



# ISCB CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

*Adopted by the ISCB Board of Directors 2019-02-14*

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INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR COMPUTATIONAL BIOLOGY

As the Articles of Incorporation of the International Society for Computational Biology (ISCB) state that the objective of the Society shall be to promote the application of computational methods to problems of biological significance. The mission of the Society is to advance understanding of living systems through computation and to communicate those scientific advances worldwide. These goals demand honesty and truthfulness in all activities sponsored or supported by the Society.

Science is best advanced when there is mutual trust, based upon honest behavior, throughout the community. Our scientific Society thus expects all our members to adhere to the highest standards of honesty and integrity in all their actions, whether inside or outside ISCB. Honesty must be regarded as the cornerstone of ethics in science. Professional integrity in the formulation, conduct, interaction, and reporting of bioinformatics and computational biology activities reflects not only on the reputation of individuals and their organizations, but also on the image and credibility of the profession as perceived by scientific colleagues, government and the public. It is important that the tradition of ethical behavior be carefully maintained and transmitted with enthusiasm to future generations.

Each researcher, practitioner, technician, student, and supplier within the field is a citizen of the community of science. Each shares responsibility for the welfare of this community. The guiding principles set forth in this ISCB Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct are meant to protect the community of science. The guidelines are not meant to be a complete list of all ethical issues. They may be modified and amplified by events and experience. Society members have an individual and a collective responsibility to ensure that there is no compromise with these guidelines.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### *ISCB members*

- Aim to uphold and advance the integrity and dignity of the profession and practice of bioinformatics and computational biology.
- Aspire to use their knowledge and skills for the advancement of life sciences and human welfare.
- Strive to increase the competence and prestige of the profession and practice of bioinformatics and computational biology by responsible action and by sharing the results of their research through academic and commercial endeavors, or by public service.
- Seek to maintain and expand their professional knowledge and skills.

- Respect professional Codes of Ethics and abide by the prevailing ethical and legal norms of their profession.
- Endeavor for objectivity in their professional activities through recognition, acknowledgment, and mitigation of intentional and unintentional biases.
- Adhere to the highest standards of publication ethics in line with those documented by the Committee on Publication Ethics (<https://publicationethics.org>). This includes but is not limited to: timely and accurate reporting of findings; full disclosure of author contributions, sources of financial support, and any potential conflicts of interest; fair and objective peer-review.
- Act responsibly, honestly, and respectfully toward colleagues, government, corporate sponsors, the wider health care community and the public at large. Build public trust through accountability.
- Foster fair participation of all people, including those of underrepresented groups in all of the Society's activities and at all levels of its organization. Prejudicial discrimination on the basis of age, color, disability, ethnicity, family status, gender identity, labor union membership, military status, nationality, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or any other inappropriate factor is an explicit violation of the Code. Harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying, and other abuses of power and authority, is a form of discrimination that, amongst other harms, limits fair access to the virtual and physical spaces where such harassment takes place.
- Treat colleagues and researchers with respect and courtesy, based on principles of equality and mutual respect for those with differing worldviews or from different cultures. Share research results and ideas honestly, giving proper credit for others' contributions to their work.

## **Professional Conduct**

### ISCB members

- Maintain professional competence by advancing their knowledge and understanding of new scientific developments and emerging areas of practice through ongoing education and training.
- Educate employees, students, and professionals to follow responsible research practices consistent with the highest ethical standards. Treat trainees with respect and provide them with opportunities for professional growth and development.

- Share knowledge in research, practice, and ethics through publication, professional meetings and conferences, and foster collaborations. Meet applicable ethical and legal standards while collaborating
- Foster public understanding of the nature and objectives of bioinformatics and computational biology consistent with open and responsible use of findings in science and health care.
- Strive for objectivity in their professional activities through recognition, acknowledgment, and mitigation of intentional and unintentional biases.
- Respect the confidential nature of all information and research data entrusted to them. Disclose information with proper and specific authority through the consent of the individual or where there is a legal, ethical or professional right or duty to disclose.
- Claim expertise only in areas where they have the necessary depth of knowledge, especially when contributing to public discussion or policy debate. Do not make statements that are false, deceptive, or fraudulent concerning research, practice, or other work activities, or those of persons or groups with whom they are affiliated. Present personal opinions as such and not as those of the Society.
- Disclose any potential conflicts of interest. Safeguard the quality and credibility of their professional judgment.
- Report findings, including negative findings, accurately, completely, without distortion and in a timely manner.
- Refrain from demeaning, discriminatory, or harassing behavior, conduct and speech. Make ISCB a place that is welcoming and respectful to all participants, regardless of race, gender, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, national origin, ethnicity, or religion. Examples of demeaning, discriminatory, or harassing behavior, conduct and speech are:
  - Any action directed at an individual that (a) interferes substantially with that person's participation; or (b) causes that person to fear for his/her personal safety. This includes threats, intimidation, bullying, stalking, or other types of abuse.
  - Any conduct that discriminates or denigrates an individual on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, citizenship, nationality, age, sexual or gender identity, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.
  - Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal/physical conduct of a sexual nature, for example:
    - unwelcome advances or propositions, particularly when one individual has authority over the other;
    - nonconsensual touching of an individual's body;

- unwelcome remarks on superficial aspects not related to the work at hand (e/g a person's appearance");
  - using an activity-related communication channel to display or distribute sexually explicit images or messages
- Demonstrate professionalism and collegiality in ISCB activities and communications, including committees, task forces, forums, and events, at all times avoiding abusive, racist, sexist, harassing, or threatening speech and/or behavior towards any other ISCB volunteer, staff, contractor, member, or event participant.

The Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct applies to all participants of all ISCB related activities, including:

- conferences, affiliated groups, communities of special interest (COSIs), workshops, and events sponsored, co-sponsored, or in cooperation with;
- exchanges among committees or other bodies associated with ISCB
- communication sent through ISCB communication channels and associated social media
- communications of press/media pass holders who are communicating through their own blogs/communication platform while in attendance of ISCB events or activities

Our goal is to foster a culture that creates a safe and open working environment for all who are participating in ISCB activities, conferences, and programs. While ISCB is not an adjudicating body, ISCB has appointed Ombudspersons who can be consulted, give advice or help seek out appropriate authorities to further handle any form of harassment or assault.

In matters directly related to alleged acts of misconduct as it relates to the ISCB Ethics and Professional Code of Conduct that take place within the purview of ISCB, ISCB is committed to listening to and addressing complaints and to guiding complainants through options confidentially before the complainant decides how to proceed. This includes ISCB consulting on details for potential informal solutions or a formal complaint. The ISCB Ombudspersons can be approached and if necessary outside counsel or consultation may be sought.