

# Governance Policies and Procedures

## OCUL Code of Conduct

Approval date: OCUL Council, June 6, 2025
Revised:
Date for review: 2028; reviewed every three years

### Overview

The Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL) is strengthened by the member library workforces who share their expertise to contribute to the delivery of innovative and equitable library services.

Included in OCUL's Operating Principles is the commitment to develop and sustain initiatives "in a climate that encourages new ideas, enables effective collaboration and builds consensus." As such, OCUL is dedicated to creating and maintaining an inclusive membership experience – one that strengthens collaboration and supports respectful discussion and expression of ideas in a manner conscientious of diverse perspectives and lived experiences and that is sensitive to the impact communications and behaviours have on others.

This Code of Conduct articulates how OCUL adheres to this commitment. This OCUL policy is in addition to, and does not supersede, any institutional policy and institutional reporting requirements.

### Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to all OCUL membership activities and governance groups (including but not limited to the Council, standing committees, subcommittees, working groups and Communities) as well as all participants, presenters, and organizers of OCUL meetings, correspondence and events – virtual or in-person<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> All OCUL staff members are subject to the Council of Ontario Universities conduct and safe disclosure policies and processes. Should you witness an OCUL staff member engaging in discriminatory or harassing behaviour, please contact the OCUL Executive Director or OCUL Chair.

## Policy

OCUL does not tolerate harassment or discriminatory behaviours of any kind.

Discrimination refers to negative treatment based on a personal characteristic: race, cultural identity, religious beliefs, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital or family status, socioeconomic status, disability, neurodiversity or physical appearance. Harassment is any behaviour that threatens another person or group or produces an unsafe environment. This includes, but is not limited to, verbal comments or non-verbal expressions. Harassment does not preclude constructive disagreement or discourse. The Code of Conduct is meant to address derogatory and targeted comments or behaviours.

## Procedure

If at any time, you witness or experience a breach of this Code of Conduct, you are encouraged to come forward as soon as you feel safe to do so.

There are three ways harassment and/or discriminatory conduct can be addressed:

### ***1. Immediate resolution***

OCUL understands there are many reasons why speaking directly to someone about their behaviour is not possible, including, but not limited to, power dynamics, unfamiliarity with the event/meeting and its participants, and concerns for personal safety.

If you do feel comfortable to address the person directly, the situation may be resolved by having an open discussion and informing them that they have negatively affected you. The behaviour may be unintentional, and the situation may be resolved by having an initial discussion and no further report is required.

### ***2. Mediated resolution***

If direct engagement is not a good option for you or the situation persists, a third party can be contacted for assistance and support.

In the case of OCUL online or in-person events, an ad-hoc Code of Conduct Committee may be designated, with committee members announced in advance. A Code of

Conduct Committee would consist of no less than two OCUL member representatives involved in planning the event and one OCUL staff person.

You can contact the OCUL Executive Director or the applicable group or event lead (e.g. the chair of the meeting, chair of the committee) or a Code of Conduct committee member to discuss the behaviour. They will determine whether the situation can (and should) be defused by communicating privately and separately with the individuals most directly involved and, possibly, particular witness(es). This can encompass a warning and clear conduct instructions to a person accused of a violation of this policy and they comply in the spirit of resolution and learning, it is apparent that misunderstandings occurred and are corrected or there is an authentic commitment to avoid a repetition of the cause of the conduct concern (and no reason to think repetition is likely), and any persons involved in the situation agree to the resolution without coercion.

### ***3. Conduct report***

If you have a concern after an event that was not resolved or if the conduct is too serious or repetitive in nature for a mediated resolution, a report can be made to either the OCUL Executive Director or the OCUL Chair.

Every conduct report will be taken seriously. All reported incidents will be treated, to the fullest extent possible, in a confidential manner and with due care, consistent with the need to investigate the circumstances of the incident or as required by the law.

OCUL will make every effort to address reports promptly and to reduce the burden on the reporter as much as possible in finding a resolution. The reporter will not be asked to resolve the incident with the person who is alleged to have violated the code of conduct or to communicate with them in any way.

OCUL may take any action deemed appropriate to support resolution, including directly following up with involved parties' home institutions. Serious or repeated breaches of this code of conduct could result in expulsion from the meeting, event, or OCUL governance group. If needed, security or local law enforcement may be involved.

## Acknowledgements

The OCUL Code of Conduct is adapted from:

- [The Association of Research Libraries Code of Conduct Policy and Protocol](#)
- [The Canadian Association of Research Libraries Code of Conduct](#)
- [Code4Lib Community Code of Conduct](#)
- [The Ontario Library Association Code of Conduct Policy and Procedures](#)