

UBC Department of Botany Code of Conduct

Introduction

The Department of Botany is committed to providing an environment that is safe, productive, inclusive, and welcoming for all staff, students, lab volunteers, collaborators, postdocs, research associates, faculty, and participants in any field project, classroom, laboratory, conference, seminar, workshop, or project hosted or managed by the Department of Botany, no matter what role they play. We aspire to be a community where every member and guest feels comfortable participating, knowing that they will be welcomed and treated fairly.

Freedom of expression and the promotion of free inquiry in the academic process cannot exist without an equally vigorous commitment to recognition of, and respect for, the freedoms of others, and concern for the well-being of every member of the Botany community. Excellence in scholarship, teaching and employment activities flows from active concern and respect for others, including their ability to participate meaningfully in the academic process, and constructively challenge information, ideas, beliefs, and opinions. The best possible environment for working, learning, and living is one in which respect, civility, diversity, opportunity, and inclusion are valued.

Everyone in the Department of Botany has the right to be in an environment free from discrimination, bullying and harassment, sexual misconduct, and violence. This Code of Conduct serves as a reminder of our obligations under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, B.C. Human Rights Act, UBC policies, and the values of the Botany community for professional, respectful, and inclusive behaviour.

Expectations

- All UBC members and affiliates are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that does not infringe upon the rights of others, in accordance with the [Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#) and [B.C. Human Rights Code](#).
- All UBC members and affiliates are expected to follow the guidelines laid out in UBC Policies [SC7](#) (Discrimination Policy), [SC17](#) (Sexual Misconduct Policy), [SC18](#) (Retaliation Policy), and [SC3](#) (Conflict of Interest Policy).
- All UBC members, affiliates, and guests are to be treated with respect and consideration, in a manner that does not devalue each other's views or diverse contributions to the department's vision and mission, as outlined in the [UBC Statement on Respectful Environment](#).
- All Botany members, affiliates, and guests are expected to uphold the department's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion in our community, research, teaching, supervision, collaborations and collegiality.
- All Botany members, affiliates, and guests are expected to support other Botany community members (especially those whom you supervise) to encourage

community and individual well-being such as encouraging a pace of work that allows each individual to achieve their own healthy work/life balance.

- All Botany members, affiliates, and guests are encouraged to respond to disrespectful, prohibited, inappropriate or questionable communications and behaviours that they witness directed at another person, either by intervening or by alerting a third person (e.g., staff, manager or supervisor, graduate or wellness advisor, associate heads, department head) to their concern.

Prohibited Conduct and Unacceptable Behaviours

The following behaviours (with their definitions) are unacceptable in the Botany Department. Anyone who is told that their behaviour is unacceptable should take the complainant's views seriously and seek to resolve the complaint in a respectful and fair manner. Resources for resolution include the Botany Wellness Advisors, Associate Head of Graduate Studies, Associate Head of Biology, and the Botany Head. Violations of the Charters of Rights and Freedoms and the B.C. Human Rights Act could result in serious sanctions, should a formal report be filed and an investigation conducted, as outlined in the next section.

Please note that the list of prohibited conduct and unacceptable behaviours presents some examples and is not all-encompassing.

Prohibited Behaviours:

Please review UBC Policies [SC7](#) (Discrimination Policy), [SC17](#) (Sexual Misconduct Policy), [SC18](#) (Retaliation Policy), and [SC3](#) (Conflict of Interest Policy) for details.

- **Discrimination:** unfair or prejudicial treatment of people and groups based on characteristics such as race/ethnicity, religion, gender identity and/or expression, age, mental or physical disability, neurodivergence, physical appearance such as skin colour or body size, family status, marital status, political belief, source of income, criminal conviction, or sexual orientation.
- **Sexual harassment:** includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, any other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature perceived by the complainant, and offensive comments related to gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, and physical appearance including body size or race/ethnicity.
***See Appendix A** for additional examples of sexual harassment and misconduct.
- **Sexual misconduct:** includes rape, sexual assault, inappropriate and unwanted touching in a sexual manner, sexual battery, sexual exploitation, coercion, and other forms of non-consensual sexual activity.
- **Stalking:** repeated following, harassing, threatening, or intimidation, via physical presence, telephone, mail, electronic communication, or social media.

- **Physical or verbal abuse:** an act of violence either through physical action that results in bodily harm such as hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, shoving, grabbing, using objects to inflict harm, restraining without consent, or verbal communication to cause emotional or psychological harm such as insults, threats, yelling or screaming in a demeaning way, belittling, over-criticizing, mocking, gaslighting or manipulating with words.
- **Retaliation:** adverse actions – employment, academic, or otherwise – against anyone reporting a violation of this policy (including reporting to Botany staff, management, police, or the UBC Investigations Office).

Unacceptable behaviours:

- **Microaggression:** everyday instances of brief, subtle, and/or indirect behaviour or interactions that communicate negative ideas of or bias towards a group of people, usually a historically and/or socially marginalized group (Sue et al. 2017). They can be intentional or unintentional but have hurtful impacts regardless of the intent.
- **Exclusion:** active dismissal, avoidance, discussions, exchanges, jokes, eye-rolling, physical gestures or any other communication or behaviour that may have the effect of isolating, marginalizing, hurting or belittling another person.
- **Personal space intrusion:** intentionally and/or persistently entering someone's personal space that they deem is uncomfortable or inappropriate, even when asked to stop, such as deliberately standing or sitting too close, initiating hugs or touches to the arm without consent, asking intrusive personal questions, entering someone's office or space without knocking or asking, and touching someone's belongings without permission.
- **Harmful gossip:** sharing private information or making negative personal comments to, and about, others that can erode relationships, reputations, and emotional well-being.
- **Disrespectful communication:** includes the use of coarse language, cursing, displaying hostility such as dismissive remarks, being excessively critical, repeatedly questioning a colleague's credibility and capability, and being unresponsive
- **Unreasonable workload:** assigning tasks outside of someone's role or job description without discussions and providing proper training.

Reporting Procedures – refer to the [flowchart](#).

All staff, students, faculty, and affiliates who have experienced any prohibited or unacceptable behaviour are encouraged to tell someone immediately. This can include a friend, professional support groups, staff, manager or supervisor, associate heads, department head, or graduate program director, the UBC Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office (SVPRO) for sexual misconduct cases, and the UBC Equity and Inclusion Office for discrimination cases. If appropriate, a disclosure must be accompanied by a formal report for further long-term action.

Note: If a disclosure contains information about criminal activity, heads, managers, and supervisors must contact the RCMP and report the disclosure.

Individuals in Botany have multiple reporting avenues. You can disclose and/or formally report an incident that you experienced, witnessed, or were told about, by using the information in the [flowchart](#).

Potential Actions and Consequences

The Department of Botany and UBC itself can take immediate and longer-term actions to ensure the safety of UBC members and affiliates once prohibited and/or unacceptable behaviour has been disclosed and/or formally reported.

- Immediate action can be carried out by a supervisor/manager and may include changes in team composition or lab assignments and/or other options, including the potential removal of the respondent from the event or activity. The action taken will depend on the disclosure and will be informed by consultation with the complainant. If a disclosure involves criminal activity, the RCMP will be notified immediately.
- Longer-term actions may only occur once a formal report is filed with the [UBC Investigations Office](#) and an investigation is completed. The UBC Investigations Office will make a 'finding of fact' that will inform disciplinary action by the relevant manager (e.g., Department Head, Dean or Dean's representative, president). The Department of Botany will consider the perspectives of the complainant in finding solutions to make the environment safe again for them.
- When acceptable to a complainant, the Department of Botany encourages the practice of restorative justice, which focuses on healing, accountability, and transformation, things we know prevent violence, rather than punishment. It also aims to achieve a positive result for the complainant and considers the type of change desired by the complainant. If the respondent is asked to take part in restorative justice, they are expected to fully engage in the process. Examples of restorative justice include, but are not limited to, a sincere apology from the respondent, attending counseling/therapy/support groups, performing community service, active self-reflection, attending harm reduction workshops, and actively listening to the complainant.

Appendix A. Additional examples of sexual harassment and misconduct (but not limited to):

- **Patterns of inappropriate social contact**, such as requesting/assuming inappropriate levels of intimacy with others.
- **Dating and domestic violence** includes emotional, verbal, and economic abuse with or without the presence of physical abuse within the context of an intimate or romantic relationship and/or domestic setting.

- **Power-based personal violence** occurs when an individual asserts power, control, or intimidation in order to harm another. This includes relationship/partner violence, sexual assault, and stalking.
- **Deliberately mis-characterizing a person's gender identity**, including the intentional and continuing use of a name or pronoun that the person has renounced.
- **Gratuitous or off-topic sexual images or behaviour** in spaces where they are not appropriate such as in professional, public, academic, and non-sexual contexts where such material or behaviour is clearly irrelevant or intrusive.
- **Violating the “Ask Once” Policy** (defined below)
 - “Ask Once” Policy: Botany follows “Ask Once” as a behavioural guideline, which means that you can ask someone out once, and if they do not say “yes,” you cannot ask them out again. Asking out includes hitting on, expressing interest, and making advances. If someone brushes off the advance, does not reciprocate in a positive way, or turns down the advance in any way, it must be considered a “no.” This guideline is intended to inform the behaviour of someone interested in another Botany member or affiliate, give people a simple way to judge when they are being harassed, and give Botany management a tool in which to evaluate a person’s behaviour.

Appendix B.

We would like to thank the Department of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Science (EOAS) and the Institute of Ocean and Fisheries (IOF) for allowing us to use their Code of Conducts as a basis for this one.