



Astronomical Society of Australia Statement of Ethics

The Statement of Ethics outlines the philosophy of the ASA with respect to professional conduct, and is the prescriptive document outlining processes and expectations under the ASA Code of Conduct.

- 1) Conduct Toward Others** All people have a right to be treated with respect at all times. Detailed expectations of conduct for ASA members are specified in the Astronomical Society of Australia Code of Conduct document.
 - a. Members of the Society are expected to promote equality of opportunity and treatment for all their colleagues, regardless of gender, cultural or linguistic background, religion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disabilities, or any other reason not related to scientific merit.
 - b. More senior members of the society, especially research supervisors, have a special responsibility to facilitate the research, educational and professional development of students and staff. This includes providing safe, supportive working environments, appropriate opportunities, fair compensation and appropriate acknowledgment of their contribution to any research results. In addition, supervisors should encourage the timely advance of graduate students and young professionals in their career aspirations.
 - c. It is a key responsibility of senior members of our society to inform more junior members of these ethical expectations and of institutional and government guidelines, policies and procedures related to the oversight and maintenance of ethical standards for research and its conduct.

- 2) Research – Academic Integrity** It is an ethical responsibility to record and maintain research results in a form that allows review, analysis, and reproduction by others.
 - a. It is a responsibility of researchers involved in publicly-supported studies to make results available in a timely manner.
 - b. Fabrication of data or selective reporting of data with the intent to mislead or deceive is unethical and unacceptable, as is the appropriation of data or research results from others without permission and attribution.
 - c. Human error is part of scientific enterprise. It is not unethical to make an error, provided that errors are promptly acknowledged and corrected when they are detected.

- 3) Publication and Authorship Practices** Anyone who has made significant contributions to a work intended for publication should be offered the opportunity to be listed as an author. This includes anyone who has contributed intellectually to the inception, design, execution, or interpretation of the research. These principles are guided by the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research¹.
 - a. The ASA's refereed journal, Publications of the Astronomical Society of Australia has its own statement reflecting these ideas in a statement on 'Publishing Ethics' in its Instructions for Contributors.

¹ <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-code-responsible-conduct-research-2018>

- b. Anyone who has contributed in any significant way to a study should be appropriately acknowledged.
- c. The sources of financial or significant in-kind support for any project should be acknowledged/disclosed.
- d. Proper acknowledgement of the work of others must always be given and complete referencing is an essential part of any astronomical research publication. Authors have an obligation to their colleagues and the scientific community to include a set of references that communicates the precedents, sources, and context of the reported work. Deliberate omission of a pertinent author or reference is unacceptable. Data provided by others must be cited appropriately, even if obtained from a public database.
- e. Plagiarism is the presentation of others' words, ideas or scientific results as if they were one's own. It is unethical behaviour and is never acceptable. Equally unacceptable is the practice of self-plagiarism whereby a person publishes virtually identical papers in more than one refereed journal. All collaborators share responsibility for any paper they co-author and every co-author should have the opportunity to review a manuscript before its submission. All authors are therefore responsible for providing prompt corrections or retractions if errors are found in published works.

4) Peer Review Peer review is an essential component of many aspects of the scientific process such as evaluating research proposals, publishing research results and evaluating colleagues for career advancement.

- a. Peer review can serve its intended function only if the members of the scientific community are prepared to provide thorough, fair and objective evaluations based on requisite expertise. Although peer review can be difficult and time-consuming, scientists have an obligation to participate in the process. Research managers have a duty to allow their staff time to participate in the referee process and to recognize such activity in performance assessment.
- b. Reviewers should disclose conflicts of interest resulting from direct competitive, collaborative, or other relationships with those they are reviewing and excuse themselves from cases where such conflicts preclude an objective evaluation. It is unethical to seek to gain an advantage by means of reviewing the work of others.

5) Conflicts of Interest Many activities of scientists and educators have the potential for a conflict of interest. This is discussed in the [ASA general guidelines on Conflict of Interest](#). Any professional relationship or action that may either be or be perceived as a conflict of interest should be fully disclosed. If a conflict of interest cannot be properly managed, the activity should be avoided or discontinued.

Individuals engaging in behaviour which is contrary to this Code as well as those making allegations in bad faith will be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the document [Handling of Potential Breaches of the ASA Statement of Ethics and Code of Conduct](#), up to and including termination of membership.

Anyone who wishes to report a violation of this policy *is asked to speak confidentially* to the meeting organiser, ASA President, or ASA Ethics and Conduct Committee Chair. Formal complaints to the Society can be made via the [Complaints Form](#) for confidential consideration by the ASA Ethics and Conduct Committee.