Association for Computing Machinery

Advancing Computing as a Science & Profession

ACM Policies and Enforcement

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SGB (Virtual) Meeting

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Policies

1. ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (1992, updated 2018)
   - https://www.acm.org/code-of-ethics
   - Applies to ACM members
2. Policy Against Harassment at ACM Events (2018)
   - https://www.acm.org/about-acm/policy-against-harassment
   - Applies to members and non-members in relation to ACM events
3. ACM Publication policies and procedures
   - https://www.acm.org/publications/policies
   - Applies to plagiarism, misrepresentation, and falsification
   - Policy on Coercion and Abuse in the ACM Publication Process
   - ACM Conflict of Interest (COI) policy related to publications
   - Policy on Roles and Responsibilities in ACM Publishing (updated 2020)
     - https://www.acm.org/publications/policies/roles-and-responsibilities
     - Applies to reviewing process (PC chairs and committee members)

Information for Event Attendees

Policy against harassment

- Registration forms for ACM events require registrants to tick a box stating that they agree to abide by the *ACM Policy Against Harassment at ACM Events*
- Many conference organizers mention this policy during the Opening Plenary
- Links to the Code and policy against harassment could also be added to the conference website along with other information about attending

- Information about handling harassment issues:
  - https://www.acm.org/special-interest-groups/volunteer-resources/conference-planning/opening-slide-on-acm-activities-policy

Information for Authors

- In CFP inform authors about:
  - Plagiarism, misrepresentation, & falsification
  - Policy on Coercion and Abuse
- Inform Program Committee Chairs and members about:
  - ACM COI for reviewing
  - Reviewing roles and responsibilities
  - Policy on Coercion and Abuse

Online Reporting of Incidents

- Policy Against Harassment at ACM Events
  - https://services.acm.org/harass/harassForm.cfm
  - Anonymous reporting allowed; no investigation

- ACM Publication policies and procedures
  - https://services.acm.org/policy_violations/policy.cfm

- ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct
  - https://services.acm.org/ethics/report.cfm

What Happens When a Complaint is Filed?

1. Complaints go directly to an ACM database
2. Submitter receives an acknowledgement within 48 hours
3. *Complaint sent for investigation
   - COPE
   - Publications Ethics & Plagiarism Committee
     - Ethics and Plagiarism also investigates review processes and other policies
   - May be referred to professional investigators
4. Interview stage: Complainant is contacted about event, witnesses, etc.
5. Decision made
6. Subject is emailed a Decision Letter with specifics of sanctions, if any
   - If sanctions imposed, the subject may file an appeal within 30 days
7. Any bans are finalized and take effect 30 days after notification of the ban or after resolution of any appeal, whichever is later
8. Complainant is notified when the ban is finalized
   - ACM does not communicate decisions to witnesses, other 3rd parties, or requests from SIGs

* While cases are being investigated, no sanctions are imposed on the subject of an investigation

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Takes Time

   - May
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ACM Violations Database

- The motivation for this database began several years ago
  - 2018 *ACM Policy Against Harassment at ACM Events*
  - How does harassment get enforced?
- Turned into a bigger project with violations from COPE and Publications over the years being included
- Now, there is the one database that can be checked which covers the three types of policy violations

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What is Kept in the Violations Database?

- All complaints filed for these policies

- Includes
  - Complaint
  - Details of investigation
  - Decisions made
  - Penalties imposed, if any
  - Appeal, in any
  - All related communications / documents

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Volunteer Role in Enforcement

- Queries to database are limited to those with a *need-to-know*
  - Board and Council Chairs
  - SIG Chairs
  - Conference Chairs
  - Program Committee Chairs
  - EiCs
- Query the Violations Database **before appointment is confirmed**
  - There will be a check for your position whether someone is able to serve, e.g., for PC members, can person serve on a PC?
  - Will be notified if an individual cannot serve
    - Will not be told the nature of the violation or the length of time of any ban
- Sensitive data from queries -- **information must keep confidential**
- Penalties are imposed for a limited time
  - As there is not notification about the length of time, there should be no assumption in future years that an individual is still banned
  - Need to re-check

Current Penalties & Enforcement

- Types of penalties
  - ACM volunteer positions
  - Organizing ACM events
  - ACM event attendance
  - Publishing in ACM venues
  - Reviewing for ACM
  - Potential additional sanctions

ACM Volunteer Positions

This does not include volunteer positions related to ACM Events or Publications - those will be covered later

- Ban may be applied for violations of:
  - Harassment policy
  - ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct
- Nature of the ban:
  - An individual is not permitted to hold any elected or appointed leadership or other volunteer position in ACM
    - Leadership positions include Officers, Board/Council/Committee Chairs, and SIGs including officers, committee or subcommittee chairs
    - Other volunteer positions include membership on Boards, Councils, Committees, Subcommittees
- Enforcement:
  - ACM will check the violations database for candidates before elections
  - Volunteer responsible for appointment needs to query the Violations Database before making final appointments
    - ACM Board and Council Chairs
    - SIG Chairs / Co-Chairs / Presidents

Organizing ACM Events

Events include, for example, conferences, workshops, chapters and webinars; Program Committees discussed later

- Ban may be applied for violations of:
  - Harassment policy
  - ACM Code of Professional Ethics
- Nature of the ban:
  - An individual is not permitted to hold any appointed volunteer position in connection with event organizing
    - This includes conference committee, and subcommittee leadership positions as well as membership on event organizing committees or subcommittees
- Enforcement:
  - Volunteer responsible for appointment needs to query the Violations Database before making final appointments
    - ACM Board and Council Chairs
    - SIG Chairs / Co-Chairs / Presidents
    - Conferences Chairs / Co-Chairs

ACM Event Attendance

- Ban may be applied for violations of:
  - Harassment policy
  - ACM Code of Professional Ethics
- Nature of the ban:
  - An individual may be banned from attending (virtual or in person) conferences, other events, or ACM member meetings
    - This ban alone does not preclude authoring a paper
- Enforcement:
  - For events that are fully sponsored by ACM and use one of ACM's registration vendors, registrations from banned individuals will not be allowed. No volunteer action needed.
    - Will work onsite
  - For all other events, the event Chair will be need to provide a list of event registrants to advocate@acm.org to have list checked. The event Chair will need to delete registrations for those banned from these events.
  - For co-sponsored events, the lead organization should handle

Publishing in ACM Venues

- Ban may be applied for violations of:
  - Publication Board policies
  - Harassment policy
  - ACM Code of Professional Ethics
- Nature of the ban:
  - An individual is not permitted to submit or publish as an author in specified ACM venues, e.g.
    - Single conference series
    - All conferences of one or more SIGs
    - All ACM conferences
    - All ACM publications
- Enforcement:
  - Bans on publishing will be enforced by ACM through checks during submission and the e-rights system.

Reviewing for ACM

- Ban may be applied for violations of:
  - ACM Publications policies
  - Harassment policy
  - ACM Code of Professional Ethics
- Nature of the ban:
  - An individual may not be permitted to serve on Editorial Boards, Program Committees, or other form of reviewing
- Enforcement:
  - Volunteer responsible for appointment needs to query the Violations Database before making final appointments
    - Journal Editors
    - Program Committee Chairs / Co-Chairs
    - SIG Chairs / Co-Chairs / Presidents

Potential Additional Sanctions

- Potential additional sanctions
  - Revocation of Advanced Member Grade
  - Ineligible to receive any Advanced Member Grade, ACM Award, or SIG award
    - ACM will query the violations database for ACM Awards
    - SIG Chair / President will need to query Violations database for SIG awards
  - Banned from ACM / SIG communication channels (e.g., Slack, Twitter, Facebook, …)
  - Apology may be required
  - Revocation of ACM Membership by Council

When SIGs Need to Check the Database

- Those with a "need-to-know" will be sent an informational email
  - Need to know for making appointments for SIGs & Conferences positions
  - Event registration
  - Awards
- Violations database:
  https://policies.acm.org/potentialViolations.cfm
Login is your ACM web account
  - Terms of use indicated that you are granted access to this sensitive information are expected to:
    - Behave responsibly and use this data for its intended purpose
    - **Maintain the confidentiality of the data**
    - Respect the privacy of the community and all those involved
- SIGs' access will be granted to:
  - SIG Chairs / Presidents (appointments, awards)
  - Event organizers (volunteer appointments, registration)
  - PC Chairs (member appointments)

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Queries of Violations Database

- Submit queries for and individual or for multiple people
  - Required: Family name and First name
  - Optional information: Email, Affiliation, ORCHID, ACM Author Profile ID, ACM member number
- For multiple people, upload a semicolon-separated text file with multiple rows (one person per line)

Responses to Queries

1. Message that "*Your search has been completed. No further action from ACM is necessary*." You can proceed with appointments.

2. Message that "*An email has been sent to advocate@acm.org and you will hear back from us within the next 48 hours*".
   DO NOT TAKE ANY ACTION IF YOU GET THIS MESSAGE
   - Initial search returns to Advocate various confidence levels on matches (based on similar names)
   - Advocate may need to email you with additional questions before being able to determine if there is a match

In cases where there is a match, Advocate will not reveal any specific about the violation – only that the named person is not eligible for the specific position / attendance / award, etc.

CARES Committees

- CARES Committee members <u>can</u>:
  - Support individuals onsite at an ACM event who have experienced unacceptable behavior
  - Provide information about ACM policies
  - Listen; serve as a sounding board
  - Provide advice on reporting the incident to ACM
- CARES Committee members <u>cannot</u>:
  - Adjudicate a situation or impose penalties
  - Serve as the complainant for opening an investigation into a harassment incident