

Policy Information

Approved by: (sign/date)	Approved – Pending Signature (Board of Trustees)	Policy number:	2025-1201-03
		Risk Appetite:	Low
		Policy Family:	Human Resources and Organizational Development (HROD)
Policy Owner: (sign/date)	(Head of HROD)	Version:	4.0
		Effective date:	December 1, 2025
		Next Review Date	December 1, 2027

1. PURPOSE

The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) is committed to fostering a safe, respectful, and inclusive work environment free from harassment, bullying, and discrimination. This Policy aims to:

- Define prohibited behaviors.
- Clarify the responsibilities of IRRI’s Board, Officers, and staff in prevention and response.
- Protect individuals who report misconduct in good faith.

2. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all IRRI staff, officers, Board members, and Associated Parties including contractors, consultants, suppliers, hosted and seconded staff, trainees, volunteers, interns, scholars, students, visiting scientists, and other individuals working on IRRI’s behalf.

Covered individuals must adhere to this Policy during official duties and recognize that inappropriate conduct, even outside the workplace, can harm IRRI’s reputation and interests.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

IRRI maintains zero tolerance for harassment, bullying, and discrimination. All reports are taken seriously, investigated through established procedures, and appropriate action is taken. Retaliation against individuals who report misconduct is strictly prohibited. Harassment in any form can harm well-being, reduce productivity, and damage team cohesion and IRRI’s reputation.

3.1 DEFINITIONS - PROHIBITED CONDUCT

Below lists and defines behaviors considered by IRRI to be prohibited conduct:

1. **Harassment:** Unwelcome conduct verbal, written, or physical that offends, humiliates, or intimidates others, creating a hostile work environment or interfering with work. It may be repeated or a single severe incident. Perception matters more than intent.
2. **Sexual Harassment:** Unwanted sexual behavior that causes offense or creates a hostile environment, including advances, requests for favors, or other inappropriate conduct. Quid pro

quo harassment involves abuse of authority to solicit sexual favors in exchange for career benefits or to avoid negative consequences.

3. **Bullying:** Repeated, offensive, or humiliating behavior verbal, physical, visual, or written that undermines an individual or group.
4. **Cyberbullying:** Aggressive or harmful behavior via electronic or social media, occurring during or outside work hours.
5. **Mobbing:** Group bullying repeated and coordinated actions by multiple individuals targeting one person.
6. **Abuse of Authority:** Improper use of power or influence to affect another's employment conditions, including intimidation, coercion, or threats.
7. **Discrimination:** Unjust treatment or differentiation based on race, gender, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, disability, age, or other protected characteristics. It may occur directly or indirectly and can manifest through harassment or abuse of authority.

Please see [Appendix 1 - Examples of Prohibited Conduct](#) for a non-exhaustive list.

3.1.8 Conduct Not Considered Harassment, Bullying, or Discrimination

Supervisors may need to make decisions—such as on performance or work tasks—that staff may not agree with. These decisions must be based on evidence and delivered constructively. Unless such actions are carried out in an offensive, intimidating, or retaliatory manner, they do not typically constitute harassment.

3.1.9 National Requirements

Where national laws are more stringent or differ in approach, IRRI will defer to local legal requirements.

3.2 ROLES IN PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

3.2.1 IRRI Staff

All staff are responsible for fostering a safe and respectful workplace, refraining from prohibited conduct, and reporting actual or suspected violations (see Disclosure of Wrongdoing in IRRI's Code of Conduct).

3.2.2 Human Resources and Organizational Development

Human Resources and Organizational Development (HROD) is responsible for:

- Training, awareness campaigns, and communication related to harassment, bullying, and discrimination (HBD).
- Tracking and analyzing HBD cases and trends.
- Leading formal and informal complaint processes.
- Determining protective and disciplinary actions.
- Reviewing and updating the Policy.
- Reporting findings to the Director General.
- Ensuring confidentiality throughout all processes.
- Reviewing and updating this policy.

HROD works closely with the Ethics and Business Conduct (EBC) Director, CGIAR, and other Centers to coordinate and align HBD initiatives. Where needed, HROD may consult IRRI’s Ethics and Business Conduct Officer or Legal Unit.

3.2.3 IRRI Leadership and Management

Leaders and managers are responsible for modeling respectful behavior, promoting safe and inclusive workplaces, and ensuring staff understand and access this Policy. They must monitor staff well-being, intervene early to address misconduct, and resolve disputes promptly and confidentially. Serious concerns should be escalated to HROD with the complainant’s consent.

3.2.4 IRRI Board of Trustees

IRRI's Board of Trustees is expected to champion ethical behaviors, actively embrace this Policy, and set the tone for healthy and safe working environments throughout IRRI.

3.3 CONFIDENTIALITY

All complaints must be handled with discretion and confidentiality to protect the privacy of all parties involved (see [IRRI’s Code of Conduct](#)). Retaliation against complainants or participants acting in good faith is strictly prohibited. Defamation of alleged offenders is not permitted.

4. PROCEDURES

Please see the [Prevention of and Response to Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination Procedures](#) for more information on reporting and filing a complaint.

5. REFERENCES AND ASSOCIATED POLICIES

Please see IRRI’s main intranet webpage on [Policies, Supplements, Procedures, and Guidelines](#) for more information or [IRRI’s website](#) for openly accessible documents. Also see the [CGIAR Integrated Partnership Anti-Harassment and Discrimination Policy](#).

6. VERSION HISTORY

Version	Effective date	Approved by	Summary of changes
1.0	2004		First Policy "Sexual Harassment Policy.
2.0	2013	Board of Trustees	“Harassment and Discrimination Policy” drafted by CGIAR's Secretariat
3.0	2025	Board of Trustees	Updates to all section's definitions added, and the title updated. This document amends the Grievance Resolution Policy & Procedures such as complaints of harassment, bullying, discrimination shall follow this governing document.

7. APPENDIX 1- EXAMPLES OF PROHIBITED CONDUCT

The examples provided below are not exhaustive and are meant to be used for guidance on what may constitute improper and prohibited conduct in the workplace. Prohibited conduct is also determined by national law.

Examples of harassment include:

- Use of offensive language, jokes, gossip or ridicule in reference to such characteristics as appearance, gender, personal status, sexual orientation or ethnic origin.
- Racial slurs and negative stereotyping of an individual or group.
- Deliberate withholding of information or resources to undermine the target's work performance.
- Excessive monitoring of work without legitimate reasons.
- Putting sustained pressure on the target to participate in activities unrelated to work.
- Display of images or written materials that are offensive, obscene, or objectionable.

Examples of abuse of authority include:

- "*Quid pro quo*" sexual harassment by a supervisor or person in a position of authority with respect to the target's employment status.
- Requesting staff to do personal favors or errands.
- Pressuring staff to distort facts or break the rules.
- Coercion or retaliation against a person who files a complaint under this Policy.

Examples of bullying include

- Repeated aggressive behavior, including intimidation, threats, or abusive language.
- Constantly humiliating, mocking, or belittling someone, particularly in front of colleagues. Repeatedly ignoring or excluding someone from office activities or excluding someone by talking across them or not listening to them.
- Regular setting of clearly unattainable work goals and deadlines.

Examples of cyber-bullying include:

- Sharing denigrating and humiliating things about the target by mass email or mass chat.
- Spreading lies or gossip about the target on social media.
- Sending threatening or harassing text messages or emails directly to the target audience.
- Publishing and/or circulating personal details or other information aimed at humiliating the target.

Examples of sexual harassment include

- Deliberate and unsolicited sexual advances or physical contact or unwelcome unnecessarily close in physical proximity.
- Sexually oriented comments or remarks about a person's appearance or physical features.
- Invitations to social activities or "dates" if they persist after the recipient has declined such invitations.
- Crude, suggestive and obscene language or gestures, or the telling of risqué or obscene sexual jokes or stories.
- The exhibition of materials of a sexually oriented nature in the workplace.

Examples of discriminatory behavior or treatment include:

- Giving less favorable treatment based on gender, status, or other personal characteristics.
- Not recommending or considering the target for promotion or other advancement on grounds of a protected characteristic.

- Giving more favorable performance appraisals to staff of one gender, and not because of individual performance.
- Social exclusion is based on a person's personal characteristics.
- Denigrating cultural or religious festivals or making derogatory comments about an individual's beliefs.
- Dismissive treatment or the expression of stereotypical assumptions about a group to which the individual belongs.