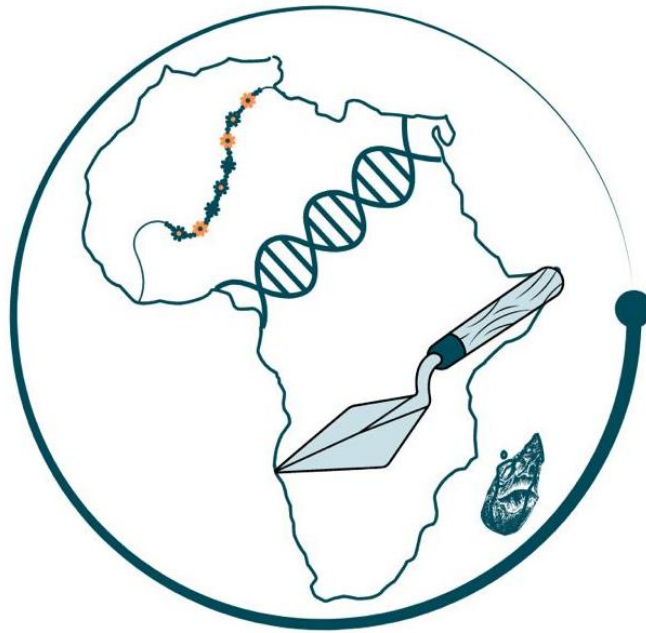


AFRICAN PALAEOSCIENCES STUDENT SOCIETY

Code of Conduct



AFRICAN PALAEOSCIENCES STUDENT SOCIETY

ADVANCING OUR FUTURE WITH CLUES FROM THE PAST

27 JULY 2026

Code of Conduct

African Palaeosciences Student Society (APSS)

African Palaeosciences Student Council (APSC)

1. Purpose

This Code of Conduct sets out the expectations for all members and leadership of the African Palaeosciences Student Society (APSS), including the African Palaeosciences Student Council (APSC). It reflects the Society's commitment to professionalism, ethical conduct, accountability, and inclusive engagement across Africa and the diaspora. The Code is binding for all members, with additional responsibilities for those serving in elected or appointed leadership roles, including council members, officers, committee chairs, and representatives.

2. Scope

This Code applies to all APSS members and APSC leaders participating in Society-related activities, including council meetings, public events, conferences, online discussions, fieldwork, collaborative research, and digital communications.

3. Core Principles and Responsibilities

3.1 Commitment to the APSS Mission

- 3.1.1 Actively advance the Society's goals of promoting African palaeoscience through research, education, mentorship, and community collaboration.
- 3.1.2 Support student and Early Career Professional (ECP) development across the continent and in the diaspora.
- 3.1.3 Uphold the Society's focus on decolonising knowledge and advocating for African-centred scientific practice.

3.2 Professionalism

- 3.2.1 Conduct duties with honesty, transparency, and respect for others.
- 3.2.2 Avoid any conduct that discredits the Society or its mission.
- 3.2.3 Promptly disclose potential conflicts of interest to the Council and recuse

oneself where appropriate.

- 3.2.4 Fulfil responsibilities diligently, including participation in meetings, timely communication, and meeting obligations.

3.3 Inclusivity and Respect

- 3.3.1 Foster a welcoming environment that values diverse identities, experiences, and academic disciplines.
- 3.3.2 Oppose and report any form of discrimination, harassment, or exclusion based on race, gender, sex, disability, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, language, or political opinion.
- 3.3.3 Support equitable participation and representation within the Society's leadership and activities.

3.4 Collaboration and Mentorship

- 3.4.1 Work cooperatively with fellow Council members, APSS members, and partner organisations.
- 3.4.2 Promote knowledge sharing, peer support, and mutual capacity building.
- 3.4.3 Actively mentor emerging scholars and support future leaders in the Society.

3.5 Accountability and Stewardship

- 3.5.1 Accept responsibility for individual and collective decisions taken as part of the Council.
- 3.5.2 Use Society resources, including funds, platforms, and partnerships, ethically and transparently.
- 3.5.3 Report any misuse of Society resources or authority promptly to the Chair.

3.6 Confidentiality

- 3.6.1 Maintain the confidentiality of internal communications, strategic planning, and member data unless otherwise approved for public release.
- 3.6.2 Respect the privacy of members, partners, and collaborators.

3.7 Representation

- 3.7.1 Represent the Society respectfully in public forums, including academic conferences, field settings, and on social media.

- 3.7.2 Clearly distinguish personal opinions from official Society positions.
- 3.7.3 Adhere to the Society's branding and communication guidelines when acting in an official capacity.

4. Prohibited Conduct

The following conduct constitutes a violation of this Code:

- 4.1.1 Harassment, abuse, or bullying in any form.
- 4.1.2 Discrimination on any basis, including race, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or ethnicity.
- 4.1.3 Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism or misrepresentation of credentials.
- 4.1.4 Misuse of Society funds, platforms, data, or privileges.
- 4.1.5 Breach of confidentiality agreements or wilful disclosure of private member information.
- 4.1.6 Repeated non-fulfilment of Council duties without valid reason.
- 4.1.7 Behaviour that disrupts the functioning, events, or governance of the Society.

5. Compliance and Enforcement

5.1 Reporting

- 5.1.1. Violations may be reported confidentially to the Council Chair.
- 5.1.2. Reports may be submitted anonymously or with identifying details and should include factual and specific information.
- 5.1.3. Retaliation against individuals who report violations is strictly prohibited.

5.2 Review Process

- 5.2.1. Reports will be reviewed by a Council subcommittee within 14 days of receipt.
- 5.2.2. All parties involved will have the opportunity to present their account and respond to any concerns raised.

5.3 Consequences

Violations of this Code of Conduct may result in one or more of the following outcomes, depending on the severity and frequency of the offense:

- 5.3.1. Informal Resolution - For minor or first-time issues, a verbal or written reminder may be issued, along with an opportunity for corrective action.
- 5.3.2. Formal warning - Members may receive a formal written warning for violations that affect the functioning or integrity of the Society. A maximum of two formal warnings may be issued to a member within a 12-month period.
- 5.3.3. Suspension - A third formal warning within 12 months may result in a temporary suspension from Council duties or Society activities (typically 3–6 months), subject to a Council vote.
- 5.3.4. Termination - Repeated or unresolved violations, or a fourth infraction, may result in termination of membership or Council position. Immediate termination may occur for serious misconduct, such as harassment, discrimination, misuse of funds, or breach of confidentiality.
- 5.3.5. Legal action - Referral to legal or regulatory authorities in cases of severe misconduct (e.g., harassment, fraud).

All disciplinary measures will be based on due process and require approval by a majority vote of the Council, and members will be given a chance to respond to allegations prior to final action. Except in urgent cases that warrant immediate action by the Chair or Council Sub-Committee.

5.4 Disciplinary Subcommittee

To ensure fairness, transparency, and due process in addressing violations of this Code of Conduct, the APSS shall appoint a Disciplinary Subcommittee to oversee matters of compliance and enforcement.

- 5.4.1. Appointment and Composition-
 - a. The Disciplinary Subcommittee shall be convened by the APSC Chair, or the Vice-Chair in the event of a conflict of interest involving the Chair.
 - b. The subcommittee shall consist of three to five members, drawn from the APSS Council and, where necessary, senior non-Council members with prior experience in Society governance.
 - c. At least one member must be external to the APSC to promote impartiality.

- d. Any member who is the subject of a complaint, or who has a personal or professional conflict of interest, shall be recused from serving on the subcommittee.
- 5.4.2. Mandate and Responsibilities - The Disciplinary Subcommittee shall:
 - a. Review the report and all relevant documentation.
 - b. Offer the member(s) in question the opportunity to respond to the allegations.
 - c. Conduct interviews or collect statements if needed.
 - d. Deliberate confidentially and make a written recommendation to the APSC regarding disciplinary action (e.g., formal warning, suspension, termination).
 - e. Final decisions shall be made by majority vote of the full Council, based on the subcommittee's findings and recommendation.
- 5.4.3. Timeline for Review-
 - a. The subcommittee must begin reviewing the complaint within 7 days of its formation.
 - b. A final recommendation should be submitted to the Council within 21 days of the subcommittee's first meeting, unless an extension is granted due to exceptional circumstances.
- 5.4.4. Confidentiality and Procedural Fairness -
 - a. All proceedings shall be held in confidence to protect the privacy of involved parties.
 - b. The process will adhere to the principles of natural justice, including: the right to a fair and unbiased hearing, the presumption of good faith and the right to respond to any allegation.
- 5.4.5. Appeals –
 - a. The member subject to disciplinary action shall have the right to submit a written appeal within 10 days of being notified of the Council's decision.
 - b. Appeals shall be reviewed by an ad hoc Appeals Panel, composed of three individuals not involved in the original subcommittee, and preferably including one external advisor or mentor affiliated with APSS.
 - c. The Appeals Panel shall provide a final decision within 14 days of receiving the appeal submission. That decision shall be binding.

6. Annual Review and Amendments

- 6.1. This Code shall be reviewed annually by the APSC and updated as necessary to reflect evolving legal, cultural, and academic standards.
- 6.2. Proposed amendments must be circulated to members in advance and

approved by a 60% vote at a duly constituted Virtual Biennial Meeting (with a quorum of at least 50% of Full Members).

7. Acknowledgement and Consent

- 7.1. All applicants for APSS membership, including those seeking election or appointment to the APSC, must formally acknowledge and sign both the Code of Conduct and the Constitution as part of the membership application process.
- 7.2. This acknowledgement is a mandatory requirement for an application to be considered valid and complete.
- 7.3. Continued participation in APSS or APSC activities indicates acceptance of this Code.

8. Contact and Support

For questions, reporting, or clarification regarding this Code of Conduct, please contact the APSS Council at paleosciencesociety@gmail.com

This Code of Conduct was officially adopted by the African Palaeosciences Student Council on 27 July 2026.

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