

Code of Conduct for the LIGO Scientific Collaboration, the Virgo Collaboration, and the KAGRA Collaboration

LIGO-M1900037/VIR-0222-19/JGW-M2617298

April 2026

The LIGO, Virgo and KAGRA Collaboration (LVKC) aspires to achieve landmark scientific breakthroughs in a diverse collaboration that spans many cultures, countries and demographics. The LVKC aims to educate its members in behaviors that strengthen the collaboration. It is a privilege, not a right, to be a member of the LVKC. Compliance with this Code of Conduct is required to maintain LVKC membership.

The LVKC strives for workplaces free from discrimination and harassment. All members will conduct themselves in a professional manner that is welcoming to all participants and free from any form of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation. Members will treat each other with respect and consideration to create a collegial, inclusive, and professional environment. Creating a supportive environment to enable scientific discourse is the responsibility of all members. All aspects of LVK science are free to be explored by our members whilst remaining cognisant of the objectives of the established working groups and adhering to the publication procedures. All LVK collaboration activities and operations should be transparent to the LVKC membership.

Members will avoid any inappropriate actions or statements based on individual characteristics such as age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, nationality, political affiliation, ability status, class origin or educational background. Disruptive or harassing behavior of any kind will not be tolerated. Harassment includes but is not limited to inappropriate or intimidating behavior and language, unwelcome jokes or comments, unwanted touching or attention, offensive images, unwelcome photography, and stalking. Disruptive behavior includes instances of disrespect and lack of civility in interactions with colleagues. All members are expected at all times to deal with and address their fellow colleagues with respect and courtesy. This includes, but is not limited to, behavior in in-person meetings, virtual (remote) meetings and email communications. Members should feel free to question, raise concerns, and contribute constructively without fear of retaliation. Deference to authority shall not compromise fairness in decisionmaking, ethical judgement, or collegial discourse. Retaliation against members exercising these freedoms shall not be tolerated.

A conflict of interest (CoI) arises where an individual's personal, professional, or financial interests could influence, or be perceived to influence, their decisions or actions. Members must remove themselves from relevant discussions or decisions where they have a perceived, real or potential CoI. Where that is not possible, they must disclose any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest and take reasonable steps to manage them.

The LVKC also shall not tolerate instances of scientific misconduct, which is characterized by any of: fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing or performing research in the LVKC. Fabrication means making up data or results and recording or reporting them. Falsification means manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record. Plagiarism means the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit.

Violations of this Code of Conduct should be reported as soon as possible to meeting organizers, working group chairs, or the LIGO, Virgo or KAGRA leadership – whatever is most appropriate in the situation. Significant violations will lead to immediate responses; repeated marginal violations also will be addressed.

Reports of violations of this Code of Conduct will be addressed in accordance with the grievance/complaints procedure of the Collaboration to which the member alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct belongs, and may include the imposition of sanctions. The other collaborations will aid in carrying out the process as appropriate. Conflicts which cannot be resolved through collaboration procedures will be referred to the institution of the person(s) who may have violated the Code of Conduct. The appropriate collaboration may take action based on the institution's findings. Retaliation for complaints of inappropriate conduct will not be tolerated. If a member observes inappropriate comments or actions and personal intervention seems appropriate and safe, they should be considerate of all parties before intervening.

This Code of Conduct is the defining document for the LSC, Virgo and KAGRA. Each Collaboration may write a more detailed interpretation or provide additional measures, but all internal documents must be consistent with the Code of Conduct in this document.

References:

<https://www.aps.org/meetings/policies/code-conduct.cfm>
https://www.aps.org/policy/statements/91_8.cfm
https://www.allea.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Code_Conduct_ResearchIntegrity.pdf

For US-funded research: The Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ONRL) developed a research code of conduct based on examples from multiple scientific organizations and accounting for US legal requirements:

- (<https://www.ornl.gov/content/research-integrity>).

The *Scientific Integrity Policy* of the US National Science Foundation (NSF) is:

- <https://www.nsf.gov/policies/scientific-integrity>.