



## **Society of Forensic Toxicologists (SOFT) Code of Conduct Reporting Procedures**

### **Purpose**

These reporting procedures aim to uphold the values outlined in the SOFT Code of Conduct and ensure the following:

- Those who experience harm or witness potential violations of the Code while participating in SOFT activities are encouraged to report their experiences. Reports are handled promptly and confidentially, limiting the risk of retaliation.
- Those accused of potential Code violations have the opportunity to respond in a fair, evidence-based process, with decisions made by neutral and unbiased individuals.
- Consequences for prohibited behavior are proportional to the harm caused and are designed to protect community members and promote a culture of care.
- The reporting and resolution process is transparent, easy to use, promotes reporting, limits the spread of rumors, and is procedurally fair to all parties involved.

These procedures are based on best practices adopted by similar organizations to implement and enforce organizational codes of conduct promptly, efficiently, and effectively.

### **Procedure for Reporting and Reviewing Violations**

#### **1. Submitting a Report:**

- A report of a potential Code violation is submitted via email to: [safeconferences@gmail.com](mailto:safeconferences@gmail.com).

#### **2. Preliminary Investigation:**

- Upon receipt of a report, the SOFT Accountability Officer (SAO) conducts a preliminary investigation to determine whether the reported conduct is a potential violation of the Code.
- Some cases can be handled without a formal investigation, particularly if the reporting party does not wish to proceed or if the issue can be resolved immediately.

#### **3. Recommendation to the Ethics Committee:**

- Once the preliminary investigation is complete, the SAO recommends to the Ethics Committee whether to conduct a full investigation or pursue an alternate resolution.
- Any alternate resolution must be reviewed and affirmed by the Executive Committee before implementation.

#### **4. Full Investigation (if applicable):**



- If a full investigation is initiated, the accused is notified and given seven days to respond. During the investigation, their membership in SOFT and participation in events is temporarily suspended.
- The SAO, in conjunction with the Ethics Committee, conducts interviews with relevant parties and reviews documents.
- Once the investigation concludes, the SAO prepares an investigation report for the Ethics Committee's consideration.

#### **5. Ethics Committee Deliberation:**

- The Ethics Committee reviews the report, considers any conflicts of interest, and maintains confidentiality regarding the parties involved.
- The committee deliberates on consequences and makes a recommendation to the SOFT Executive Committee.

#### **6. Executive Committee Determination:**

- The Executive Committee also considers conflicts of interest and agrees to keep parties' identities confidential.
- The committee issues a determination with appropriate consequences, and the President notifies all relevant parties (reporting party, accused, SAO, and Ethics Committee Chair) in writing of the outcome.

### **Grounds for Appeal**

A participant subject to consequences may petition the SOFT Executive Committee for reconsideration on the following grounds:

- Bias or misconduct affected the outcome
- The consequences were disproportionate to the violation

The petition, limited to 500 words, must be submitted within seven days of the notice date and will be reviewed by the Executive Committee within 30 days. The decision following reconsideration is final and immediately enforced.

### **Consequences for Code Violations**

Consequences for a violation of the Code may include, but are not limited to:

- A verbal or written request to cease and desist conduct in violation of the Code
- Removal of messages and solicitations, with banning of those sources
- Removal from a conference, associated hotel accommodations, or event (virtual or in-person) without warning or refund, with a ban on future attendance



- Limiting rights to participate in SOFT activities, committees, or leadership for a designated time with specified remedial actions
- Suspension from SOFT leadership or membership, up to and including expulsion

### **Record Keeping**

SOFT maintains a confidential record of all reports so that a participant's conduct can be considered as part of a pattern in future incidents, even if a formal investigation is not conducted or if the initial report does not warrant consequences.