

International Glaciological Society (IGS)

Complaints Handling Procedure, passed by Council 13 July 2024

1. Scope

As an international society we recognise that behavioural norms are shaped by cultural values that differ across societies and therefore the IGS membership. This complexity must be borne in mind when interpreting the guidelines described below.

The IGS has drawn up a document detailing the 'Core Values' and the 'Scientific Code of Conduct' of the Society by which all members are expected to abide in accordance with the Constitution of the IGS (see <https://www.igsoc.org/about/our-values>).

This document details the procedures for handling complaints against IGS members and/or complaints relating to IGS activities, including:

- IGS conferences, workshops and meetings, along with any associated social events. These guidelines apply to both online and in-person events.
- IGS publications, including authorship, reviewing and editing activities.
- Conduct of IGS members during professional activities that occur outside of IGS events and the publication process.

Complaints may relate to discrimination, harassment, bullying, coercion, intimidation, censorship and/or plagiarism. The IGS is fully committed to the fair and timely handling of such complaints. This document outlines the processes and parties involved with the submission and handling of complaints. This living document shall be reviewed by the IGS Ethics Committee, and revised as needed, at least once a year and after any incident that results in sanctions.

We are aware that some incidents may require notification of law enforcement and in such circumstances we recognise that legal considerations may pre-empt the complaints handling procedures described herein.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

A Person of Trust (assigned as described in Section 3) shall communicate in confidence with the complainant and provide assistance to the IGS Ethics Committee.

The IGS Ethics Committee is composed of:

- the IGS President
- the IGS Secretary General
- the IGS Complaints Officer (Chair)
- one or more additional member(s), as described below

The IGS Ethics Committee is responsible for investigating complaints, communicating in a timely fashion with those involved and imposing appropriate sanctions, if needed. If a

complaint involves one or more members of the IGS Ethics Committee, those members shall step down from the committee for the duration of the complaint case and be replaced by one of the IGS Council members.

Should the decision of the Ethics Committee be appealed, an ad hoc Appeals Committee will be formed to revisit the decision, as described in Section 6.

3. Process for reporting complaints

All communications relating to cases of misconduct are treated as confidential and are read only by the Person of Trust (assigned as described below), the members of the IGS Ethics Committee, and, when applicable, the Appeals Committee.

The following information is useful for ensuring timely action on a complaint:

- A. The name and affiliation of the person making the complaint.
- B. The name and affiliation of the subject of the complaint.
- C. A brief description of the circumstances prompting the complaint, including, where possible, particulars such as the date and location of the incident.
- D. Supporting documentation or evidence, including names and contact details for witnesses where applicable.
- E. Pertinent information concerning any personal or professional relationship(s) between those involved.

It is preferable that complaints be made within 60 days of the incident to allow for timely investigation.

The Person of Trust shall consult regularly with the complainant about whether/how to proceed with an investigation in a manner that respects privacy and other concerns.

The Ethics Committee shall strive to provide initial feedback on any complaint within 21 days.

a. Complaints relating to actions during meetings

To address complaints related to conduct at IGS conferences, workshops and meetings, or any associated social events, the Person of Trust shall be appointed by the meeting organisers and identified on the meeting website. Complaints should be reported to the Person of Trust and/or one of the meeting organisers. If the complaint is lodged following the conclusion of the meeting and the Person of Trust cannot be reached, misconduct can instead be reported to the IGS Complaints Officer (Chair of the Ethics Committee) <IGS.Complaints.Officer@igsoc.org>, who may designate a substitute Person of Trust.

b. Complaints relating to the publication process

The process for addressing complaints related to conduct involving IGS journals are guided by and consistent with [CUP Publication Ethics](#). The IGS Chief Editor shall serve as the Person of Trust, unless there is a conflict of interest, in which case the IGS Publications Chair shall serve as the Person of Trust. The Ethics Committee may consult with other members of the editorial staff during subsequent investigations, as needed.

c. Complaints relating to other incidents

Complaints involving conduct by IGS members during other professional activities that occur outside of IGS meetings and the publication process may be reported to the IGS Complaints Officer (Chair of the Ethics Committee) (< [insert permanent email address for IGS complaints officer](#) >). In consultation with other Ethics Committee members, the IGS Complaints officer will determine whether it is appropriate and feasible for the alleged misconduct to be investigated by the IGS Ethics Committee. In such investigations, the IGS Complaints officer shall designate a Person of Trust in consultation with the complainant and the other Ethics Committee members.

4. Process for Investigating complaints

Prior to an investigation, the Person of Trust and the Ethics Committee Members shall strive to identify any potential conflicts that necessitate temporary replacements in these roles. The IGS Ethics Committee, together with the Person of Trust, will hold virtual and/or in-person meeting(s) to discuss the complaint and review available documentation or evidence. Brief written summaries of these discussions will be compiled, circulated amongst the attendees as a check on accuracy and archived as outlined below (Section 7). Supporting witness statements may be solicited from those identified in the complaint and from others with pertinent information. The Person of Trust shall pursue open and regular communication with the complainant to allow for feedback and adjustments to the process.

5. Resolution

a) Without sanctions

The Ethics Committee, in discussion with the Person of Trust and with the assent of the complainant, may decide to conduct one or more moderated discussions between the complainant and the complaine in an attempt to arrive at a suitable resolution. The parties that will lead and participate in the moderated discussions will be selected by the Ethics Committee considering input from the Person of Trust, the complaine and complainant. This process may lead to a formal apology and/or other remedial actions, such that the Ethics Committee determines that no sanctions are necessary.

b) With sanctions

The sanctions imposed will depend on the nature of the misconduct, its severity and repetition (as applicable). Sanctions may be permanent or for a fixed duration, and may include such measures as:

- suspension of membership
- removal from an official IGS position
- denial of IGS awards
- suspension of reviewing / editing for IGS journals
- withdrawal of submitted manuscripts from the review process
- suspension of publishing in IGS journals and/or rejection of conference abstracts (in cases involving scientific misconduct, e.g. plagiarism, fabrication, etc.)
- suspension of presenting / convening roles at IGS conferences and other events
- written reprimand or warning

Additional measures, including such actions as notification of supervisory personnel at the home institution, documentation of the misconduct in the public record, revocation of IGS awards, and suspension of publication in IGS journals may be taken with the approval of IGS Council following consultation with legal professionals.

6. Appeals

At the conclusion of the investigation, the complainant and the complaine e will be informed of the committee's decision. Those facing sanctions as a result of the complaints process may appeal the committee's decision. Such appeals should be directed to the Complaints Officer together with supporting documentation and other pertinent information, ideally within 30 days of the announcement of the sanctions decision. Appeals shall be considered by an ad hoc Appeals Committee of three that is appointed by the IGS President from amongst the current IGS Council, the IGS Publications Committee, and relevant IGS Journal Editorial Boards. The Complaints Officer and other members of the IGS Ethics Committee, constituted as described above, may be called upon to work with the Appeals Committee on an ex officio (non-voting) basis. The appeals process will adhere to the same principles of confidentiality and consultation as the original investigation. Replies should be anticipated within 90 days.

7. Post-investigation actions

Following the announcement of the sanctions decision and any appeals process, where relevant, the sanctions shall be applied. The Person of Trust shall communicate with the complainant about potential support services, if known, and also solicit their insights into any part of the Complaints Handling Procedures that they are willing to share with the Ethics Committee. The Ethics Committee shall meet together with the Person of Trust within 30 days to draft a brief, anonymised summary of the nature of the complaint and related procedures followed, and to consider revisions to these Complaints Handling Procedures in light of the experience gained during this process.

8. Tracking of complaints

The IGS Complaints Officer shall ensure secure storage of all documentation related to complaints, investigations and appeals that prohibits access to anyone apart from the Person of Trust and members of the Ethics Committee involved in handling the complaint (including those involved in adjudicating any appeal).

Annual reports to Council of Ethics Committee actions (e.g. number of events, number with sanctions, level of severity, number of appeals) shall be made while adhering to the confidentiality principles described above.

In cases where no sanctions are imposed, all documentation that contains any identifying information related to a complaint shall be expunged within 90 days of the conclusion of an investigation and any related appeals.

