

IRC Equity Policy

Purpose

The International Relations Council (IRC) aims to create an environment in which all of its members can participate fairly and comfortably in all of its activities. This document aims to provide guidelines for basic conduct for all members such that everyone can access the IRC in an equitable manner. Members and leaders of the IRC should be well-informed of this equity policy and abide by it.

This equity policy applies to all spaces created by the IRC, including but not limited to:

- Board meetings
- IRC-wide socials (*e.g. formals, outings*)
- Program socials (*e.g. ILCs*)
- External events attended by the IRC (*e.g. conferences, symposiums*)
- Events run by the IRC or its programs (*e.g. conferences, trainings*)

Furthermore, this policy can be applied to interactions between members of the IRC, even if the interaction did not happen in the aforementioned spaces.

The existence of an IRC-wide policy is especially important because most members of the IRC participate in multiple programs within the organization. As a result, an incident in one setting can affect many areas of a member's Harvard experience. Members should not be subjected to multiple different reporting processes within one organization.

Pronoun Policy

Individuals should have an opportunity to introduce their preferred pronouns. Members of the IRC should adhere to such preferred pronouns for each individual. In the absence of the knowledge of preferred pronouns, people should refer to individuals with gender neutral language (*e.g. their name*).

Equity Violations

The IRC does not tolerate behavior that hinders another individual's will or capacity to participate in IRC-run or IRC-related events. Any such behavior will be considered an equity violation and will be taken seriously.

Equity violations include but are not limited to:

- Harassment, intimidation or sexually predatory behaviour
 - *Consumption of alcohol or drugs will never be considered to be a mitigating factor for violating equity. Anyone who feels they are unable to comply with the equity guidelines when they are inebriated are advised to moderate their drinking accordingly.*

- Don't stand by – If you witness someone looking uncomfortable or unsafe, please do go up and ask them if they are okay. If in doubt, we would strongly urge you to talk to them and check they are okay rather than presume otherwise. However, if you feel intervening might put you in a position of risk, please alert as many people around you as possible to the situation, and contact members of program leadership or IRC Central immediately. As far as is possible, please do not abandon a vulnerable individual.
- A comment, gesture, or any such behavior that can be seen as attempting to exclude an individual from meaningfully participating. This includes but is not limited to –
 - An attack against an individual's identity, personhood or framework of beliefs. This includes, but is not limited to: derogatory remarks about an individual's race, class, gender, sexual orientation, mental health, language status, disability, nationality, educational background, religious affiliation or lack thereof, and political ideology.
 - Disparaging remarks about personal characteristics such as appearance, dress, weight, personal habits, sexual practices, profession and lifestyle choices.
 - Intimidating or threatening behavior towards any individual who is part of IRC events, such as: yelling, harassing, threatening, acting in a physically or verbally aggressive fashion or invading personal space.
 - Deliberate or repeated misgendering, or attempting to disrupt or undermine the pronoun policy
 - This very strongly includes unsolicited sexual advances. Please be mindful of power dynamics in any situation and whether an individual may feel coerced into consenting or not objecting to invasive or threatening behavior. Please adopt a standard of enthusiastic consent. Bear in mind that consent must be actively sought, is specific to a particular act, can be withdrawn at any time, and must never be presumed. If in doubt, err on the side of caution.
- A comment, gesture or any such behavior that makes unfair generalizations about a community or stereotypes its members in a way that cannot be defended through rational argumentation and evidence.
 - This is an equity issue even if no member of that community is present during the equity violation and thus cannot be 'personally offended'.
- Use of inflammatory or triggering language, particularly in debates where discussion of sensitive and difficult subjects such as mental health, rape, violence, abortion or abuse might be necessary.
- This list is non-exhaustive. Any other comment, gesture, behavior, or action that is deemed by complaint evaluators to hinder another individual/s' will or capacity to participate in the IRC can be deemed an equity violation.

Responses

The Response Director is the primary point of contact for any issues of misconduct within the IRC. They will review concerns reported through the equity reporting form. The Response

Director will be appointed by corporate officers at the end of April based on nominations and approved by BoD.

Based on the stated desires of the complainant and the judgment of the Response Director, the IRC President and relevant program heads can be involved for enacting measures when applicable. The Response Director, IRC President, and Program Head grouping will be abbreviated as RPP for the below section.

Once an equity complaint or concern has been brought to the Response Director, here are the range of measures that the IRC can take. Multiple measures may be taken at the same time, if deemed necessary. If the complaint or concern was not brought up anonymously, the person or people who brought the equity complaint will always have some input in the measures that will be taken:

- RPP can approach the individual for which the equity complaint has been filed against and discuss the individual's action or behavior.
- RPP can mediate a conversation between the actors involved in the equity complaint.
- RPP can make a public statement to the entirety of the IRC, cautioning against a certain kind of behavior or speech.
- RPP can request separate housing and transportation for individuals impacted by equity complaints (e.g. not staying in the same hotel room at HNMUN).
- RPP can refer the affected individual to appropriate Harvard College resources and assist them through official reporting processes.
- RPP can propose other solutions as appropriate.

RPP reserves the right to ask members to temporarily leave the organization, including to exclude expelled members from all spaces created by the IRC mentioned at the top of this document. Responses that involve suspensions or expulsions from the IRC must be done in line with the organization's bylaws. Appeals for suspensions and expulsions will be considered when there is new evidence about the misconduct.

Please note that the IRC cannot make determinations of guilt in matters of sexual harassment or assault, in line with the Harvard College Title IX policy. RPP members can assist affected individuals in seeking out resources in these situations.