

Frequently Asked Questions about AAPT's Event Participation Code of Conduct

1. Why do we need a Code of Conduct?

As much as we might like to believe that all of our members are treated with respect, that isn't always the case. Sometimes poor behavior is a deliberate action while other times it comes from a lack of understanding. Either way, we feel that it is important to not only help everyone understand what is appropriate behavior, but also to provide an avenue for those on the receiving end of inappropriate behavior to report on it so that we can work toward eliminating it.

2. What is the difference between filing a report using the online form versus telling the Director of Programs what happened?

If you are in immediate need of assistance, it is best to contact the Director of Programs or conference/hotel security if you are in danger. The online form can be submitted at any time including after the AAPT event.

3. What difference does it make if I file a report anonymously or not?

Anonymous reports means that AAPT can neither (a) contact you for more information if needed or (b) report back to you on the outcomes of the investigation. However, within the limitations inherent with (a), all reports will be investigated with the same rigor regardless of whether it is made anonymously or you provide your name and contact information.

4. Who is the complainant and who is the respondent?

The complainant is the person filing the grievance. That person may or may not be the target of the harassment or unwanted behavior.

The respondent is the person about whom the grievance is filed, i.e., the alleged offender.

5. Will the person I submit a report about know that I filed the report?

We will not deliberately share your information--should you provide it--with the respondent at any time before, during, or after any investigation that takes place. Additionally, we will do everything in our power to approach the investigation in such a way that your identity cannot be discerned from any questions or conversations we have with the respondent. However, depending upon the incident, it may be possible that the

respondent can infer the person involved despite our best efforts to maintain a more generic and anonymous approach.

6. Who sees my report? / How will my anonymity be protected if I include my name on the report?

The initial incident report is received by a single, specified AAPT Staff Member (a member of the IT group) who then forwards the report to the Executive Officer (EO), or in the case of a conflict, directly to the Chair of the Section Representatives (CSR). This Staff Member only looks to ensure there is no conflict of interest before forwarding and is not actively involved in the process in any other way. Assuming no conflict, the EO shares the report with the CSR; they then collaboratively decide whether there is cause to involve a single, specified AIP HR staff person as a consultant. Thus a minimum of three people see the initial report, or possibly four, if the AIP consultant is brought in.

The report is not shared beyond this maximum of four people. Any additional consultation--such as with the Audit Committee members--is anonymous and stripped of all identifying details and is NOT the full report.

For a list of current AAPT Staff see

http://aapt.org/aboutaapt/organization/contact_us.cfm and for current Board members see <http://aapt.org/aboutaapt/organization/board.cfm>. The Audit Committee (<http://aapt.org/aboutaapt/organization/audit.cfm>) is comprised of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Section Representatives, the three At-Large Board members, and the Executive Officer (*ex officio*). Note that you have to be logged in to see the individual contact information for Staff members (i.e., beyond generic departmental phone numbers and email addresses) and to look up Board members in the Member Directory.

7. What happens to the report after I submit it? (What is the process?)

All reports will be taken seriously and due respect given to reporters. There are three possible actions that result from AAPT receiving an incident report: (a) a determination to dismiss (no violation); (b) document prior resolution, such as if action is taken by the Director of Programs at the time of the incident, or (c) determine that an investigation is warranted.

For (a) and (c), an initial determination will be made about the reported event by the EO and CSR, with possible consultation with AIP's HR. If a more detailed investigation is warranted (c), the investigation will be carried by the AIP HR staff member with assistance from the EO and CSR as needed. If a detailed investigation is not warranted, but something like education for the respondent is needed, the AIP HR staff member will assist the EO and CSR in crafting an appropriate letter to be sent to the respondent.

Finally, if you submitted your name with your report, then the AIP HR staff member will follow up with you to describe the outcome. If the report was submitted anonymously, then no outcome reporting to the complainant is possible.

8. What are the possible outcomes from filing a report? For complainants? For respondents? How will I know if/what was done about my report?

The Event Participation Code of Conduct, Section 7, lists some example disciplinary actions that may result from inappropriate behaviors. Other actions, of course, are possible as well depending upon the nature of the behavior. Any resulting actions will be communicated with respondents directly and privately.

Complainants who provide their name and contact information will receive a description of actions taken from the AIP HR consultant. If the report is filed anonymously, no such follow-up report can be provided.

The Executive Office records minimal information (number of reports, general outcome of process without detail) for reporting out to the Board of Directors and, later in summary form, to the Meeting of the Members and Annual Report (see also question 11 below).

9. What happens if my complaint is against a member of the AAPT staff or Board of Directors?

All BOD members complete a Conflict of Interest declaration each year, which includes acknowledgement of the potential to be recused from any Board discussions that may be an actual conflict or be perceived as a conflict. The EO (or AEO, should a complaint involve the EO), in consultation with the President (or President-Elect, should a complaint involve the President), can ask that specific BOD members be recused from any discussions that may be required among the Board.

Complaints against AAPT Staff Members would be treated as a potential disciplinary action and handled by their supervisor.

10. What happens if the respondent is not an AAPT member?

The same processes and outcomes will be followed to the extent reasonable, given the status of the respondent. For example, it would not be possible to revoke such a person's AAPT membership--however, they could be barred from events or from future membership. In the case of vendors/exhibitors, the case may be referred to the company for additional review as a personnel/disciplinary issue within their organization.

11. How many reports does AAPT receive?

The AAPT Event Participation Code of Conduct was implemented in for the first time at SM16. In the 2017 annual report (published in 2018), AAPT EO Beth Cunningham reported that:

“The Board approved the Event Participation Code of Conduct (CoC) in 2016 (http://aapt.org/aboutaapt/organization/code_of_conduct.cfm) as well as a form for reporting incidents. We have now held three national meetings (and other events) under the Code. Five cases were submitted and resolved. Below is a summary of actions that were taken:

- *One incident was deemed outside the realm of the CoC and no action was warranted.*
 - *Three incidents resulted in letters of notification and education submitted to the respondents.*
- *One incident resulted in the respondent voluntarily withdrawing from the AAPT activity.”*

In the 2018 annual report (published in 2019), AAPT EO Beth Cunningham reported that:

“We had the following incident that occurred in 2018:

- *One incident was reported and deemed outside the realm of the Code of Conduct. No action was warranted.”*

The Executive Officer reports this level of information regularly at the Meeting of the Members (held at the Winter meeting) and in the annual report (available at <https://www.aapt.org/Publications/annualreport.cfm>).

12. If I have more questions that aren't answered here, or suggestions for improving the process, who can I talk to?

Talk with AAPT's Executive Officer or Associate Executive Officer, Chair or Vice Chair of the Section Representatives, or Past President Janelle Bailey. Don't know any of these folks? Consider asking a Committee Member or Chair to introduce you.