

Departmental and lab codes of conduct are **foundational tools for building safe, inclusive, and productive academic and research environments**. They set clear expectations, reduce conflict, and foster a culture of respect and accountability. Here's why they are so important:

1. Establishing Clear Expectations

- **Removes ambiguity:** Outlines acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, helping everyone know the “rules of engagement.”
 - **Reduces power imbalances:** Particularly important in academia, where hierarchies (faculty, postdocs, students) can create uncertainty around what is appropriate.
 - **Supports fairness:** Ensures consistent standards for all, regardless of position or background.
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2. Fostering Safety and Respect

- **Prevents harassment and discrimination:** Codifies zero tolerance for harmful behaviour and reinforces EDIA (Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility) principles.
 - **Creates psychological safety:** When people feel respected and protected, they are more likely to contribute ideas and collaborate openly.
 - **Addresses microaggressions:** Provides mechanisms for recognizing and addressing subtle, often unintentional, exclusionary behaviours.
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3. Protecting Academic Integrity

- **Sets professional standards:** Encourages ethical conduct in research, data management, authorship, and collaboration.
- **Mitigates conflicts of interest:** Ensures transparency in decision-making, resource allocation, and credit assignment.
- **Supports compliance:** Aligns departmental and lab practices with institutional policies and legal requirements.

4. Improving Conflict Resolution

- **Provides a reference point:** A code offers a shared framework for resolving disputes objectively.
- **Empowers bystanders:** Makes it easier for individuals to intervene or report misconduct because expectations are clearly documented.
- **Reduces escalation:** Clear processes prevent small conflicts from becoming major disputes.

5. Enhancing Productivity and Collaboration

- **Encourages teamwork:** When norms are defined, collaboration becomes smoother and more efficient.
- **Promotes inclusion:** Creates an environment where everyone—regardless of background—feels they belong and can thrive.
- **Supports mentorship:** Clarifies boundaries and responsibilities for supervisors and trainees.

6. Building a Positive Reputation

- **Strengthens recruitment:** Students, staff, and faculty are more likely to join and stay in departments and labs with well-articulated, supportive cultures.
- **Aligns with funding expectations:** Many funding agencies increasingly expect demonstrable commitments to EDIA and safe working environments.
- **Enhances public trust:** Demonstrates that research is conducted responsibly and ethically.

✅ **Bottom line:** Codes of conduct are not just bureaucratic documents; they are **cultural blueprints** that protect individuals, build trust, and create an environment where science and learning can thrive.

Examples follow below

Department of Chemistry and Biology

Code of Conduct for Research and Graduate Studies

Endorsed by Department of Chemistry and Biology Council, May 23rd, 2024

The Department of Chemistry and Biology at Toronto Metropolitan University is committed to establishing, supporting, and maintaining an inclusive culture and environment for research and graduate studies. We recognize that doing so requires deliberate and explicit contributions from all the members of our community, including graduate students, undergraduate students, postdoctoral fellows, faculty members, and staff. In this pursuit of an inclusive and accessible community, we outline some key values that guide our actions:

- Respect for others.
- Respect and acceptance of the self-described identity of others.
- Kindness, care, and compassion.
- Openness and commitment to listen to others.
- Humility.
- Being welcoming, constructive, and nurturing.
- Equity.

To encourage members of the Department to uphold these values, we have specifically identified the following behaviours and actions to which we all commit to adhering:

- We strive to learn about cultures and backgrounds other than our own and act respectfully and considerately.
- We understand that consent is never implied and that people may have different boundaries. We acknowledge and affirm that any behaviour such as touching, hugging or other physical contact requires consent each and every time. Consent can be withdrawn at any time. Withdrawal of consent should be clearly communicated. Consent cannot be assumed based on silence (or the absence of “no”).

- We aim to create, support, and maintain spaces where every member of a group or team can express their views in a respectful manner, and have other members of that group or team actively listen to and consider different viewpoints to foster a balanced dialogue where no single voice overwhelms the conversation, allowing everyone the chance to be heard and understood.
- We strive to make all research spaces accessible to individuals with disabilities. We commit to ongoing consultation with members of our community with disabilities to address and adapt to their needs effectively.
- We aim to provide constructive feedback when appropriate, and in doing so will:
 - provide criticism of ideas and not individuals.
 - strive to consider the impact of our body language and other unconscious forms of communication when providing feedback, not just spoken language.
- We commit to acting ethically and equitably, in a manner that minimizes negative impact on others. For example, this can include consideration of the impact on work created or generated for others as a consequence of our actions, and striving to limit such impact on others when possible.
- We strive to support a culture where mistakes are valued as learning experiences, and to create spaces that are safe for failure, as much as reasonably possible.
- We recognize the mental health challenges that can accompany research work. We are dedicated to creating support mechanisms that promote mental well-being, including providing information on mental health resources. We also acknowledge the value of discussions about mental health that may be initiated by a supervisor, which can be an effective strategy for supporting mental health.
- We assign significant value to supporting professional development in Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility. Further, we aim to advertise such training opportunities on campus to our community, and/or to provide opportunities for such training within the Department.
- We understand that there is sometimes the need for “difficult conversations”, which can include discussing certain types of unwanted or harmful behaviour with others, or discussing inequities in resources or access to support. We understand that initiating these conversations, as their name suggests, can be challenging and requires knowledge of how to conduct them effectively and respectfully. We are committed to starting and engaging in these discussions in a direct and respectful

manner. Further, the Department aims to provide training to all members of the community in having such conversations, such as through an annual workshop.

- We recognize that discussions of this Code of Conduct such as within individual research teams within the Department are valuable, and that developing parallel Codes of Conduct within these units can be a valuable complement to this Code of Conduct document.

TMU Senate Policy 61 and HR policy define unacceptable behaviours. In addition to these, we also specifically identify the following unacceptable behaviours:

- Harassment of any kind, whether on the basis of gender, gender identity and expression, age, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, race, ethnicity, religion (or lack thereof), socio-economic circumstance, academic field of study or background, or technology choices.
- Unwelcome sexual advances, including inappropriate or unwelcome advances as well as jokes or comments.
- Physical contact or simulated contact without consent.
- Violence, threats of violence, or attempts at intimidation.
- Gratuitous sexual images, language, or behaviour.
- Deliberate misgendering.
- Use of media (including social media) to target individuals or groups, including to reveal information about others that is not intended to be shared.
- Disruption of or exclusion from community events.
- Deliberately demeaning or disrespectful behaviour or conduct.

We recognize the need for mechanisms to report and address any experiences that are not consistent with this Code of Conduct, or that otherwise impact the intention to establish, support, and maintain an inclusive culture and environment for research and graduate studies. We provide a clear assurance that all reports of misconduct, including harassment and discrimination, will be treated with seriousness and confidentiality. We expect that anyone who reports misconduct or participates in an investigation will be protected from

retaliation. We also recognize that reporting and seeking support is made challenging in situations where there is a real or perceived power imbalance. The following mechanisms are available for reporting and addressing such experiences, which will be taken with utmost care and importance, and in the strictest confidence:

- Contact the [University Ombudsperson](#), “a place for students to come to if you have a problem or a conflict with the university”
- Contact TMU [Consent Comes First](#), which provides “free, confidential, trauma-informed, healing-centred support to Toronto Metropolitan students affected by sexual violence and other forms of gender-based violence”.
- Contact the Molecular Science GCU (contact details to be added)
- Contact the Department of Chemistry and Biology EDI committee (contact details to be added)
- Contact Chemistry and Biology Department Chair: [Dr. Costin Antonescu](#)
- Graduate students: Contact your Graduate Program Director: Mol Sc: [Dr. Sarah Sabatinos](#); En Sci Man: [Dr. Andrew Laursen](#). Alternatively, contact [Dr. Nancy Walton](#), Associate Dean, Student Affairs YSGPS for matters where you believe there will be a conflict of interest with your GPD.
- Contact your Associate Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: [Dr. Russell Viirre](#)
- Undergraduate students: contact your Undergraduate Program Directors: Chemistry: [Dr. Stephen Wylie](#); Biomedical Science: [Dr. Joseph McPhee](#), Biology: [Dr. Vadim Bostan](#)
- Contact your Dean: [Dr. David Cramb](#), for concerns that you think should be escalated beyond the Department of Chemistry and Biology.
- Contact Dimensions Faculty Lead: [Dr. Stefania Impellizzeri](#), for support related to Equity Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility concerns related to research within the Faculty of Science at TMU
- Contact the [Human Rights Office](#) at TMU, which “offers free and confidential complaint resolution services to university students, faculty, staff and community members based on the Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Policy and the Sexual Violence Policy.” Alternatively, consider contacting: [Human Rights Legal](#)

[Support Centre](#), which provides “legal advice or assistance with respect to a matter covered by the Ontario Human Rights Code”

This Code of Conduct for Research and Graduate Studies in the Department of Chemistry and Biology will be subject of input from the community, discussion, and revision, for example on an annual basis or as input is received.

Koivisto Group Code of Conduct

1. **Professionalism in the workplace.** Regardless of experience level, every lab member is to be treated with respect and their contributions are to be welcomed:
 - Be mindful of reasonable work hours
 - No gossiping about other lab members
 - Be mindful that your free time may not be others' free time.
 - Clean up your workspace and communal spaces and always be willing to clean up someone else's mess
 - *e.g.*, if the drying rack is full, take some time to clear it out, put materials back where they belong, empty base bath if full, etc.
 - do not put dirty glassware away if you do not have time to clean it
 - While it is important to factor in time to clean, sometimes things come up. Be sure to communicate with others or send a message in the group chat if you must leave suddenly – we can kindly help each other out in these cases
 - Be mindful about your volume (personal meetings and phone calls) and avoid distracting conversations when others are trying to be productive.
 - Limit social activities in the lab when other members of the team are trying to be productive (except for group scheduled events)
 - Follow all safety procedures
 - Use all equipment and PPE responsibly
 - Accept responsibility for mistakes made and disclose it to your supervisor
 - Be mindful of the power dynamics (in our lab and in TAing), such that you never abuse your perceived or actual authority
 - Never avoid difficult conversations
 - “Don’t treat people the way you want to be treated” - **INSTEAD - TREAT PEOPLE THE WAY THEY WANT TO BE TREATED**
2. **The goal of your work is to learn and grow.** It is the responsibility of every lab member to collaborate with one another, help others when needed, and to provide resources that may be helpful. All questions are good questions.
3. **Be mindful of your language.**
 - Comments or jokes at the expense of others are not acceptable.
 - If you feel angry or upset, take a moment to collect your thoughts to avoid using angry or aggressive tones with others.

- Be aware of the personal pronouns of lab members and do not deliberately misgender them when speaking to or about them.
 - The words you choose may impact others, be mindful.
 - Offensive behaviour or comments related to gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, mental illness, neuro(a)typicality, physical appearance, body size, age, race, ethnicity, religion, or a person's lifestyle choices and practices are not welcome.
 - Don't be afraid to speak up if you think that something was said that was offensive. We are all learning and should be receptive to feedback.
 - Conversations in the group should be in English, so that nobody feels excluded.
4. **Any form of harassment is not tolerated.** This includes:
- Unwanted physical, sexual, verbal, psychological (ex. gaslighting, passive aggressive behaviour, etc.), or repeated unwanted social contact.
 - Consent is not implied, and if you are unsure whether your behaviour towards another person is welcome, ask them. If you are asked to stop, do so.
 - Do not take photographs of others without their permission.
5. **Ensure every member has the opportunity to participate both within the lab and in social group settings.** In group meetings, encourage friendly participation. Do not interrupt others; hold comments until members have finished speaking. Be considerate of dietary restrictions, familial obligations, religious observances etc.
- Social events will include multiple types of team bonding (for differently abled individuals, etc.), including social events where non-alcoholic beverages are available, sporting events, outdoorsy events, etc. to ensure that if somebody cannot participate in a specific activity, they do not feel excluded from the group. Group members should speak up if they feel uncomfortable with a certain activity.
6. **If you see something inappropriate happening, do not be complicit.** If you see a problematic situation occurring and believe the situation requires further intervention (and don't feel comfortable acting) please reach out to Bryan so, he can encourage you. It is a bystander's responsibility to speak up.
7. **Be mindful of feelings and show empathy to others**
- Burnout
 - Difficult day in the lab
 - Workload and course load management

- Academic stress
- Personal challenges including physical and emotional pain and trauma. There are some people that are battling things that are not visually obvious.
- Financial challenges
- Feelings of isolation
- Shared Space – This is a collaborative environment designated for the team. While we seek to maintain an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere, visitors, including personal guests should be introduced to the lab team, so they are not strangers.
 - Furthermore, guests should be mindful of security protocols and are expected to visit for reasonable time limits.

8. **It is possible that Bryan may unintentionally be insensitive** (perhaps as a critique to motivate you, but sometimes to fill awkward silences). If you feel comfortable privately correcting him, you are **STRONGLY** encouraged to do so. Otherwise send a lab delegate on your behalf. He wants to be a better person and welcomes the feedback.

Example of a conference code of conduct courtesy of Dr. Stefania Impellizzeri and the NanoOntario, 2025 conference organizing committee

Conference Code of Conduct

The Nano Ontario Conference & Exhibition is committed to providing a safe, supportive and welcoming environment for all participants. The conference offers an excellent opportunity for members and attendees to connect, learn, expand, and advance their careers. At all times, meeting attendees, volunteers, and staff should act in accordance with this Code of Conduct across all conference activities.

By participating in this event, you agree to:

1. Engage respectfully with all individuals involved in the meeting, including attendees, volunteers, management, speakers and coordinators.
2. Ensure a professional, collaborative and constructive dialogue, avoiding personal attacks, derogatory remarks, or disruptive behaviour.
3. Be conscious of critiquing ideas, not individuals.
4. Accept that disruptive, harassing or other inappropriate statements or behaviour toward an individual is unacceptable.
5. Refrain from engaging in unacceptable behaviour.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour include:

- Disruption or obstruction of any meeting activity or social events.
- Physical or verbal harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying, discrimination in any form, or abuse of any attendee.
- Intimidation, threats or coercion.
- Conduct or knowingly creating a condition that threatens or endangers any person.
- Conduct that is, or is reasonably seen to be, humiliating or demeaning to another person.
- Aiding or encouraging others to act in a manner prohibited under these guidelines.
- Verbal comments based on gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance and dress, body size, socioeconomic status, education background,

marital status, and personal characteristics protected under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (race, religion, national origin); inappropriate use of nudity and/or sexual images in public spaces or in presentations; threatening, stalking, and harassing of any attendee at the event or meeting, including speakers, volunteers, staff, service providers, and guests; unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favours; and harassment intended and communicated in a joking manner.

- In addition, participants are asked to adhere to the following rules:
 - The recording or transmission of any education sessions, presentations, demos, videos, or content in any format is strictly prohibited.
 - Disruption of presentations during sessions, in the exhibit hall, or at other events organized throughout the meeting. All participants must comply with the moderator's instructions.
 - Any direct selling of products/services offered by speakers, industry partners, or consultants in any public area is prohibited. Many engagement conversations are based on knowledge and expertise and are not categorized as a direct sales pitch. Selling must be conducted during mutually agreed-upon private conversations.

This is a drug- and smoke-free event. The use of illegal substances, smoking, and vaping is prohibited in conference spaces. Alcohol consumption is restricted to approved events for attendees aged 19+.

We take all reports of violations seriously. If you experience or witness any inappropriate behaviour, please contact one of the organizers or event staff. Reports will be handled confidentially. Violators may be subject to a warning about their behaviour, removal from the event without a refund, and exclusion from future events hosted by Toronto Metropolitan University.