

## BSPR: Professional Conduct Policy

Keywords: harassment; discrimination; hostile environment; inclusivity; equality; diversity

The British Society for the Philosophy of Religion (BSPR) is a community of scholars dedicated to promoting excellence in the study of philosophy of religion by facilitating and shaping philosophical thought, conversation and community.

Freedom of inquiry is at the heart of this enterprise. However, such freedom carries with it the responsibility of professional conduct, and the BSPR must be a welcoming and inclusive community for all participants. The BSPR therefore requires professional conduct of all its members and participants.

Professional conduct includes (though is not limited to) respectful conduct towards others. Respectful conduct does not exploit power and/or status differences such as those that exist between academic staff and students, between senior and junior colleagues, between employers and those seeking employment, or between those who grant access to publication or presentation and those who seek such access. It includes conduct based on respect in peer-to-peer relationships. Professional conduct is free from all forms of harassment and discrimination.

Discrimination means a distinction, whether intentional or not, relating to personal characteristics of an individual or group, which has the effect of imposing burdens, obligations, or disadvantages on such an individual or group not imposed on others; or which withholds or limits access to opportunities, benefits and advantages available to other participants in BSPR activities. Participants at BSPR events shall not discriminate on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, being married or being in a civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (as defined by the Equality Act 2010).

Harassment on the basis any of the characteristics protected under the Equality Act (2010) is any conduct that (i) has the effect or purpose of creating a hostile or intimidating environment; or (ii) has the effect or purpose of offending or demeaning a person or group of persons; or (iii) which functions, implicitly or explicitly, to limit participation in a professional program, activity, or opportunity. It is also the case that the victim of harassment can be anyone affected by the offensive conduct, not just the individual at whom the conduct is directed.

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other verbal comment or physical conduct of a sexual nature by a person who knows or ought to know that such conduct is unwanted, including situations in which (i) the request or conduct involves any implied or expressed promise of professional reward for complying; or (ii) the request or conduct involves any implied or expressed threat of reprisal or denial of opportunity for refusing to comply; or (iii) the request or conduct results in what reasonably may be perceived as a hostile or intimidating environment. Such examples are illustrative, not exhaustive.

Any person who has experienced a serious verbal threat or any physical assault should contact the police immediately.

## **Reporting**

Any person who wishes to report a possible violation of the BSPR Professional Conduct Policy at any point should promptly contact the BSPR Secretary (Dr Tasia Scrutton: [t.scrutton@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:t.scrutton@leeds.ac.uk)), the BSPR President (Prof Yujin Nagasawa: [y.nagasawa@bham.ac.uk](mailto:y.nagasawa@bham.ac.uk)), or the BSPR Treasurer (Dr Ryan Byerly: [t.r.byerly@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:t.r.byerly@sheffield.ac.uk)). If any participant in a BSPR meeting, event or activity is found to be acting in a harassing or discriminatory manner, the BSPR Committee may take any action they deem appropriate, including, but not limited to, warning the offender or requesting that they leave the conference. The BSPR Officers and Executive Committee will endeavour to provide appropriate support for anyone who is affected by harassing behaviour, and to help all participants feel safe, welcome and included at BSPR meetings, events, and activities.

At each Annual General Meeting, the BSPR Secretary will report to the membership of BSPR whether any professional misconduct complaints have been made during the year and how these have been dealt with.

## **Records**

Records pertaining to professional misconduct allegations, including any notes made, will be retained by the BSPR Secretary and President, and passed on to the next Secretary and President. These will be retained until five years after the complaint was made, until the parties are no longer affiliated with BSPR, or such other later period required by law. It is intended that the BSPR Secretary will periodically review its files for ones that are outside this retention period, so that these files can be destroyed. These records are BSPR's confidential work-product and not available to other entities except where required by law.