WORK ORGANIZATIONAL AND INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGISTS' ASSOCIATION

Gender Equality and Anti–Sexual Harassment Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect and advance gender equality across all activities and settings of the Work Organizational and Industrial Psychologists' Association (The Association); to prevent discrimination, all forms of sexual harassment, and workplace psychological harassment (mobbing); to provide a safe, accessible, and trauma-informed reporting pathway for those affected; and to address violations through a fair, impartial, and consistent process.

As a direct requirement of its members' field of expertise (industrial, organizational, and work psychology), The Association commits to being a model of equality, inclusion, and respect in its own internal life. This policy is not merely a compliance document; it is a concrete expression of the association's values.

2. Scope

This policy binds the persons defined below, whatever their capacity, in all association settings defined below.

2.1. Persons covered

- All members of The Association (including full, candidate/student, and honorary members);
- Members of the Board of Directors, the audit board, committees, and working groups;
- Paid employees of the association;
- Regular and occasional volunteers and interns;
- Event participants, speakers, trainers, session chairs, and exhibitor/booth staff;
- Third parties acting on behalf of, or providing services to, the association (contractors, consultants, vendors).

2.2. Settings covered

This policy is not limited to physical venues. It applies in all of the following: any event organized or hosted by the association (congresses, conferences, trainings, workshops, meetings, and official social events; including informal spaces such as the hallways, elevators, and lobbies of conference hotels); the association's online environments (website, email groups, messaging channels, social media accounts, online meeting platforms); the association's official communication networks and correspondence; and external events that members or representatives attend on behalf of THE ASSOCİATİON . A violation may be committed in person, in writing, or by telephone, text message, social media, or any other means.

2.3. Professional practice and power asymmetry

When practicing their profession (with clients, research participants, students, supervisory or mentoring relationships, etc.), members are responsible for refraining from discrimination, harassment, or abuse incompatible with this policy. Academic and professional relationships often involve asymmetries of authority: one person (e.g., a thesis advisor, supervisor, or employer) holds significant influence over another's career outcomes (e.g., a student, supervisee, or employee). This power differential demands additional care and responsibility and directly affects whether consent is genuine.

3. Definitions

Gender equality: The condition in which all individuals enjoy equal rights, opportunities, resources, representation, and respect regardless of sex, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.

Diversity, inclusion, and belonging: Diversity is the presence of different identities and experiences. Inclusion is the effective incorporation of those differences and ensuring they have a voice. Belonging is each individual feeling safe, valued, and genuinely part of the association. The policy attends to all three dimensions together.

Protected characteristics: The characteristics protected against discrimination under this policy include sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, health status, ethnic origin, race, language, religion or belief, marital and parental status, pregnancy, socioeconomic status, and similar dimensions of social identity (non-exhaustive list).

Discrimination: Treating a person unfavorably, in an exclusionary or disadvantageous manner, because of a protected characteristic, with respect to access to association resources, assignments, election, representation, or treatment. It may arise directly or indirectly.

Sexual harassment: Non-consensual conduct of a sexual nature — words, insinuations, propositions, messages, images, contact, or behavior — that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, humiliating, or hostile environment. It does not require physical contact.

Sexual assault: Acts involving non-consensual physical/sexual contact that may fall within the scope of criminal law.

Workplace psychological harassment (mobbing): Behavior directed at a person that is systematically repeated and intended to — or has the effect of — intimidating, excluding, discrediting, humiliating, or incapacitating them. Such harassment need not be based on a particular identity; identity-blind bullying is also within scope.

Microaggression: Everyday words and behaviors — often unintentional — that belittle or exclude a person because of their identity or rest on negative assumptions about it. Though seemingly minor in isolation, when repeated they can create an exclusionary environment.

Implicit (unconscious) bias: Stereotyped attitudes a person holds without awareness that can influence their decisions and behavior. The policy recognizes that bias is often unintentional; this does not remove responsibility but shapes the approach to prevention and education.

Retaliation: Any adverse, punitive, or exclusionary act or threat directed at a person who reports, complains, testifies, or otherwise contributes to the process.

Consent: Approval given freely, clearly, and revocably at any time. Silence, lack of resistance, or compliance within a hierarchical or dependent relationship does not constitute consent.

Intersectionality: The phenomenon whereby the intersection of a person's multiple identity dimensions (e.g., gender with disability, ethnic origin, or socioeconomic status) can produce distinctive and layered forms of disadvantage. This layering is taken into account in assessments.

Reasonable accommodation: Reasonable arrangements and measures — not imposing a disproportionate burden — that enable persons with disabilities or specific needs to participate equally in association activities.

Trauma-informed approach: An approach that, throughout reporting and process, seeks to prevent re-traumatization of the affected person and prioritizes safety, choice, and respect.

4. Core Principles

The Association adopts a zero-tolerance stance toward discrimination, all forms of sexual harassment, and mobbing. The association considers gender equality in its decisions and in the distribution of its resources, and approaches those who report in a supportive, confidential, trauma-informed, and retaliation-protective manner.

Assessments balance the presumption of innocence with a survivor-centered approach: no party is deemed guilty or at fault in advance, while at the same time the safety and dignity of the person reporting are protected.

This policy applies equally to everyone, and no one is exempt. Anyone whatsoever — including members of the Board of Directors, committee chairs, and the association's most senior figures — is subject to these principles. If an allegation concerns a member of a decision-making body, that person recuses themselves from all related processes.

5. Prohibited Conduct

The following are illustrative and not exhaustive:

- Unwanted sexual advances; persistent propositions, messages, images, or the sharing of sexual material;
- Non-consensual physical contact and any form of sexual assault;
- Demeaning remarks, jokes, epithets, gossip, or stereotypes based on sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or another protected characteristic;
- Microaggressions and exclusionary, othering language;
- Discriminatory assignment, exclusion, denial of representation, or withholding of opportunity;
- Systematically intimidating, discrediting, silencing, or isolating a person;
- Persistent and unwelcome communication or stalking;
- Preventing a person from exercising their rights under this policy, or retaliating for doing so.

6. Duties and Roles

The association administers this policy through a simple structure appropriate to its scale:

a) Equality and Ethics Representative (1–2 persons). Appointed with attention to gender balance. This is the first point of contact. Its function is confidential listening and guidance, assistance with informal resolution if requested, and the receipt and coordination of formal reports. The Representative does not decide cases or impose sanctions; it is an impartial, independent, and confidential advisory-coordination role. A person may speak with the Representative in confidence even before being ready to file a formal complaint.

b) Assessment Panel (case-specific, 3 persons). In formal complaints, it evaluates the findings and submits a reasoned recommendation to the Board of Directors. The final decision rests with the Board. The Panel is drawn from board/committee members unconnected to the complaint who can remain impartial, or from a small, pre-designated pool of trusted members.

Conflict of interest and recusal. A Representative or Panel member recuses themselves from all related discussions and decisions if they have, with any party, a family tie, a close personal relationship, an employer-employee relationship, a mentoring relationship within the last five years, an intensive collaborative relationship (project/publication/consultancy), or a financial interest. In a small professional community this rule is especially critical.

External body (optional and, in some cases, mandatory). In severe or complex cases (e.g., an allegation of sexual assault, many parties), or where an impartial internal panel cannot be constituted, the Board of Directors turns to an impartial external expert, lawyer, or a pre-arranged external body. In a small-scale association this is often not an option but a necessity, to keep the process from stalling.

7. Reporting and the Two-Tier Process

Anyone who experiences or witnesses an incident may report it. A report is made to iocp@iocp.org.tr or directly to the Equality and Ethics Representative. It is helpful for a report to include what happened, when and where it occurred, the persons involved, and any evidence (messages, emails, images, witnesses). Incomplete information does not preclude assessment of the report. Reports are kept confidential; the person's identity is shared only with those necessary to conduct the process.

The person reporting may choose between informal resolution (e.g., addressing the other party through the Representative) and proceeding directly to the formal process; the informal route is not a precondition for a formal complaint. The person may also turn to law-enforcement or judicial authorities at any time.

Tier 1 — Record. The incident is recorded confidentially and securely, but no investigation is opened. The aim is to keep a record even if the person does not yet want a formal process. If another report is later made about the same person, the person who left a Tier 1 record is notified and asked whether they wish to elevate their complaint to Tier 2. The person may elevate at any time. This mechanism enables those who hesitate to act alone to move forward together once a pattern emerges.

Tier 2 — Investigation. The Assessment Panel is engaged and a formal review begins.

8. Review and Decision

The Representative responds to the reporting person within 5 business days of receiving the report. Once an investigation begins, the Assessment Panel gives both parties the opportunity to present their views and evidence; the process is conducted in a trauma-informed manner that protects the dignity of the parties. The review aims to conclude within a reasonable time (30–45 days) and may be extended provided the reason is recorded in writing. If the responding party does not reply within 15 days, the process may continue without them.

The Panel submits a written report of findings and a recommendation to the Board of Directors; the final decision rests with the Board. The outcome is communicated in summary to both parties. Sanctions are applied proportionately, consistently, and without delay.

Emergency protective measure. In cases of serious risk (e.g., a person threatening the safety of an event), a temporary measure (temporary removal from an event or communication channel) may be taken until the process concludes. The measure is recorded in writing with its justification and submitted to the Board of Directors.

9. Appeal

The parties may appeal once, within 15 days of being notified of the outcome, on the grounds of new evidence or reconsideration of existing evidence. The appeal is reviewed by an impartial body with no prior involvement in the process and no conflict of interest. Because the association's internal pool is small, appeals are as a rule reviewed by an external body (an independent colleague, a lawyer, or a partner organization); the outcome is submitted to the Board of Directors. A decided complaint cannot be reopened through any other internal route beyond this single right of appeal.

10. Confidentiality and Prohibition of Retaliation

All information relating to the process is kept confidential and shared only with those necessary to implement the policy or to take resulting disciplinary/remedial steps. Everyone involved must safeguard documents with the utmost confidentiality and must destroy any process documents on their personal devices once the process ends.

No retaliation may be taken against anyone who reports, testifies, or contributes to the process; retaliation is itself a violation and is separately subject to sanction. Knowingly and maliciously making a false report is also a separate violation; however, a good-faith report that is not substantiated is not deemed false.

Legal limit: The confidentiality commitment does not override the parties' exercise of their legal rights or the association's legal reporting obligations. In Türkiye, a duty to report to the competent authorities may arise for certain offenses.

11. Sanctions

Depending on the nature and severity of the violation, sanctions that may be applied on a graduated basis include: written warning; a requirement to apologize or to undertake behavioral correction and training; restriction of participation in events; restriction from appearing in association publications; removal from a duty or committee membership; revocation of honors and awards; suspension of membership; and expulsion from membership. For paid employees, sanctions are administered through disciplinary processes under the applicable labor law. Acts requiring criminal sanction may be referred to judicial authorities. More severe sanctions apply in cases of retaliation or repeated violations.

12. Integrity Mechanisms

Nominee disclosure. When a person is nominated for an association office, award, or honorary membership, they disclose whether any organization (including The Association) is currently investigating them or has previously found them responsible for a violation. The nominator likewise discloses any situations known to them. This prevents a perpetrator of harassment or discrimination from being honored within the association.

Violations at other organizations. If it becomes known that a member has been formally found responsible at another organization (a court, employer, etc.) for a violation defined in this policy, the Board of Directors may consider its own sanctions.

Annual transparency report. Each year, without disclosing identities, a summary report on the number and outcomes of formal reports is shared with members. If the small number of cases risks revealing identities, the report is prepared by combining multiple years. This transparency builds confidence that the policy genuinely works.

13. Equality Feedback Channel

Not every allegation involves an individual perpetrator–victim relationship. For structural equality issues — such as imbalanced representation, single-gender panels, or unequal access to opportunities — a separate, lightweight feedback channel operates. This channel is not an investigation-and-sanction process; it is oriented toward improvement and correction. Feedback received is considered in the Board of Directors' annual review.

14. Proactive Gender Equality and Inclusion

This policy does not merely react to violations; it actively promotes equality:

- Balanced representation: gender balance is sought on the board, committees, juries, and decision-making bodies.
- Equal representation at events: diversity is sought in panels, sessions, and speaker line-ups; single-gender panels are avoided.
- Equal access: equality is essential in access to awards, scholarships, training, and assignments; measures are taken to reduce implicit bias in these processes.
- Those with caregiving responsibilities: measures such as online participation and suitable scheduling are considered to facilitate the participation of members with parenting and caregiving responsibilities.
- Intersectionality and accessibility: the intersection of gender with other identity dimensions is considered; reasonable accommodation and accessibility are pursued at events.
- Monitoring: data on representation and participation are, with due respect for confidentiality, monitored as far as possible and considered in the annual review.

15. Education, Inclusive Language, and Communication

The Association conducts regular awareness and information activities for its members, employees, and volunteers on this policy, gender equality, and implicit bias. Inclusive and respectful language is the standard in all official association communication. The names and contact details of the policy and its roles (including the Representatives) are made visible on the association website, in event programs, and across communication channels. Acceptance of the policy may be required at event registration.

16. Effect and Review

This policy enters into force upon approval by the The Association Board of Directors and is reviewed at least annually. Any changes are announced to members. This document is not a legal opinion; before it enters into force, review by a lawyer is recommended, particularly regarding the limits of confidentiality, reporting obligations, and disciplinary provisions concerning employees.

17. Effectiveness:

This policy enters into force upon the approval of the Board of Directors and is implemented by all members and employees.