequences of breaching this Code of Conduct**

If an individual is found to have breached this Code of Conduct ("the transgressor"), the panel or appeal panel may decide to impose one or more of the following consequences:

- **Informal action:** The transgressor may be told what remedial actions or changes are expected of them in future, but there will be no other steps taken. Informal action may be used when there has been a breach of this Code of Conduct but the risk to ISUOG and its community is very low.
- **Formal written warning:** The transgressor may be issued with a formal written warning setting out the nature of the misconduct and the change in behaviour and/or remedial action required. A formal written warning may be applied where the conduct is a one-off incident representing a low risk to ISUOG and its community. If the transgressor fails to take the remedial action within a specified amount of time, one or more of the more serious consequences below may be imposed instead.
- **Compulsory training:** The transgressor may be required to attend training to address the conduct of concern. This may be provided by ISUOG or a third party. This consequence may be applied if the conduct has illustrated a learning need and can be applied in any situation where there has been a breach of the Code of Conduct. If the transgressor fails to attend the training and to engage with it positively and openly within a specified amount of time, a more serious consequence may be imposed instead.
- **Limited involvement in ISUOG activities:** The transgressor may be fully or partially restricted from certain activities (for example attending or presenting at events or courses, submitting materials or publications, being appointed to ISUOG governance roles or being eligible for awards) for a specified period of time. This consequence may be applied if their conduct represents a significant risk to ISUOG or its community but is not so serious as to warrant full suspension or removal from the ISUOG community.
- **Removal or suspension:** The transgressor may be removed from their role or status within ISUOG (for example committee member, member, ambassador, trustee, award winner) either permanently or for a specified period of time. This consequence may be applied if their conduct represents a high risk to ISUOG or its community.

The panel will consider the behaviour and engagement of the alleged transgressor following any complaint and take this into account in deciding what consequences should result from any breach of this Code of Conduct. In particular, where the alleged transgressor engages transparently, honestly and in good faith with the process, accepts their wrongdoing and/or provides an appropriate apology, this will be factored into decisions as to which, if any, consequences should be imposed in the circumstances.

The panel will also take account of other relevant ISUOG policies and documents when deciding on the appropriate consequence(s), and this may affect the consequences that the panel chooses to apply.

### **How ISUOG uses personal information**

Please see [ISUOG's Privacy Notice](#) for information about how ISUOG uses personal information in relation to this Code of Conduct.

### **Feedback about this Code of Conduct**

Any comments or queries relating to this Code of Conduct should be addressed to the Governance Manager [[ea@isuog.org](mailto:ea@isuog.org)].



### **Section 1**

#### **Policy Statement**

The International Society of Ultrasound in Obstetrics and Gynecology (ISUOG) is a charity that strives to provide professional, respectful, and timely service in all interactions with stakeholders by adhering to policies and procedures.

On occasions, the conduct of a person related to ISUOG (e.g. Trustee, other Officer working for the Society as Committee member, Ambassador, (invited) Speaker at an ISUOG event, Staff member, Industry representative or ISUOG Member at large acting on behalf of the Society) might fall below expectations.

In such case, this complaint policy can be used.

The complaint policy aims to:

- provide a fair and transparent complaint procedure;
- facilitate anyone, including members of the public, to fairly and equitably express dissatisfaction or concern about any aspect of ISUOG's work or conduct or the work or behaviour of an individual or individuals working for or acting on behalf of ISUOG, including the Journal *Ultrasound in Obstetrics and Gynecology* and all ISUOG educational and charitable activities;
- publicise existence of the complaint procedure so that people know how to contact ISUOG to make a complaint;
- ensure ISUOG Staff to know what to do if a complaint is received;
- provide information on the procedure to be followed both by complainant and respondent;
- ensure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely manner;
- ensure that complaints are – wherever possible – resolved in a satisfactory manner;
- use any complaints received as a learning experience to improve the work of ISUOG.

#### **Definition of a complaint and policy scope**

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about ISUOG's work or conduct, including the Journal *Ultrasound in Obstetrics and Gynecology* or about the conduct or behaviour of one of the individuals listed above. Out of scope are complaints that relate to the conduct of an ISUOG Member or Staff member whilst delivering work not directly associated with ISUOG activities.

Whistle blowers will be handled in accordance with ISUOG Whistleblowing policy.

#### **How to make a complaint**

A complaint should be made in writing and emailed to an Officer of the Society or the Chief Executive Officer. The following email addresses can be used: [\[ea@isuog.org\]](mailto:ea@isuog.org) and/or [\[President@isuog.org\]](mailto:President@isuog.org)

A complaint should include the following information:

1. details of the nature of the complaint, including – where relevant – names and dates (and/or the Code of Conduct policy or Regulation not followed);
2. evidence to substantiate the complaint;
3. a remedy the complainant is seeking;
4. name, address and daytime telephone contact number.

Complaints should be submitted as soon as possible after the relevant incident. Ordinarily, this is within a month so that ISUOG can effectively investigate and identify any remedy. Complaints made in public forums or on social media will be investigated by ISUOG and further details might be requested.

#### **How complaints will be managed**

##### **Step 1**

The Honorary Secretary will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within a week of its receipt and will notify the complainant that the matter, including the response, will be referred to the Executive Committee / Board of Trustees for decision on any action.

In case information are missing (point 1 & 2 above), this will be requested and should be delivered within 28 days of the date of receipt of the request, in writing (email will be considered acceptable in advance of a registered mail response).

In case requested information or further information is not made available, the investigation may be delayed or prevented from continuing.

### **Step 2**

The Executive Committee will review any allegation in full and decide whether the matter warrants further action under ISUOG Articles of Association. If this is the case, ISUOG will confirm within 10 working days of receiving the complaint the appropriate next steps.

### **Step 3**

An appropriately qualified Trustee (Investigation Manager) will be appointed by the President (in agreement with the Chief Executive Officer) and, together with the Governance Manager (forming together the Investigating Team), will gather the facts relevant to the complaint ensuring that the information is accurate and complete. The Investigating Team may call for a meeting to discuss the complaint in person or remotely to seek additional information from the complainant.

If the complaint is in scope, related to an individual (respondent) and deemed to be of a serious enough nature to warrant consideration of suspension of duties, the President will – after discussion with the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees - make a decision regarding temporary suspension of official ISUOG duties whilst the investigation is ongoing.

### **Step 4**

Once the Investigating Team has completed their work, the Executive Committee will review the response, together with the existing evidence, and propose an action that is acceptable under the ISUOG Articles of Association.

The allegations, any evidence, the response and proposed action will be presented to the Board of Trustees who will vote by poll on the proposed action.

A response in writing will confirm the investigation outcome and the reasons for either upholding or rejecting the complaint. Where ISUOG has upheld a complaint and proposes a remedy, all individuals affected will be contacted to discuss this further.

At all times, proposed action is limited by the procedures defined within the Society's Articles of Association.

Remedies might include (but are not exclusive to):

- For everyone
  - To be asked to offer an apology
- For Staff
  - Informal warning via the Staff Disciplinary procedure
  - Formal warning via the Staff Disciplinary procedure
  - Gross acts of misconduct may lead to termination of employment via the Staff Disciplinary procedure
- For general ISUOG activity
  - A member involved in ISUOG activity to offer an apology
  - Issuing a remedy statement
  - Issuing a written warning
  - Suspension of ISUOG membership

In addition, if the complaint is upheld, the action taken and the lessons learned or to be learnt will be formally recorded by the Governance Manager in a Complaint register (annually reported to the Board of Trustees)

### **Appeal**

The following process applies both to the person making the complaint as well as the respondent, i.e. the person about whom the complaint has been made.

If one of them is unhappy about the outcome of the complaint, a review can be requested within 10 working days of receiving the ISUOG's response to the complaint. Sufficient new and relevant evidence must be produced to substantiate the appeal. This could include evidence that ISUOG did not follow its protocol during the initial investigation. If the evidence is judged as insufficient, ISUOG will not review the initial decision. If the appeal is accepted, the below steps will be followed:

### **Step 1**

Acknowledgement of the request for a review within 1 week of receipt.

### **Step 2**

Within 10 working days, ISUOG will confirm whether sufficient further evidence has been provided in order for this to be considered as part of a review of the complaint.

**Step 3**

A different ISUOG Investigating Manager, appointed by the President / Chief Executive Officer, who has not been involved in any aspect of the original complaint, will consider your request for a review and respond with reasons for either upholding or rejecting the review. The outcome of this will be formally recorded by ISUOG Governance Manager in the Risk Register.

**Respondent**

If the complaint is about an individual (the 'respondent'), rather than the organisation, that person has the right to know that a complaint has been lodged. ISUOG will ensure that the respondent is aware of the process of managing the complaint and what support and advice is available at each stage of the complaint, including how and when the respondent will be given the opportunity to respond to the complaint via the Investigating Manager or the Investigating Team. The respondent will also be informed of the possible sanctions available. ISUOG will ensure that at no stage will the rights of anyone involved in the complaint be infringed. In the case of a non-response of the alleged respondent(s), a notice in writing will let them know that the matter is to be referred to the Board of Trustees (at a given date) without his/her response. A final option is given to respond within 10 days of the date of the notice.

**Confidentiality**

All complaints and accompanying documentation will be kept confidential as far as is possible in facilitating a fair and thorough investigation. The privacy rights of all the individuals concerned and any potentially confidential information will be respected and upheld.

**Data retention**

All materials relating to a complaint will be kept on active file for 6 years from the date of conclusion of the complaint and will then be destroyed.

Alternatively, ISUOG may be asked to resolve a dispute between two members, and a similar process as above will be followed.