ASA, CSSA, SSSA Code of Conduct

1. Introduction

Visions of ASA, CSSA, and SSSA

The American Society of Agronomy (ASA), Crop Science Society of America (CSSA), and Soil Science Society of America (SSSA) are non-profit (501c3), international scientific societies. Each Society has separate bylaws, governance, and distinct visions. These visions are:

- ASA Vision – The preeminent community for diverse agricultural professionals, leading education and collaboration with partners to address food and environmental challenges by connecting the science of agronomy to its practical applications.
- CSSA Vision – A global community of crop scientists, educators, and practitioners with a common bond of improving plants and their production in a scientifically sound and environmentally responsible manner.
- SSSA Vision – Unite a global community advocating for soils through education and science.

To achieve these visions, the Societies value high-quality research, education, professional practice, and service combined with highly professional, ethical, and inclusive conduct as fundamental to excellence and integrity of the Societies, the disciplines, and all participating in them. As such, members and awardees/honorees of ASA, CSSA, and SSSA agree to abide by the following code of conduct. It is a set of principles and practices for professional behavior that guides all members/awardees/honorees, creates an expectation of excellence and integrity, and is the foundation for a welcoming and inclusive community. All other participants in the disciplines are encouraged to practice the same principles of the code of conduct.

The Code of Conduct expands on the ASA, CSSA, SSSA Statement of Ethics.

2. Persons to Whom the Code Applies

If you are an ASA, CSSA, and SSSA member and/or awardee/honoree, this code applies to you. It is a set of principles and practices for professional behavior that governs all members. This Code of Conduct also includes any non-member who participates in an ASA, CSSA, and/or SSSA program or activity.[1]

3. Policies/Codes of Ethics

This Code of Conduct is the umbrella policy for conduct within the Societies. As a Society member, you are required annually to acknowledge and affirm that you have read and agree to abide by the Societies' Statement of Ethics and Codes of Conduct policies.

---

[1] Memberships and ASA, CSSA, SSSA Fellow and Honorary Members are defined in each Society's bylaws. Those memberships and award nominees and recipients for awards/scholarships/honors not defined in the bylaws but provided at Society programs are also held to this code of conduct. Award nominators and nominees must disclose any known complaints or investigations involving a nominee's legal, ethical or conduct violations.

Certification and Publications policies apply separately to certificants and authors, respectively (and who may not be members of ASA, CSSA, or SSSA). Anyone who participates in meetings of the Societies – whether they are members or non-members – must adhere to the policies and guidelines established for Meetings.

ASA, CSSA, SSSA Policies/Statements
- **Publications -** Editorial Policies/Ethics
- **Conflict of Interest Policies (Boards of Directors) -** ASA | CSSA | SSSA
- **Whistleblower -** ACSESS Whistleblower Policy
- **Meetings Code of Conduct** - Meetings Code of Conduct

ASA, SSSA Certification
- **CCA:** Code of Ethics | Policy Manual
- **CPSS/CPSC:** Code of Ethics | Policy Manual

Note: **Bold** terms are expanded upon in the glossary at the end of this document.

Anti-Harassment Statement*

ASA, CSSA, and SSSA have zero tolerance for the following and you shall not engage in:
- **Harassment** or **discrimination** of any kind, including those based on race, ethnicity, creed, color, sex, gender identity or expression, age, national origin, ancestry, religion, physical or mental disability, veteran status, marital or domestic partnership status, affectional or sexual orientation, and/or financial status. This also includes personal attacks, threatening behavior, **bullying** and/or **retaliatory** behavior, in any form.
- **Sexual harassment**, which is defined as the unwelcome or unsolicited sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, conversations about sexual activities, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.
- **Exploitation** of positions of power and/or privilege that harm another, through any means.

*It is important to remember that harassment is considered from the viewpoint of the person experiencing any of the above in the initial inquiry process in determining any code of conduct violation.

If you are found to be in violation of any of the above, at Society events or activities, you will be in breach of this Code and may be subject to disciplinary or remedial action, including potential loss of awards/honors and/or membership.

4. Communications and Interactions: Member and Awardee Responsibilities

These standards serve as guiding principles that encourage you to uphold high ethical behaviors and values. You strive to:
- Maintain respectful and courteous interactions, including in person, online, and in learning environments.
- Handle disagreements professionally, with resolution attained through respectful dialogue.
- Strive for **impartiality**, free from personal, professional, and disciplinary biases.
- Avoid real or perceived **conflicts of interest** (situations where relationships or personal interests could prevent objective decision making).
- Demonstrate professionalism and **respectful discourse** in communications.

5. Expectations of Members: Scientific, Research, and Professional Integrity

While members typically do not conduct research, seek funding, teach, publish, or advise on behalf of the Societies, as part of the work they do for their employers or themselves, these expectations serve to guide behavior.

Honesty, accuracy, equity, and impartiality should be maintained within original work and when evaluating the work of others.

Artificial/Generative Intelligence, in its many forms, is a tool for enhancing the advancement of science. Use these when appropriate and cite the use and results of these tools.

Funding - Application, acquisition, and allocation of funds
- Properly credit, with permission, others' ideas, processes, results, and/or words.
- Identify collaborators correctly and appropriately when applying for research funds.
- Use research funds only as authorized by the project funder.
- Do not **fabricate**, **falsify**, or **misrepresent** information in applications for research funding.

Research - Project design, execution, analysis, and reporting
- Ensure that research is reproducible, with clear, transparent, and verifiable research records.
- Follow ethics guidelines for publishing, including those issued by the Committee on Publishing Ethics (COPE) and by journals such as the Societies' journals.
- Operate to ensure the safety of people and appropriate stewardship of resources and environment.
- Do not fabricate or falsify results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record. Note: Scientific error or incorrect interpretation of research data that may occur as part of the scientific process does not constitute scientific misconduct.

Credit and Citation
- Obtain the appropriate permissions and give full and proper credit to the ideas, contributions, and work performed by others in all documentation and communications. This includes authorship or acknowledgment as appropriate.
- Follow the appropriate copyright rules when using previously published material in presentations and publications.
- Do not give authorship or acknowledgment if inappropriate to the level of involvement in various aspects of the research.
- Avoid **plagiarism**, including self-plagiarism.

Teaching and Learning Situations
- Provide a collaborative, supportive, and welcoming environment, whether in a classroom, laboratory, or field site, where all participants are allowed to succeed.
- Incorporate and value diverse backgrounds and perspectives within teaching materials and discussions.
- Follow all health and safety guidelines and incorporate best practices for health and safety in the laboratory, field, and other settings.

Professional Advice
- Provide professional advice only on subjects about which you are informed and qualified.
- Avoid real or perceived **conflicts of interest** in providing professional and unbiased advice and services.

6. Reporting

You recognize the responsibility of ASA, CSSA, and SSSA to consider and investigate breaches of this Code of Conduct and to recommend appropriate responses. You should be open, honest and accurate when cooperating in any investigations.

The Societies reserve the right to consider reports in which members or awardees/honorees have been found guilty of violations of this Code of Conduct outside of Society events and programs but will not investigate without a formal report.

The inquiry/investigation process is currently in development by the ASA, CSSA, SSSA Ethics Committee. If you have been the subject of a violation of this code of conduct, you may report it using our Feedback Form (www.sciencesocieties.org/diversity/feedback). Only first party reports will be reviewed and investigated.

This code may be amended at any time by the ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Boards of Directors.

Adoption Date: December 2025

BACKGROUND INFORMATION
Glossary
Bullying: Using power or perceived vulnerability of others to harm, intimidate, coerce, and/or sabotage an individual's professional or academic work or efforts. Bullying may occur in person, in writing, or via any form of electronic communication.

Conflict of Interest: A conflict of interest is a situation (real or perceived) where relationships or personal interests could prevent objective decision making because of the possibility of personal or professional gain (financial or otherwise).

Discrimination: Prejudicial treatment of individuals or groups of people based on their race, ethnicity, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, religion, disability, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by applicable laws resulting in unfair treatment and the denial of opportunities, education, employment, funding, and/or other professional activities.

Harassment: To create a hostile personal situation through uninvited, unwelcome, or offensive verbal or physical conduct.

Research Misconduct: Includes *fabrication* (making up data or results and recording/reporting them), *falsification* (manipulating research materials/equipment/processes or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record), and plagiarism (using another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit; includes self-plagiarism).

Respectful Discourse - Expressing professional disagreement, including opinions, experiences, research, or questioning, if offered as part of an on-point discussion of work and in a manner that avoids unreasonably interfering with others' ability to participate, is not a violation of professional, ethical and inclusive conduct. Respect and consideration for others in the manner of offering such expression, not engaging in personal attacks or put-downs of an individual, and consideration for distress are important factors in these types of communication.

Retaliation: punishing or treating someone adversely in response to that person raising a concern about or asserting the right to be free from discrimination and harassment.

Sexual Harassment: Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

References

The following sources were used in the consideration and development of the language in this Code of Conduct:

- Societies Consortium to End Harassment in STEMM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medicine) - documents and developed materials and organizations within the Consortium that have freely shared documents and processes in the development of their codes of conduct. https://www.societiesconsortium.com
- US Dept. of Health and Human Services: Office of Research Integrity, https://ori.hhs.gov/definition-research-misconduct
- National Academies of Science, Code of Conduct, adapted with permission, www.nasonline.org/about-nas/code-of-conduct/nas-code-of-conduct.pdf
- Merriam-Webster Dictionary, www.merriam-webster.com/