

AFRICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION

Anti-Harassment Policy¹

Statement on Harassment:

The African Studies Association [ASA] is committed to creating and maintaining an inclusive environment for all participants in all of its activities, free from harassment based on sex, race, age, ethnicity, national origin, religion, language, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, disability, health conditions, socioeconomic status, marital status, domestic status, or parental status. All members and participants, including employees, contractors, vendors, volunteers and guests, are expected to engage in respectful behavior and to preserve the ASA's standard of professionalism at annual meetings, workshops, official and unofficial ASA gatherings

All participants in ASA events are expected to abide by this Anti-Harassment Policy In all venues, including annual meetings, workshops, and ancillary events, as well as at official and unofficial social gatherings or through electronic communication.

Harassment may consist of a single intense and severe act or of multiple persistent or pervasive acts that are demeaning, abusive, or offensive, and create a hostile environment. Harassment may include sexual solicitation, physical advance, or verbal or non-verbal conduct that is sexual in nature. It can also include discriminatory remarks or actions based on an individual's sex, gender, gender expression or sexual orientation. Harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal comment or physical conduct of a sexual nature, including situations in which the request or conduct involves any implied or expressed promise of professional reward for complying; or the request or conduct involves any implied or expressed threat of reprisal or denial of opportunity for refusing to comply; or the request or conduct results in what reasonably may be perceived as a hostile or intimidating environment. Harassment is not only sexual. It may also include threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts; circulation of written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility toward an individual or group; epithets, slurs or negative stereotyping based on group identity. In sum, harassment refers to behavior that reasonably situated persons would regard as not welcome and as personally intimidating, hostile, or offensive.

According to U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) guidelines, the victim of harassment can be anyone affected by the offensive conduct, not just the individual at whom the conduct is directed.

This anti-harassment policy and the structure for addressing violations will be clearly and prominently displayed on the ASA website. All participants in officially sanctioned ASA

¹ Policy text adopted and adapted from the Sexual Harassment Policies of the American Historical Association and the American Sociological Association.

activities, including the annual meeting, will be required to acknowledge this policy and their willingness to abide by it as part of the registration process.

Procedures Regarding Reports of Harassment:

The primary goal of the African Studies Association's [ASA] Anti-Harassment Policy and its enforcement is to ensure a safe environment for all participants in meetings and events of the association. Participants in ASA events are encouraged to report any instances of harassment. Reporting information is provided below. Please note that neither ASA staff nor board members can provide legal advice to individuals who make reports under this policy. Reporting an incident of harassment does not obligate the reporter to pursue any further action and all reports will be treated, within the limits of the law, as confidential.

This section describes procedures for addressing reports of harassment at meetings and events of the ASA. The procedures described might not cover all possible circumstances and the ASA Board of Directors and Secretariat staff may exercise their professional judgment regarding the effective enforcement of the Harassment Policy.

Definitions

- **Meeting participants:** anyone who is present at an ASA meeting or event including members, other attendees, staff, contractors, temporary staff, vendors, exhibitors, and venue staff
- **Target:** anyone who experiences unacceptable behavior that violates the Harassment Policy
- **Witness:** anyone who sees an incident that allegedly violates the Harassment Policy
- **Reporter:** anyone who contacts the Investigators to report an alleged incident of unacceptable behavior, including targets, witnesses, or bystanders
- **Alleged violator:** anyone who has been identified by a Reporter as having allegedly violated the Harassment Policy
- **Investigators:** individuals who are assigned the duty of following up on reports of incidents that allegedly violate the Harassment Policy
- **Formal Complaint:** a report of an incident to the investigator with a request to take action

Intake and Investigation

The Intake and Investigation Team (Investigators) comprises the consultant ombuds, the Executive Director, and the following trained volunteers: the ASA Deputy Director, the Program Manager and a Board member appointed by the ASA President.

Intake Process

1. Reports of alleged violations can be made in person, by phone < +1 (848) 999-4455 option 3>, or by email <asaed@africanstudies.org>.
2. The Investigators will interview the Reporter. If the Reporter is not the Target, then the Investigators will interview the Target as well.
3. The Investigators will obtain the consent of the Target before continuing an investigation.

4. Investigations might include interviewing witnesses; reviewing relevant information such as emails, text messages, tweets, etc.; interviewing the Alleged violator; and interviewing witnesses identified by the Alleged violator
5. Following the investigation, the Investigators will provide a report of the incident and make recommendations to the Association's decision-making team (see below).

Confidentiality

In order to encourage reporting of incidents, reports and the names of Reporters will be kept confidential to the extent possible. However, neither the Reporter nor the Target can be guaranteed confidentiality.

Reporting Data

The ASA will provide an annual report of aggregated data about incidents and outcomes upon request.

Reports of Workplace Sexual Harassment

Investigators might receive reports of incidents that have occurred at participants' workplaces or settings other than ASA meetings and events. These incidents are outside of ASA's capability to address.

Decision on Consequences

The decision-making team for ASA meetings and events comprises the Executive Director of the association, the onsite ombuds, and at least one member of the ASA Executive Committee. Any member of the team with professional or personal ties to the Alleged violator or Target, or with any other real or perceived conflict of interest in the decision, must recuse themselves from participation in the decision-making process.

Decision Process

1. The Investigators provide the Executive Director with the results of the investigation and with their recommendation for consequences, if any, for the Alleged violator.
2. The Executive Director consults with the decision-making team.
3. The Executive Director informs the Alleged violator and the Target and implements the decision.

Possible Consequences

If a violation has been determined, possible consequences to be implemented at the meeting or event may include:

- Warn the violator to cease their behavior and that any further reports will result in more serious consequences
- Require that the violator immediately leave the event and not return
- Ban the violator from future events (either indefinitely or for a certain time period)
- Immediately end any volunteer responsibilities and privileges the violator holds
- Require that the violator not volunteer or serve as a contract employee or vendor for ASA, either indefinitely or for a certain time period

- Remove and ban the violator from membership in ASA, following established procedures
- Depending upon the severity and nature of the report, and in compliance with local, state and national law, the ASA may be compelled to contact law enforcement.

Appeals Procedure

Violators who wish to appeal the ASA's decision may contact the Executive Director in writing with further information regarding the incident. If necessary, the Investigators will conduct additional interviews or other information gathering. If the Executive Director finds that a reconsideration of the decision is warranted, the Executive Committee will be consulted. The ASA's decision can also be appealed to the President, who will consult with the Executive Committee as appropriate and initiate additional investigations as necessary. The ASA's decision can be overturned by a majority of the Board of Directors.