

Code of Conduct

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee
Department of Human Genetics, University of Chicago

Our objective in developing this Code of Conduct is to create spaces where we can gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the diversity of experiences and priorities of department members to advance the DEI mission. This will be an evolving document aimed to achieve respectful discussion of differences of opinion, creative problem-solving, and consensus building in a way that feels available and safe to all participants.

Norms and Values

We welcome participation from all department members. However, we ask everyone to be mindful of the inherent power differentials, in and outside of academia, when sharing their opinions to not limit other individuals from participating in the conversation. We recognize that the topics discussed may be emotional, personal, or charged for many people. As scientists, we often turn to hard facts that we can empirically test in order to alter our viewpoints. However, social constructs are often not so easy to test, and our views of them are largely shaped by our personal experiences and biases. You may encounter others' lived experiences that conflict with your understanding, but this is not grounds for their invalidation. We expect participants to follow the guidelines below, which offer a guide to express opinions and describe experiences in a manner that **will not interfere** with others' ability to participate.

Participant and Meeting Expectations

1. When you'd like to make a comment or ask a question, please wait until the current speaker has finished talking.
2. If participating virtually, keep your microphone muted when you are not speaking.
3. We encourage participants to be comfortable with silence to allow time for reflection.
4. Offering an advance warning of the potential impact on others when discussing traumatic experiences is considerate and thoughtful. *(see example 1 below)*
5. Critique ideas, not people.
6. Embrace people's lived experiences. *(see example 2 below)*
7. It is ok to be unfamiliar with something and to ask questions in good faith. To ensure the meeting is comfortable for everyone, we expect questions to be directed towards the group, to avoid putting someone on the spot to share a lived experience. *(see example 3 below)*
8. We encourage everyone to practice empathy with a goal of deeper understanding. This may look like pausing before you react, reflecting on the speaker's lived experience, allowing yourself space to experience emotion, and being mindful of your power differential when responding. *(see example 4 below)*
9. HG DEI Committee meetings will be a harassment-free environment for everyone, regardless of gender, gender identity and expression, age, sexual orientation, disability,

pregnancy status, physical appearance, body size, race, ethnicity, nationality, visa status, or religion (or lack thereof). We do not tolerate harassment of participants in any form. Belittling, trolling, discriminatory, or threatening behavior, speech or imagery will not be tolerated, even when intended as a “joke,” and engaging in this will result in removal from the meeting.

Examples

1. An example that fulfills expectation #4: “I’m going to discuss a traumatic experience (sexual assault, racism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, ableism, suicide, etc.) for the next few minutes. Please don’t feel the need to listen in if you feel uncomfortable.”
2. An example that fulfills expectation #6: “Thank you for sharing this. That must have been really difficult. I was unaware of X, Y, Z, and I appreciate knowing more.” Try not to say, “That doesn’t happen / never happened. Do you have data on this?”
3. An example that fulfills expectation #7: ‘I’m not sure if I understand X. I thought X was like Y. Could someone clarify?’
4. An example that fulfills expectation #8: If someone is sharing an experience that is unique to someone’s identity or intersecting identities (race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, visa status, body size, pregnancy status, disability, etc.) that you do not share, consider how your words may impact them. People in positions of power and privilege can be very impactful - use this to help and promote others. A common example in academia: if a student is sharing a difficult experience, and you are a professor, reflect on how your response may affect them. “I recognize that you are a student, and I have not been a student for many years, so I may not completely grasp where you are coming from...”

Enforcement

Anyone in attendance at an HG DEI Committee meeting is welcome to bring up the Code of Conduct. If a participant feels that someone is violating the HG DEI Code of Conduct, they may message the Committee Chair to let them know. Depending on the severity of the violation, the chair may 1) remind everyone of the Code of Conduct and bring attention to the expectation that has been violated, or 2) talk to the person(s) afterward and discuss it privately. If a meeting participant violates expectation #9 against harassment, the Chair will remove the person from the meeting. Repeated or severe violations of the Code of Conduct, and in particular expectation #9, will be grounds for removal from the Committee.

If a Committee member feels that the Chair did not enforce the Code of Conduct fully, they should discuss the matter with other members of the Committee. If the Chair violates expectation #9, this should be raised with the other faculty members on the Committee and with the HG Department Chair. In addition, harassment, threats, discrimination, and intimidation should be brought to the attention of Bridget Collier, Associate Provost for Equal Opportunity Programs, Title IX Coordinator, ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, and Affirmative Action Officer (bcollier@uchicago.edu; 773.702.5671).

Participation in Social Media Outlets

The HG DEI Committee currently has a Twitter account (@UC_HG_DEI) and website (<http://hg-dei.bsd.uchicago.edu/>). The purpose of these is to provide our Committee with an online presence to further advance the DEI mission. The Committee will assign members to oversee these online outlets. Decisions on the content that is posted and retweeted from these accounts will be at each individual's discretion, as long as such content is in line with the purpose and scope of the Committee and is not described as an official statement from the UChicago Department of Human Genetics. Individuals overseeing these accounts should check in with other members of the Committee if in doubt about sharing specific content.