

# IASNR CODE OF ETHICS<sup>1</sup>

## PART I: CODE OF ETHICS – MEMBERSHIP CONDUCT

Respectful and ethical conduct is critical to support the continuation of the International Association for Society and Natural Resources (IASNR) by fostering a welcoming environment. IASNR encourages the free expression and exchange of ideas in both formal and informal venues where mutual respect and trust are conditions for collegiality.

### I.A. Relationship of members to colleagues

- I.A.1. Members shall conduct themselves in an ethical and respectful manner that reflects personal and professional dignity.
  - I.A.1.1. Members shall not knowingly take credit for work done by others but rather give credit where credit is due.
  - I.A.1.2. Interactions between members shall be collegial. They shall respect the opinions and rights of others, and commit to discussing differences openly and honestly.
    - I.A.1.2.1. Members shall not engage in discrimination based on age; gender; race; ethnicity; national origin; religion; sexual orientation; disability; health conditions; marital, domestic or parental status; or any other applicable basis.
    - I.A.1.2.2. Diversity shall be valued, and members shall respect the dignity of all persons by treating colleagues affably throughout all forms of communication.
    - I.A.1.2.3. Members shall not engage in the harassment<sup>2</sup> of any person.

### I.B. Relationship of members to students, supervisees, and employees.

- I.B.1. Members shall not exploit persons with whom they have any degree of seniority over, including but not limited to students, supervisees, and employees.
  - I.B.1.1. All members shall treat students, supervisees, and employees with respect, and refrain from any interactions or conversations that could be considered prejudicial, bigoted, insulting, offensive, or derogatory.
  - I.B.1.2. Members shall adhere at all times to the ethical and legal codes from their respective academic institution, agency or organization that govern appropriate conduct between individuals with seniority and individuals who are supervised, instructed or evaluated.
- I.B.2. Members shall actively contribute to the intellectual development of students in the context of the member's own area of expertise.

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<sup>1</sup> This document was developed by reviewing numerous professional organizations' codes of ethics, including American Sociological Association, Association of American Geographers, Society for Risk Analysis, Society for Applied Anthropology, International Sociological Association, Society of American Foresters, Ecological Society of America, European Society for Rural Sociology, American Meteorological Society, Society for Conservation Biology, and the Social Research Association. Some wording found in this document may be verbatim of these other codes of ethics.

<sup>2</sup> Harassment is any conduct, verbal or physical, that has the intent or effect of interfering with an individual, or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. Harassment can take many different forms, including but not limited to intimidation, bullying or sexual harassment.

## **PART II: CODE OF ETHICS – PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS**

The following statements serve as guiding ethical and professional standards the IASNR expects from its members and registered attendees of the ISSRM symposiums. Members of the IASNR, and other fellows and invited attendees in IASNR activities shall act in a manner consistent with these standards.

### **II.A. Research**

We shall conduct research activities following established protocols that are approved in advance by our respective institutions' human subjects review panels. The people we recruit to voluntarily participate in research shall be informed of the research goals, significant benefits and risks of participation, and assured of confidentiality of information they share. Where applicable, we have the responsibility of training our students and scholars regarding ethical responsibilities and professionalism in social science research. We have the obligation to prevent any distortion (suppression, falsification, fabrication) of data and results.

### **II.B. Publication**

We shall publish the outcome of our research to benefit the broader community of scientist and practitioners. We owe accurate interpretation of our research results while publishing in refereed and non-refereed outlets. We shall properly recognize or acknowledge the contribution of everyone involved in the study. We have the obligation to avoid unprofessional and ethical issues (e.g. plagiarism, intentional misinterpretation and distortion of results) in publications as well as presentations. Policy and management recommendations made in our publications shall be exclusively based on the data and results of our research.

### **II.C. Society**

We have the responsibility of communicating our knowledge about the natural and sociocultural systems to the society at large. We shall attempt to engage a variety of audiences including but not limited to scientists, practitioners, administrators, decision makers, students, fellows, citizens in dialogues related to the interconnections and interdependency between human and natural systems. We shall not favor any interest groups in conducting our research and scholarly activities. We have the obligations to follow standard social norms while representing our institutions and attending IASNR events.

## **PART III. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **III.A. Responsibilities and Authority of IASNR Ethics Committee**

The IASNR Ethics Committee<sup>3</sup> has been established by the IASNR Council to promote ethical conduct of members, investigate complaints concerning the ethical conduct of members, investigate of complaints concerting the ethical conduct of members, and impose sanctions when a violation of the Code has occurred.

### **III.B. Authority of IASNR Ethics Committee**

IASNR Ethics Committee is authorized to:

- III.B.1.** Publicize the Code of Ethics to IASNR membership.
- III.B.2.** Education of IASNR members concerning the ethical obligations under the Code of Ethics.
- III.B.3.** Recommend to the IASNR Council changes in the Code of Ethics and these Policies and Procedures.
- III.B.4.** Provide to individual members of IASNR on an informal and confidential basis advice regarding their ethical obligations under the Code of Ethics.
- III.B.5.** Seek to resolve allegations of unethical conduct of members of the IASNR informally through mediation or other means.
- III.B.6.** Investigate allegations of unethical conduct of members of IASNR, determine violations of the Code of Ethics, and where appropriate, impose sanctions.
- III.B.7.** Adopt such rules and procedures governing the conduct of all matters within its jurisdiction as are consistent with the By-Laws of IASNR, the Code of Ethics, and these Policies and Procedures.
- III.B.8.** Provide to the IASNR Executive Director and Council quarterly written reports of committee activities.

### **III.C. Responsibilities of the IASNR Executive Director**

- III.C.1.** Works with the IASNR Ethics Committee in the administration of III.B.1-III.B.7.
- III.C.2.** Reports to IASNR Council on a quarterly basis the number and types of complaints received, the number recommended for information resolution, and any other pertinent information regarding the involvement of the Executive Director in ethics inquiry.

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<sup>3</sup> The establishment of the IASNR Ethics Committee required a vote by IASNR Council to become a Standing Committee.

## **PART IV. OPERATING RULES OF IASNR ETHICS COMMITTEE**

### **IV.A. Membership and Officers**

The members of IASNR Ethics Committee shall be appointed by the IASNR Council. After the end of his/her term of office, a member of IASNR Ethics Committee may continue to participate in the investigation of a matter to which he/she was previously assigned, and such member may participate in reaching the findings and recommendation of the investigation with respect to that matter.

The composition of the IASNR Ethics Committee shall be comprised of: 1 chair (a current Council member), 3 members (both Council members and non-Council IASNR members), and 1 Student Affairs Committee member. The committee shall represent the diverse membership of the Association. All terms shall be a maximum of 1 year, with appointments beginning on January 1<sup>st</sup>. The IASNR Ethics Committee shall deliver an annual summative report to the Executive Director by December 31<sup>st</sup> in lieu of a 4<sup>th</sup> quarter report. The Chair shall have the primary responsibility for carrying out the mandate of the IASNR Ethics Committee.

### **IV.B. Meetings**

A regular meeting of the IASNR Ethics Committee shall be held annually in connection with the annual ISSRM meeting. Additional meetings may be held, upon call of the Chair, from time to time in person or by video- or tele-conference.

### **IV.C. Quorum and Voting**

A quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the annual IASNR Ethics Committee shall consist of a majority of the members then in office. All decisions shall be by majority vote of the members present at a meeting.

### **IV.D. Conflicts of Interest**

No member of the IASNR Ethics Committee shall participate in the deliberations or decisions of any matter with respect to which the member has a conflict of interest as outlined in the Code of Ethics.

## **PART V. ENFORCEMENT OF THE IASNR CODE OF ETHICS**

### **V.A. Jurisdiction**

- V.A.1.** IASNR Ethics Committee shall have jurisdiction to receive and determine any timely complaint of the violations of the IASNR Code of Ethics by a current member of the IASNR in any category of membership. In the event that a complainee resigns from the IASNR subsequent to filing of a complaint against him or her, the IASNR Ethics Committee shall have a discretion to resolve the complaint as if the complainee were still a member.
- V.A.2.** In the event that a complaint alleges conduct which is, or may be, the subject of other legal or institutional proceedings, IASNR Ethics Committee may, in its discretion, defer further proceedings with respect to the complaint until the conclusion of the other legal or institutional proceedings.

### **V.B. Filing of Complaint**

- V.B.1.** Any member or non-member of the IASNR who perceives that an IASNR member has violated an ethical standard may file a complaint with IASNR Ethics Committee.
- V.B.2.** A complaint may be initiated by IASNR Ethics Committee on its own behalf.
- V.B.3.** Initial contact with the Executive Director or his/her designee is encouraged to clarify whether concerns about a possible ethical violation is covered by the Code. If it appears that a potential complaint may be covered by the Code, a copy of the Code, and a summary of the complaint shall be sent to the potential complainant. Informal dispute resolution and the use of other venues of investigation shall be encouraged.
- V.B.4.** A complaint may not be accepted or initiated if it is received more than 18 months after the alleged conduct or was discovered. A complaint received after the 18-month time limit set forth in this paragraph shall not be accepted unless the Chair of the IASNR Ethics Committee determines that there is good cause for the complaint not to have been filed within the 18-month time limit. No complaint shall be considered if it is received more than seven years after the alleged conduct occurred or was discovered.
- V.B.5.** A complaint shall include the name and address of the complainant, the name and address of the complainee; the provisions of the IASNR Code of Ethics alleged to have been violated, a statement that other legal or institutional proceedings involving the alleged conduct have not been initiated, or, if initiated, the status of such proceedings; a full statement of conduct alleged to have violated the Code of Ethics, including the sources of all information on which the allegations are based, copies of any documents supporting the allegations; and, if necessary, a request that the 18-month time limit be waived. Anonymous complaints shall not be accepted. Confidentiality shall be protected as described in Part VI, items VI.B.8.1-VI.B.8.4.

### **V.C. Notice of Complaint, Preliminary Screening, and Informal Resolution**

- V.C.1.** The Executive Director or his/her designee shall screen each complaint to determine whether the complainee is a member of IASNR and whether the alleged conduct is covered by the Code. If the complaint does not include the information required, the Executive Director or his/her designee shall so inform the complainant, who shall be given the opportunity to provide additional information. If no response is received from the complainant within thirty days, the matter shall be closed the complainant so notified.

- V.C.2.** If the complaint is complete, the Executive Director or his/her designee shall notify the Chair of the IASNR Ethics Committee and provide relevant material regarding the complaint. The Chair of IASNR Ethics Committee and Executive Director shall evaluate whether there is cause for action. If cause for action exists, a formal case is initiated. If cause for action does not exist, the complaint shall be dismissed at this stage.
- V.C.3.** If cause for action is found, the Executive Director or his/her designee shall provide a copy of the complaint and all supporting materials and a copy of the Code of Ethics and these Policies and Procedures, to the complainee and encourage a settlement through informal means. If informal dispute resolution is declined, the members of the IASNR Ethics Committee shall not be informed which party declined.

#### **V.D. Response to Complaint**

If either or both the complainant and the complainee decline informal dispute settlement or if informal dispute settlement fails to resolve the complaint, the Executive Director or his/her designee shall notify the complainee that the case shall go forward in accordance with these Policies and Procedures. Complainee shall have thirty days after receipt of this notice to respond in writing to the complaint. An extension may be granted by the Executive Director if good cause is shown, but that extension shall not exceed ninety days.

The complaint and response shall be submitted to the Chair of the IASNR Ethics Committee for an initial determination whether there is sufficient evidence to proceed with the case. The Chair may, in his/her discretion, request additional information from the complainant and/or any other appropriate source before making the initial determination, provided, however, that the Chair shall not rely on such additional information unless it has been shared with the complainee and the complainee has been afforded an opportunity to respond. If the Chair shall decide that there is insufficient evidence to proceed, the matter shall be closed and the complainant and complainee notified in writing.

#### **V.E. Investigation and Recommendation**

If the Chair determines that there is sufficient evidence to proceed with the complaint, he/she shall appoint an Investigation Panel composed of the Chair and two members of the IASNR Ethics Committee to investigate the complaint. The Panel may communicate with the complainant, complainee, witnesses, or other sources of its business as is practical through written correspondence or verbal communication. Although complainants and complainee have the right to consult with attorneys, concerning all phases of the ethics process, the complainant must file and the complainee must respond to charges of unethical conduct personally and not through legal counsel or another third party, unless the complainant or complainee provides good cause as to why he or she cannot respond personally. The Panel shall submit a written report of its findings and any recommendations for sanction of the full Committee within ninety days, unless a longer period is necessary in the opinion of the Chair. A copy of the Panel's findings and recommendation shall be provided to the complainant and complainee, who may submit a response in writing within a time frame of not more than thirty days.

#### **V.F. Determination of Violation**

IASNR Ethics Committee shall determine whether a violation of the Code of Ethics has occurred on the basis of the complaint, the response, any other information provided to the Investigation Panel, the recommendations and findings of the Panel, and the responses of the parties thereto, provided, however, that IASNR Ethics Committee may hear the testimony of witnesses where in its view it is essential to the fairness of the proceedings. IASNR Ethics Committee may return any matter to the Investigation Panel for further investigation. Upon completion of its review IASNR Ethics Committee shall issue a determination of whether one or more violations of the Code of Ethics have occurred, including a summary of the factual basis for this determination, and the appropriate sanction.

## **PART VI. SANCTIONS**

### **VI.A. Purpose of sanctions:**

The purpose of sanctions for violations of the IASNR code of ethics is to: 1) penalize the violator for his/her misconduct, 2) provide feedback to educate and rehabilitate individuals who violate the code of ethics, and 3) to create an environment of accountability in which IASNR members are ensured of the expectation of ethical behavior and that violators shall be held accountable for misconduct.

### **VI.B. Types of sanctions:**

#### **VI.B.1. Private reprimand**

In cases where the violation is minor in nature and/or did not cause serious personal and/or professional harm, a letter of reprimand, including any stipulated conditions, may be sent to the complaine. Failure to comply with stipulated conditions may result in the imposition of a more severe sanction.

#### **VI.B.2. Public censure**

In the case of more serious ethical violations, a public censure may be issued to the full membership and to other parties concerning the violation, as appropriate.

#### **VI.B.3. Denial of privileges**

In appropriate cases, sanctions may include denial of some privileges of IASNR membership including, but not limited to: election or appointment to any IASNR committees or offices, appointment to editorial boards of publications, serving as editor of any publications, receipt of awards, presenting or otherwise participating in any meetings of IASNR, or receiving other assistance from IASNR. When membership privileges are denied, membership dues will not be returned.

#### **VI.B.4. Suspension of membership**

In cases in which the violation causes serious personal and/or professional harm, IASNR membership and all privileges may be suspended for an appropriate period of time. Renewal of membership may be either automatic or provisional upon compliance with stipulated conditions. When membership privileges are suspended, membership dues will not be returned.

#### **VI.B.5. Revocation of membership**

In cases in which the violation causes the most serious personal and/or professional harm, IASNR membership and all privileges may be permanently revoked. When membership privileges are revoked, membership dues will not be returned.

#### **VI.B.6. Notice of Determination**

The Chair of the IASNR Ethics Committee shall notify the complainant and complaine of the decision. If a sanction is imposed the Ethics Committee shall instruct the Executive Director to take the appropriate action.

#### **VI.B.7. Appeal**

A complainee who is found by the Ethics Committee to have violated the Code of Ethics and who receives a sanction may appeal this determination by filing a Notice of Appeal and Statement of Reasons no later than thirty days after the receipt of the Notice of Determination. If an appeal is filed, the Executive Director of IASNR shall appoint a three-member Appeal Panel of past members of the Ethics Committee to review all information considered by the Ethics Committee and, within ninety days, make a decision to uphold or reverse the determination. The Appeal Panel may set aside the Ethics Committee's determination that a violation has occurred or it may determine that the sanction imposed by the Ethics Committee is not appropriate and impose a less severe sanction. The decision of the Appeal Panel shall constitute the final decision of IASNR with respect to all matters.

#### **VI.B.8. Confidentiality**

- VI.B.8.1.** The filing of a complaint against an IASNR member and all proceedings shall be kept confidential by the IASNR Ethics Committee, the Investigation Panel, the Appeal Panel, Council, and the Executive Director of IASNR prior to a final determination of the matter, except that information regarding the complaint may be shared with the Council, any staff designated by the Council to assist the Ethics Committee and legal counsel. All parties involved in ethics investigations shall, to the greatest extent possible, make reasonable efforts to maintain confidentiality of other parties. Determination of violations of the Code of Ethics by IASNR Ethics Committee or by an Appeal Panel shall be kept confidential, except in the case of termination of membership, or unless disclosure of the determination to the public is imposed as part of another sanction. The name of each individual whose membership is terminated and a brief statement of the reason for termination shall be reported annually to the Council.
- VI.B.8.2.** The Committee may disclose such information when compelled by a valid subpoena or by court order.
- VI.B.8.3.** Initiation of legal sanction against the IASNR or its officers or employees shall constitute a waiver of confidentiality by the person imitating such action.
- VI.B.8.4.** Records relating to the investigation of complaints of violations of the Code, whether or not IASNR Ethics Committee determined that a violation occurred, shall be maintained in a secure place indefinitely.