

International Association for Caribbean Archaeology (IACA)

Code of Ethics

This Code of Ethics is founded on the principles of:

- **inclusivity**, regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, or other personal characteristics;
- **equity**;
- **responsible stewardship** of the archaeological record, and;
- **accountability** to the academic community and our peers; the host communities and organizations with whom we work; and the local physical environment.

We aim to provide an association that maintains and promotes best practice in archaeology and its related disciplines, and that is environmentally and socially conscientious. The following rules therefore apply to IACA Members operating in any professional context, both inside and outside the Congress. Members should also abide by the rules of the host country, organization, and venue.

This document establishes the standards of Member behavior, the process for filing a complaint, and the disciplinary action that can be taken. It should be considered holistically, as the different sections often overlap with one another. Contravention of any section of this Code can result in consequences for the offending Member as determined through the steps outlined in Section 9. Members are encouraged to alert the Ethical Conduct Panel when they learn of potential violations and may also consult the Best Practice Guide for further details relevant to each section.

Definition of Terms Used

<i>Abuse</i>	(A pattern of) verbal or physical actions that are cruel and/or exploitative.
<i>Bullying</i>	(A pattern of) verbal or physical behavior that is intended to harm, coerce, or intimidate another person.
<i>Unethical collector</i>	A person who purchases or otherwise acquires looted archaeological artifacts.
<i>Complainant</i>	A person making a complaint about (alleged) misconduct by a Member. This person does not have to be a Member of IACA themselves.
<i>Descendant community</i>	Group of people identifying a buried population as their ancestors, in cultural, genetic, or spiritual terms, consistent with locally recognized ethical guidelines.
<i>Discrimination</i>	Includes but is not limited to: exclusion of individuals and groups because of their characteristics, and/or bullying behavior because of their characteristics

(for example coercion, blackmail, and threatening, offensive, humiliating, intimidating, malicious, insulting or patronizing behavior that causes harm to other individuals).

<i>Equity</i>	Providing disadvantaged groups with the mechanisms, tools, and resources to succeed at the same rate as privileged groups (this is not the same as 'equality', which is based on providing the same opportunities for everyone without adjustment for complicating factors such as race, class, and gender).
<i>Ethical practice</i>	Archaeological and academic practice that is fair, moral, truthful, and honest. It may vary depending on the context.
<i>Ethical Conduct Panel</i>	A group of three to five Members tasked with examining ethical issues within the organization, especially complaints made about Members.
<i>Harassment</i>	Includes but is not limited to behaviors such as: unwanted photography or recording, intimidation, stalking, sustained disruption of conference presentations, inappropriate physical contact, physical violence, unwelcome sexual and intimate attention, and revenge pornography.
<i>Looting</i>	Removing an archaeological artifact from its stratigraphic context without standard archaeological documentation.
<i>Member</i>	Anyone who has paid the IACA membership fee for the current two-year window (this automatically includes all Congress attendees, since payment of the membership fee is mandatory for Congress attendance).
<i>Microaggression</i>	Actions or words which (consciously or unconsciously) discriminate against or negatively impact marginalized groups (based on any protected identity).
<i>Misconduct</i>	Behavior which violates this Code of Ethics.
<i>Protected identities</i>	Personal attributes such as race, class, gender, sexuality, nationality, age, ethnicity, and religion.
<i>Researcher</i>	For the purposes of this document, this word refers to anyone conducting archaeological work in the Caribbean or using Caribbean archaeological materials, including those employed by commercial companies.
<i>Respect</i>	Due regard for the wishes, rights, and feelings of others (both living and dead). It may vary depending on the context.
<i>Respondent</i>	A Member who is being accused of (alleged) misconduct.
<i>Special finds</i>	As opposed to 'bulk finds', which may be found in vast quantities at a given site, 'special finds' or 'small finds' are those less commonly found that may be useful for diagnostic purposes, are made from unusual materials requiring

alternative treatment, or are otherwise notable in some way relevant to the context.

Stakeholder

Anyone with a stake in the cultural (and natural) heritage affected by the practices of IACA Members. This includes but is not limited to local inhabitants, descendant communities, landowners, clients, subcontractors, and archaeologists. Where this word is used in these documents, it is always to be assumed that local inhabitants and descendant communities are the most important stakeholders (ethically speaking).

1. Fieldwork

As an organization that respects the Caribbean, its communities, and their heritage, attention should be given to the ethics of fieldwork (research) in a way that benefits all parties.

Members should adhere to the following ethical principles regarding fieldwork:

- 1.1 Ascertain if there are local procedures and (international) treaties and include them in the research.
- 1.2 Acquire research permits (if applicable, each island has its own protocol) as well as permissions from private landowners, community groups that have a connection to the heritage, etc.
- 1.3 Make thorough Health and Safety/Risk Assessment plans for the community, staff (emergency numbers and local contacts, etc.), and site (e.g. in case of theft and site tampering).
- 1.4 Comply with verbal and written agreements with authorities, organizations, and stakeholders.
- 1.5 Ensure that those in leadership positions on archaeological projects are appropriately qualified for the role.
- 1.6 Consult the IACA Best Practice Guide.
- 1.7 Members have a duty to minimize the impact of archaeological excavation on non-threatened archaeological resources. Efforts should be devoted to first protecting imminently threatened sites (e.g. erosion or development). Excavation of threatened sites should occur when threats cannot be mitigated.
- 1.8 Members should have valid research goals when considering excavating at non-threatened sites that otherwise would be preserved.

2. Human Remains

Ethical issues with the handling of human remains primarily center around the two following areas. The Best Practice document should be consulted for further details.

2.1 Professionalism in Bioanthropology

- Existing local laws and rules for the excavation and handling of human remains should at a minimum be followed at all times.
- Those who excavate and analyze human remains should be properly qualified for these tasks and should follow the best practice guidelines of their discipline.
- Human remains should not be viewed or regarded as property save in practical applications for legal compliance, and should therefore never be bought and sold.
- Members should not condone the active unethical acquisition of human remains.

2.2 Stakeholders Living and Dead

- The wishes and needs of living descendant communities should be prioritized above the concerns of science and academia.
- Human remains should be handled with respect, for example:
 - No needless destructive sampling.
 - Curation, analysis, and reburial practices should be chosen as appropriate for the context.
 - In certain cases, it may be important to protect human remains from view (e.g. screens shielding excavation areas, blurring of published images).

3. Looting and the Antiquities Market

IACA has long been an association of both professional and amateur archaeologists, but the latter should not be understood as mere “collectors” of portable antiquities. It is expected that Members have a genuine concern for the region’s cultural material as an educational/research (not financial) investment. For this reason, Members are expected to adhere to disciplinary principles regarding the commercialization of the portable artifacts we study, namely:

- 3.1 Never loot a site (i.e. never remove artifacts from their archaeological context without following archaeological best practice).
- 3.2 Never participate in the buying or selling of looted archaeological artifacts.
- 3.3 Avoid researching, “authenticating,” or otherwise validating (or providing valuations for) looted archaeological materials (barring exceptional circumstances).

4. Curation and Archiving

Taking into consideration that most projects include fieldwork, and that this most likely will yield physical materials, it is important to take into account what happens to these materials at the end of a project. Members should adhere to the following ethical principles in this area:

- 4.1 Clear agreements between relevant authorities/organizations and researchers/research organizations should be made concerning the finances of the post-excavation processing, the storage location of excavated materials, the transfer (and formatting) of digital documentation, and agreement on finds/samples being taken abroad for further analysis, when they cannot be analyzed in situ.
- 4.2 Time should be allowed for adjustment of the final report by relevant stakeholders.
- 4.3 Documents and records should be provided in a timely manner to the local heritage organization that deals with archaeology in an official capacity. If there are no such local organizations, then this information should be given to the most relevant local authorities.
- 4.4 Signed agreements between local authorities/organizations and researchers/research organizations, including all relevant paperwork (such as permits, customs papers, receipt acknowledgement, etc.) should be prepared when taking finds abroad for further analysis.

5. Public Engagement

Public engagement is a key aspect of archaeological research. It is a two-way process, aiming to generate mutual benefit through genuine dialogue, participation, and equitable collaborations. The funding for and evaluation of public engagement with archaeology should be planned in parallel with the research project. IACA Members shall abide by laws covering public engagement, if these exist, and where possible, IACA Members shall also:

- 5.1 Accept responsibility for informing the public of the purpose and results of their work and make research results accessible to the public and living descendant communities, where appropriate.
- 5.2 Pursue equitable collaborations to foster a mutually beneficial working relationship and proactively inform and involve the public and living descendant communities with archaeological research process, results, and interpretations.
- 5.3 Prioritize engagement with living descendant communities with respect to their expertise and stewardship, and where possible, obtain the consent of living descendant communities for project activities.
- 5.4 Consult with and address views and concerns of individuals or group(s) about places, objects, human remains, or intangible heritage that hold significant cultural or religious meaning.

5.5 Build trust and mutual understanding between researchers and the public and strengthen the public accountability of Caribbean archaeologists.

5.6 Promote actions to ensure that Caribbean heritage is safeguarded and valued.

6. Environmental Impact and Sustainability

IACA recognizes that normal professional conduct may have negative and unintended environmental consequences resulting from the consumption of scarce or non-renewable resources, pollution, waste production, and harm to biophysical systems. These effects may be felt at local, regional and/or global scales.

6.1 Members must comply with all relevant local, regional, and national environmental laws in their field and research activities, including obtaining all necessary environmental and biosecurity permits.

6.2 IACA Members have a duty of care to minimize, as much as possible, their ecological impact in the course of field, lab, analytic, curatorial, artifact/site conservation, and Congress activities. This includes but is not limited to: consideration of resource consumption (water, fossil fuels, natural resources); the production, recycling, and disposal of waste (for example, single-use plastics); the use of chemical treatments in analytic applications and material culture conservation; and the disruption of landscapes, wildlife, and biophysical systems during field activities.

7. Publication

IACA endorses the Core Practices set out by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE 2020) and encourages Members to be familiar with these areas of potential misconduct. Publication (including reports and published conference papers) should occur within a reasonable time frame of the work being carried out and should be made accessible to local and professional communities where possible.

8. Harassment

Harassment is defined as “unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, [with] the purpose of violating [an individual’s] dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment” (UK Government 2010). This behavior can be sexual or non-sexual in nature, and applies to both verbal and physical interactions, including behavior occurring online or in other written form or in images. It is similar to behaviors of abuse, discrimination, and

bullying, all of which are strictly prohibited for Members. Harassment and discrimination can be related to protected characteristics such as age, disability, gender, race, religion, and sexual orientation, and include repeated patterns of microaggression.

These actions are not tolerated by IACA. They hinder the exchange of ideas and production of knowledge by creating a hostile environment, which damages individuals, communities, and the advancement of our discipline. Any of the above behaviors therefore constitute serious misconduct. Any allegation of discrimination, harassment, bullying, or victimization will be treated seriously, regardless of the identities of those involved.

9. Process of Intervention

Contravention to any section of this Code shall result in consequences for the offender depending on the gravity of the case, determined through the due process established below. Members are encouraged to alert the Ethical Conduct Panel when they learn of potential violations.

9.1 IACA Ethical Conduct Panel and Process Overview

An Ethical Conduct Panel will be formed, comprising three to five persons elected at each General Meeting, along with one Contact Person on the Board. The Contact Person will be an observer on the Panel, except in the event of a voting tie, in which case they have the deciding vote, and the Contact Person is also responsible for notifying the Respondent after the Board has approved the investigative report. Where possible, the Panel must comprise both senior and junior researchers, reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of the IACA body including Members from the Caribbean, and include at least one male and one female member, with at least two members from the previous Panel (50% overlap). All Panel members must be in good standing with the Association and declare any conflicts of interest (previous violations, relationships with previous Complainants or Respondents, etc.) before taking their position (and again at the commencement of any adjudication). If a Panel member must be replaced due to conflicts of interest or lack of availability, the Board will appoint a new Panel member for a designated time or until a new election can be held at a General Meeting.

The Ethical Conduct Panel is tasked with investigating misconduct and reporting back to the Board in a timely manner. The Panel must conclude, based on the evidence, whether allegations of misconduct are:

- upheld in full
- upheld in part, or
- not upheld.

The standard of proof used is that of “on the balance of probabilities”. The Panel will recommend if the matter requires disciplinary action, including expulsion from the Congress. The Panel can also recommend that the Respondent provides proof of ethics or bias training as part of their sanctions.

9.2 Reporting

A complaint form will be placed online for members to report alleged ethical violations. Complaints can also be lodged with any member of the Ethical Conduct Panel.

9.3 Confidentiality

At the initial reporting stage, the complaint may be anonymous/anonymized to ensure the privacy of the person(s) making the allegation (the “Complainant(s)”) and the person(s) who is/are the subject of the complaint (the “Respondent(s)”).

If the process proceeds to a full investigation (i.e. if the Panel finds that the alleged incident might indeed represent a breach of the IACA Code of Ethics), it will normally be necessary to disclose the identity of the Complainant(s) and Respondent(s), as well as other relevant information, to all those who will be involved in the investigation (Board, Panel, and witnesses). The Board and the Panel will maintain confidentiality beyond this group.

The Respondent(s) will be notified of the complaint and will be allowed to provide a response to the allegations. Witness statements may be solicited for the Respondent(s) and Complainant(s).

Whether an announcement of the incident should be given to Membership depends on the nature of the offence. In cases of harassment or assault, swift action and discretion should be undertaken in order to protect the Complainant(s).

Complainant(s) may withdraw their complaint at any stage of the process. If this occurs, the Board and the Panel still have a responsibility to maintain confidentiality about the case.

9.4 Process

This section describes the general process for interventions.

Step 1 Upon being made aware of a situation (via the online complaint form, a member of the Ethical Conduct Panel, or other means), a quorum of the Board may take immediate action if needed. This may include (but is not limited to):

- reporting to local authorities
- restriction of the violating Member's participation in activities
- removal of the violating member from the Congress
- or other reasonable steps depending on the nature of the misconduct.

Step 2 The Ethical Conduct Panel must also be notified, if they are not already involved. This Panel will investigate the alleged misconduct (including the collection of witness statements, which may include input from affected stakeholders) on behalf of the

Association and compile a memo within a predetermined reasonable timeframe. The Panel will issue a written request for explanation from the Respondent(s). The Respondent(s) should supply the Board with a written statement within thirty (30) days. If no response is received, the Board shall issue a written warning with a demand for a written response to the Panel within fifteen (15) days of the second warning. Clarification may be requested where necessary. Failure to respond to the second warning within the allotted timeframe allows the Board to proceed with the investigation without Respondent's input.

Step 3 The Panel will report back to the Board with a memo summarizing the facts obtained, the Code section in violation, and proposed action(s) depending on the nature of the misconduct, including (but not limited to):

- a first warning
- intervention/mediation
- removal from the Congress (if applicable), and
- removal from the organization.

Step 4 The Board makes a decision on action to be taken by a simple majority vote, and the decision shall be effective immediately. No vote by the IACA Membership will be conducted. The Board's representative on the Conduct Panel should not vote on the Board's decision, except in the circumstances of a tie.

Step 5 A copy of the memo and the decision of the Board shall be provided to the Complainant(s), Respondent(s), and Panel.

Step 6 An appeals process can be requested by the Complainant(s) or Respondent(s) (see Section 9.6 below).

In short, the Ethical Conduct Panel investigates the matter and informs the Board; the Board decides what action should be taken.



9.5 Sanctions

In many cases of minor to moderate misconduct the Association should seek to facilitate training and education and/or arbitration (e.g. between the “Complainant(s)” and “Respondent(s)”). However, in more severe cases sanctions could include suspension or expulsion.

Examples of specific actions may include (but are not limited to):

- Asking the person to cease the inappropriate behavior, and warning them that any further reports will result in other sanctions.
- Early termination of a talk that violates the Code of Ethics.
- Not allowing a speaker who violated the Code of Ethics to give (further) talks at the Congress.
- Immediately ending any Congress responsibilities or privileges held.
- Restricting the participation of the Respondent(s), including in subsequent publications and proceedings of the Congress.
- Requiring that the person immediately leave the Congress and not return (without a refund).
- Banning the person from future events (for a defined time period).
- Expulsion from IACA and all associated activities (including social platforms).
- Contacting the local authorities in cases of illegal conduct.

9.6 Appeals Panel and Process

If a complaint is upheld, all Complainants and Respondents have a right of appeal, which should be directed to the President of the Association. The President will then convene an Appeal Panel, comprised similarly to the Ethical Conduct Panel (but not voted in by the IACA Membership), to review the case under the same conditions as the original Panel. The Appeals Panel cannot contain any members of the original Panel. A key principle of the procedure is fairness. This means that when someone is accused of misconduct, that person must be given full details of the allegations in writing, and they must be given the opportunity to respond to allegations raised. They must also be allowed to ask questions, present information in their defense, and adduce evidence of witnesses. The Respondent(s) and/or Complainant(s) and any other witnesses may provide a written statement that will be kept confidential. The procedure must also seek to preserve confidentiality and not reveal the identities of Complainants or Respondents outside of those involved in the investigation and adjudication process. As with the original investigation, a memo is written to the Board, who then makes the final decision on the outcome.

Where ambiguities occur in the French and Spanish translations of the Code of Ethics, the English version of the Code of Ethics is to be considered correct.

Once approved this Code of Ethics takes immediate effect and is subject to revision only by a vote of the General Assembly of IACA Members in good standing.

References

Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) (2020) *Promoting integrity in scholarly research and its publication*. Available at: <https://publicationethics.org/>. Accessed: 19th June 2020.

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