

# International Pulsar Timing Array (IPTA) Anti-Harassment Policy

As an intellectual and creative endeavour, “*science cannot reach its full potential without diversity, and diversity cannot flourish in a culture of racism, discrimination and fear*<sup>1</sup>.”

Accordingly, the IPTA collaboration does not tolerate harassment of any form between its members and is committed to ensuring a working environment free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, bullying and retaliation. It is the responsibility of every IPTA member to prevent harassment from taking place and to give assistance to fellow IPTA members who perceive that they have been subject to harassment.

## Definition of harassment & Code of Conduct

The IPTA adopts the definition of *sexual harassment* and *other harassment* of the [Anti-Harassment Policy for Meetings and Activities of the American Astronomical Society and Divisions](#), and the [NANOGrav Anti-Harassment Policy](#).

*Sexual harassment refers to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Behavior and language that are welcome/acceptable to one person may be unwelcome/offensive to another. Consequently, individuals must use discretion to ensure that their words and actions communicate respect for others. This is especially important for those in positions of authority since individuals with lower rank or status may be reluctant to express their objections or discomfort regarding unwelcome behavior.*

*Sexual harassment does not refer to occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature. It refers to behavior that is not welcome, is personally offensive, debilitates morale, and therefore, interferes with work effectiveness. The following are examples of behavior that, when unwelcome, may constitute sexual harassment: sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions; verbal comments or physical actions of a sexual nature; sexually degrading words used to describe an individual; a display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; sexually explicit jokes; unnecessary touching.*

*Harassment and bullying on the basis of any other protected characteristic is also strictly prohibited. This conduct includes, but is not limited to the following: epithets, slurs, or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts (in person or via e-mail); denigrating jokes and display or circulation of written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group.*

*Even in cases where an individual victim cannot be identified, lewd, offensive, or inappropriate behavior may be construed as harassment and cannot be tolerated in a professional, collegial environment.*

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.swinburne.edu.au/news/latest-news/2016/01/how-to-stop-the-sexual-harassment-of-women-in-science.php>

## Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all attendees of IPTA-sanctioned activities, including scientists, students, guests, staff, contractors, and exhibitors, participating in scientific collaborations and discussions (in person or via e-mail), and in scientific sessions, tours, and social events of any IPTA meeting or other activity. The policy is intended to ensure a healthy working environment, and to provide support to victims of any form of harassment or bullying.

IPTA members asked to stop harassing behaviour are expected to comply immediately. Harassment may constitute a willful and/or egregious violation of IPTA rules. If a member of the IPTA engages in behaviour that meets the above definition of harassment and/or bullying, one or all members of the Diversity Committee may contact the dedicated office at the home institution of the alleged offender, and the IPTA Steering Committee may take actions limiting the alleged offender's participation in IPTA-sanctioned activities. In the event of a complaint, one or all the members of the Diversity Committee will act as a liaison between the victim/complainant and the home institution of the alleged offender, if desired. The Diversity Committee *will not* launch any formal investigations (see "Reporting Incidents & Investigations").

## Reporting Incidents & Investigations

The IPTA emphasizes that harassment and/or bullying can happen to anyone and for any reason, regardless of gender, academic level, sexual orientation, race/nationality, religion (or lack thereof) or any other aspect, and that anyone who feels they have experienced or witnessed harassment should feel supported in reporting the incident(s) in accordance with this policy.

In case of harassment, discrimination and/or bullying, the affected party is encouraged to speak to one or more members of the Diversity Committee (see below for contact details). Advice for reporting sexual or other forms of harassment is available on the website of the Committee on the Status of Women in Astronomy (CSWA): [www.aas.org/cswa/](http://www.aas.org/cswa/). Below is a summary:

- Write everything down (times, places, nature of the incident, and comments made).
- Save e-mails, notes, etc.
- Tell someone you trust.
- In the case that an investigation is pursued, it is likely that you will be asked to write and sign an official letter of complaint documenting the nature of the harassment and/or discrimination. Be as detailed as possible. Supporting documentation and statements from witnesses should be submitted with your letter.

Any individual covered by the IPTA Anti-Harassment Policy who believes that they may have been the subject of harassment and/or bullying, or who believes that they witnessed such an act, is encouraged to contact members of the Diversity Committee. The affected

individual(s) is not required or expected to discuss their concern with the alleged offender.

The contacted member(s) of the Diversity Committee will gain verbal consent from the affected individual before reporting the claim to other members of the Diversity Committee or to any other third parties. The claim will be treated as confidential, and will be considered seriously and discreetly by the members of the Diversity Committee. The members of the Diversity Committee will provide immediate support and discuss the case promptly. We stress that no parties will be notified without the consent of the affected individual.

If a formal investigation is required, this will be performed by qualified individuals at the dedicated office of the home institution of the alleged offender(s).

We here restate that all reports will be treated confidentially and seriously.

### **Current members of the IPTA Diversity Committee**

The Diversity Committee is made of two members from each PTA. The current composition:

From NANOGrav: Thankful Cromartie ([thankful.cromartie@gmail.com](mailto:thankful.cromartie@gmail.com)), Emmanuel Fonseca ([efonseca@physics.mcgill.ca](mailto:efonseca@physics.mcgill.ca))

From EPTA: Delphine Perrodin ([delphineaz@gmail.com](mailto:delphineaz@gmail.com)), Chiara Mingarelli ([mingarelli@gmail.com](mailto:mingarelli@gmail.com))

From PPTA: Paul Lasky ([paul.lasky@monash.edu](mailto:paul.lasky@monash.edu)), Zhu Xingjiang ([zhuxingjiang@gmail.com](mailto:zhuxingjiang@gmail.com))

### **Useful Resources**

NANOGrav Policy: <http://nanograv.org/astronomers/membership.html#harassment>

LIGO Policy: [https://dcc.ligo.org/public/0115/M1400285/003/lsc\\_harassment-final.pdf](https://dcc.ligo.org/public/0115/M1400285/003/lsc_harassment-final.pdf)