

Suresearch Conduct Code and Procedure

Agreed at Suresearch EGM on 4 May 2017

and amended at Suresearch AGM on 7 March 2024

Code of Conduct for Suresearch Members

Suresearch aims to provide a safe supportive environment for members to develop their knowledge and skills in mental health education and research, and needs to ensure that its resources and activities remain under the control of its members, in accordance with its constitution. To sustain this, Suresearch has adopted the following code of conduct.

1. Members should:
 - a. be polite and courteous to other members,
 - b. actively listen to what other members have to say, and respond constructively when it is appropriate to do so,
 - c. express views, and conduct oneself in a way which values other members' contributions, even when in disagreement,
 - d. be patient with the failings and mistakes of others, and accept responsibility for our own,
 - e. avoid interrupting others in meetings, and follow the directions of the person chairing the meeting,
 - f. never use words, in speech or writing, that are offensive to or about another member,
 - g. never use racist or other forms of discriminatory language, in speech or writing, or otherwise act in a manner which could be discriminatory towards any group or individual with a protected characteristic (as set out by the Equality Act 2010).
 - h. adopt the same approach when communicating with non-members in the course of mental health related activities.
2. Members are encouraged to share information about Suresearch and distribute authorised Suresearch publications. However, members will not do this in a way which incurs expense for Suresearch (for example printing, photocopying or booking rooms) without authorisation from the Suresearch monthly meeting.

3. Members will not give the impression to others that they are acting on behalf of or representing Suresearch without authorisation from the Suresearch monthly meeting or Suresearch Constitution.
4. Members will not use rooms, equipment or any other resources belonging to Suresearch, or hired or borrowed on behalf of Suresearch, for any illicit or inappropriate purpose (including accessing pornographic material), or for any purpose other than that authorised by Suresearch's Monthly Meeting or its officers. If using University of Birmingham computers, members will comply with the University's "General Conditions of Use of Computing and Network Facilities".
5. Members will not act in a way which brings Suresearch into disrepute or otherwise disrupts the functioning of Suresearch.
6. Members will not act in a manner which fall within any of the categories of abuse which are listed and described in the Suresearch Safeguarding policy.

Suresearch meetings are generally welcoming and harmonious occasions, but occasionally problems do arise. Members are encouraged to resolve difficulties informally and directly, with assistance from other members as necessary. If, occasionally, these informal methods are unsuccessful or not appropriate, then members may make use of the 'Suresearch Conduct and Grievance Procedure'.

Suresearch Conduct and Grievance Procedure

Appointment of Conduct and Grievance Panel

1. At the Suresearch AGM or such other time as may be necessary, a Suresearch Conduct and Grievance Panel will be appointed by election, consisting of the officers plus at least three other members. Where possible, the Panel should include at least one member who is also a University of Birmingham staff member.
2. A complaint about a member's conduct may be directed to any member of the Conduct and Grievance Panel (referred to as the Panel, below), and can be made by any member, including officers and Panel members.
3. Where a need to investigate under the procedure arises, but no complaint has been received, the Panel may nominate a member of the Panel who is acquainted with the circumstances to act as complainant.
4. In exceptional circumstances of urgent or serious misconduct, the Panel may start the procedure without receiving a formal complaint.

Investigation of Complaints and Decision by Monthly Meeting

5. In the event of a complaint about any member's conduct being made to any member of the Panel, three or more members of the Panel will:
 - a. investigate the complaint, communicating with anyone concerned verbally or by other means;
 - b. attempt to resolve the complaint informally by agreement if they feel that is appropriate;
 - c. If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, make a written recommendation to the Suresearch monthly meeting on what action should be taken, and the monthly meeting will accept or amend the recommendation in making a decision.
6. For any complaint, the investigating Panel should not include anyone who has made the complaint or is being complained against.
7. Members, whose conduct is subject to investigation, will be given full details of any complaint against them and an opportunity to respond. In exceptional cases, the Panel may depart from this requirement insofar as is necessary to protect the welfare of a member or complainant.
8. For those who have made a complaint or are subject to a complaint, there will be a right to be accompanied by another Suresearch member, or another person who is family, a friend or a support worker, when meeting the Panel or at a monthly meeting considering the complaint.

9. In the event of a breach of the code of conduct or conduct which brings Suresearch into disrepute or otherwise disrupts the functioning of Suresearch, the monthly meeting may decide on any of the sanctions set out below:
 - a. Restrictions on the right of a member to attend Suresearch meetings or otherwise participate in Suresearch activities
 - b. Restrictions on the right to represent Suresearch, or take part in external events, groups and publications as a member of Suresearch.
 - c. Removal from Suresearch mailing lists.
 - d. Suspension of Suresearch membership
 - e. Termination of Suresearch membership
10. Members referred to in recommendations from the Panel to the monthly meeting will be given a copy of the report and recommendation at least one week before the monthly meeting which considers the recommendation.

Communicating Decision and Right of Appeal

11. The decision on the recommendation of the Panel will be communicated to the member sanctioned and complainant by email or letter within one week of the meeting, together with notification of the right to appeal and the address to which the appeal should be sent.
12. A member who has been subject to a sanction or who has made a complaint under the procedure can appeal against the decision by submitting reasons for appealing within 2 weeks of receipt of the decision, and a decision on the appeal will be considered at the first available monthly meeting.

Review of sanctions

13. Sanctions and suspension will be for a minimum set period and after the expiration of this time they will be reviewed under this procedure at the request of the member who is sanctioned or at the discretion of a monthly meeting. The member requesting a review should state the grounds for review in the request.
14. The monthly meeting may make a decision on the review in accordance with this procedure or ask the Panel to conduct further investigation to assist with the review.

Alleged Misconduct Requiring Urgent Action

15. In the event of a complaint of misconduct that requires urgent action to protect the interests of Suresearch, the officers may impose any of the sanctions listed above for a temporary period (including suspension of membership, but not termination) to allow investigation by the Panel and a decision by the monthly meeting.

16. Officers taking action under this section may take part in the Panel which investigates the complaint.
17. The Panel may review and amend the temporary sanction during the course of the investigation.

Agreed 7th March 2024