

“Respectful and Responsible Conduct” language for CBS program handbooks

The College of Biological Sciences is committed to fostering the education of students and postdocs in a welcoming and supportive environment. All students, postdocs, fellows, staff and faculty are expected to treat each other in a respectful, professional manner. We are all responsible for holding our student, postdoc, staff and faculty community to professional and respectful standards, both on and off campus (e.g. at University field stations, or during travel for conferences, meetings or field work). In addition to following University policies, we ask all members of CBS to support and adhere to our community norms of respectful and responsible conduct.

1. Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. This includes both verbal abuse and sexual harassment.

- We expect CBS community members to be civil when interacting with others in the lab, the field, and during social activities. Differences of opinions and points of view are normal and are encouraged in a scientific environment; however we have a responsibility to treat each other with respect. Avoid personal attacks when engaging in exchanges of ideas.
- Excessive drinking at CBS, departmental or graduate program events can create an environment in which harassment is more likely to occur and is prohibited. Intoxicated behavior by students, postdocs, staff or faculty will be reported to the dean, department head and DGS, as appropriate. In extreme cases, intoxicated individuals may be escorted from the event by the host or by campus security if necessary. These same behavioral expectations hold at field stations and on research or meeting travel away from campus.
- Sexual harassment is defined according to the [Board of Regents policy](#) as “unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature under either of the following conditions:

(a) When it is stated or implied that an individual needs to submit to, or participate in, conduct of a sexual nature in order to maintain their employment or educational standing or advance in their employment or education (quid pro quo sexual harassment).

(b) When the conduct: (1) is severe, persistent or pervasive; and (2) unreasonably interferes with an individual's employment or educational performance or creates a work or educational environment that the individual finds, and a reasonable person would find, to be intimidating, hostile or offensive (hostile environment sexual harassment).”

As a community, we believe that all CBS students, postdocs, staff and faculty should be provided a training environment and/or workplace that is free of unwelcome sexual innuendos or insinuations. Individuals in positions of relative power are expected to understand that those with less power may participate in, submit to, or fail to object to sexual conduct or other unprofessional conduct because they fear negative repercussions if they do not, and not because they are comfortable with the conduct. CBS community members are also expected to understand that individuals may perceive comments or touches in different ways. What one might consider light banter or an innocent touch may make another uncomfortable, or even be experienced as threatening or intimidating.

2. What to do if you experience or witness inappropriate behavior:

- If you have been subjected to sexual harassment or harassment based on your gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, disability, national origin or other protected identity, we encourage you to report it to the [University's EOAA office](#), which will work with you to determine whether to address the concern through informal problem-solving or a formal investigation.

- If you have been subjected to other forms of harassment, bullying, abuse of power or other inappropriate behavior, we encourage you to report your concerns to your supervisor, Department or College Leadership, Human Resources, Office of Community Standards, or other appropriate reporting resource.
 - The [Aurora Center](#) is a confidential resource that specializes in issues like sexual assault and relationship violence, but also sexual harassment. They may be able to provide support in situations where you are not yet ready to go to the University's EOAA office with a complaint. College, departmental, and program leadership can also be first points of contact; however they are required to report any sexual misconduct they learn of to the [University's EOAA office](#).
 - Faculty, staff, postdoctoral researchers and fellows, and graduate assistants must report sexual harassment and other sexual misconduct that they learn about in the course of performing their job duties to the [University's EOAA office](#). Except, non-supervisory and non-Human Resources employees do not need to report sexual harassment directed at employees, although they are encouraged to do so. Upon receiving a report, the [University's EOAA office](#) staff will determine whether the issue needs to be investigated.
 - Under [University policy](#), protections from retaliation are in place. While it is natural to be reluctant to report such incidents for fear of reprisal or creating problems for someone, reporting any incident of harassment is important to prevent further escalation and to hold our community accountable.
 - If you become aware of harassment or if it is reported to you, it is appropriate to respect the privacy of the individuals involved to the greatest extent possible (keeping communication about it to the University's EOAA office and those who "need to know"). This is a common courtesy and will help protect the person who made the complaint from retaliation. Understand that sharing the identities of or information about complainants or witnesses beyond a "need to know" circle can, in some circumstances, constitute retaliation under [University policy](#).
 - All reported incidents will be taken seriously, and referred to the appropriate entity.
 - At College, departmental, or graduate program events both on and off campus, harassment of any form by students, postdocs, staff or faculty will not be tolerated and could result in removal from the event by the host or campus security if necessary. The incident will be reported to the College, department and/or program leadership, and, in cases that involve sexual harassment, to the University's EOAA office. Individuals subjecting others to harassment in any College, department, or program-related activity (including the laboratory, classroom, or off-campus UMN-related trips) may be terminated from graduate student or graduate faculty status in the program, and/or subjected to disciplinary action at the College level.
- 3. Resources are available to help students, postdocs, staff and faculty better understand the definitions of harassment and to obtain training in how to maintain an inclusive, harassment-free environment.**
- [University policy on sexual harassment](#)
 - [EOAA Workshop and Training Schedule](#)
 - [Equity and Diversity Certificate Program](#)

4. **While the DGS (for graduate students), CBS Associate Dean for Graduate Studies (for graduate students and postdocs), CBS Associate Dean for Faculty (for faculty) and CBS HR (for staff) can serve as a reporting resource and a first point of contact, resources are also available for students, postdocs, staff or faculty who feel they need to report an incident or inappropriate experience to someone outside of the department, College, or graduate program.**
- Anonymous reporting service, [Ureport](#) (administered by a service independent of UMN, can be used to anonymously report “any situation or University conduct you believe violates an applicable law, regulation, government contract or grant requirement, or University policy.”)
 - [Student Conflict Resolution Center](#)
 - [Office of Conflict Resolution](#)
 - [EOAA Reporting Resources](#)
 - The [Aurora Center](#) (a confidential support resource)

We appreciate the commitment of our faculty, postdocs, staff and students to creating a safe and constructive environment. Our collective experience in class, in the laboratory and field, and at scientific/social events is important, and a comfortable climate is a big part of our College’s success. We also have an obligation under University policy to provide the best possible experiences and opportunities for our students, postdocs, staff and faculty, while CBS community members each individually have a responsibility to bring constructive, collaborative behavior to our College. By working together as a respectful community, we can ensure that everyone finds the experience valuable, enriching, and positive.