

Code of Conduct

Why?

The nccr – on the move is a research network with a variety of activities, including the organization of events, training, and the support of research and publications. This Code of Conduct¹ aims to ensure that everyone involved in our NCCR activities can work in a safe and respectful environment. As the National Center of Competence in Research (NCCR) for migration and mobility studies, our institution is dedicated to preventing discrimination and harassment, and to ensuring clear procedures for addressing any such instances.

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to promote and encourage behaviors and exchanges in the network that:

- Respect and value the dignity, autonomy, and diversity of the people we interact with.
- Promote equal opportunities and inclusion.
- Do not discriminate or condone direct or indirect discrimination on any grounds, including but not limited to gender, racial, ethnic, religious, or social background, sexual orientation, age, physical appearance, disability or cognitive impairments.
- Create an environment free from harassment, bullying or intimidation, and where possible remove physical and other barriers to participation.
- Recognize and respect academic freedom in engaging in research, dialogue and other forms of exchange amongst colleagues and participants in the NCCR activities.

What?

In line with the [definition provided by the Swiss Federal Commission against Racism \(FCR\)](#), this Code of Conduct refers to discrimination as either direct or indirect. Direct discrimination consists of treating someone differently solely because of their specific characteristics. Indirect discrimination refers to a rule or practice that seems neutral but in fact has a particularly disadvantageous impact on a person or a group of persons having a specific characteristic. Harassment is a form of discrimination. It can have a sexual or psychological character and covers a wide range of behaviors of an offensive nature, from verbal or written comments to gestures and actions that can demean, humiliate, and/or intimidate a person.

¹ The Code of Conduct of the IMISCOE served as inspiration for this document.

Following the above outlined understanding of the notions, this Code of Conduct defines unacceptable behaviors as any actions or comments that directly or indirectly harm another person or create an unsafe or hostile environment for any person. These include, but are not limited to:

- Inappropriate actions or comments (speech) concerning a person's background, including but not limited to a person's gender, racial, ethnic, religious, or social background, sexual orientation, age, physical appearance, disability or cognitive impairments.
- Any form of racism, discrimination, sexual harassment, intimidation, or any form of unwelcome solicitation of emotional or physical intimacy.
- Using one's position or authority in the academic hierarchical structures in a way that is considered discriminatory, intimidating or harassing.
- The use of harmful or prejudicial verbal or written comments.
- Inappropriate photography, recording, intimidation, stalking, or following.
- Threats to act violently.
- Inciting or spreading hatred, violence or defamation.
- Advocacy, or encouragement of any of the above behaviors.

By contrast, this Code of Conduct defines respectful behaviors as actions and comments that contribute to creating an open, safe, and inclusive environment for activities and exchanges. These include behaviors that:

- Ensure and perpetuate a general atmosphere in which everyone behaves, and can be expected to behave in good faith towards other members of the network.
- Treat others with respect, dignity, and courtesy, listen actively and consider others' perspectives, experiences, and scientific contributions.
- Respect the boundaries and autonomy of others.
- Seek to create an environment where everyone, regardless of their gender, racial, ethnic, religious, or social background, sexual orientation, age, physical appearance, disability or cognitive impairments, feels equally valued and respected.
- Strive, individually and collectively, to increase the participation of under-represented groups.
- Enable all participants to constructively criticize the substance of each other's work. In promoting our ideas, each one will make every reasonable effort to minimize the risks of any harm arising for any person.
- Ensure that everyone is aware of and feels safe to raise concerns about whether the environment is truly open, safe, and inclusive.
- Proactively assist people who find themselves in a situation of potential harm.

The intention of this Code of Conduct is not to restrict intellectual freedom in engaging in research, discussion, and dissemination of scientifically based ideas, however contentious. Each one will be aware that some academic opinions and arguments may cause offense to some people but that this is not, in itself, a sufficient reason not to express those opinions and arguments. Each one will, nevertheless, be sensitive to the views of others and will present their views in a respectful and thoughtful manner.

Who?

The Code of Conduct applies to all members holding a status defined in the [Rules of Procedure](#), namely Project Leaders, NCCR Fellows, associated doctoral students enrolled in the Doctoral Program, other associated researchers, Directors and members of the Network Office, and all external participants in the network activities. All the members consent to this Code of Conduct as part of their individual membership. Participants in events shall also consent to this Code of Conduct as part of the registration procedure.

Where?

This Code of Conduct applies to any professional and academic interaction within the framework of the nccr – on the move and in particular to all actions and speech/comments of participants in the context of activities organized by the NCCR, either face-to-face, online or hybrid:

- Retreats;
- Module, Individual Project, Committee and bilateral meetings;
- Education activities: Neuchâtel Graduate Conference, Core Courses/Research Days and additional training;
- Knowledge transfer activities: Public Lectures and Academic Conversations, Expert Exchange Round Tables and additional workshops; and
- Social gatherings before, during and after the abovementioned activities organized by the NCCR.

The nccr – on the move encourages and trusts its members to follow the approach and the principles laid down in this Code of Conduct when they organize events or represent the NCCR in one way or another.

How?

All members who feel they have experienced or witnessed unacceptable behavior, or believe they have harmed someone, are encouraged to contact the earliest possible Robin Stünzi, the Education, Careers, and Equal Opportunities (EEO) Officer or Nora Bardelli, the Knowledge Transfer (KT) Officer. Both contact persons are trained in this capacity.

For any issue that may have relevance to the employment law, the universities employing the members of the NCCR are responsible for legally binding investigations and sanctions. The NCCR contact persons can guide the individual toward the adequate structure, facilitate contact with the person in charge, and bring information on the issue to the attention of the adequate structure. But the NCCR has no right to receive information about entailing investigations, or to impose sanctions in areas that fall within the responsibility of the employing universities. If the outcome of an investigation is communicated to the NCCR, it will assess whether to take additional internal measures.

For issues that can be addressed within the NCCR structure, there are two main approaches:

- 1) Informal resolution of the issue, supported by the contact person or an external expert, if required. Both contact persons are willing and able to receive a person and provide advice, offer mediation between conflict parties if feasible, as well as orient persons towards external resources if needed. Such issues will also be brought to the attention of the Administrative Director and/or the Director. We strive to always resolve the issue informally in an atmosphere that respects the principle of confidentiality as much as possible, and prioritizes the involved persons' well-being.
- 2) Any person can report unacceptable behavior to one of the contact persons either orally or in writing and ask for a formal resolution within the NCCR structure. In an exchange with any person(s) involved in or knowledgeable about the reported issue, the NCCR contact person will then gather more information to capture the situation as comprehensively and fairly as possible. Depending on the nature of the issue, the gathering of information can also be done by another member of the Network Office or an external expert. Based on the information gathered, the Administrative Director and Director will then either decide on a measure or bring the issue to the responsible Committee or the Management Board for decision. Potential measures can include proposing a mediation or arbitration, issuing a warning, notifying a person's institution, forbidding access to NCCR activities, and suspending membership. If the membership of a whole Individual Project is at stake, the Rules of Procedure apply.

Amendments

This Code of Conduct was developed in consultation with all members and approved by the EEO Committee and Management Board of the nccr – on the move. It is meant to be a living and collaborative document reflecting the needs of the members. Any member is invited to contact the EEO Officer to suggest changes to improve the scope and efficiency of this document. The suggestions will be discussed by the EEO committee which will make a recommendation to the Management Board for final decision.