

## Respectful Workplace Policy

### Overview

The **Alberta Post-Secondary Application System (APAS)**, its Board of Directors, and its management promote a respectful work environment free of **discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment)**, and **violence**. As members of this community, any staff member who is aware of acts of discrimination, harassment, or violence are encouraged to take the appropriate actions required to end this behaviour. As an organization, APAS may address these issues informally, through mediation, or through disciplinary action, including but not limited to dismissal. This policy is not intended to affect any legal remedies staff members may wish to pursue with regards to discrimination, harassment, or violence.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the APAS work environment is free of discrimination, harassment, and violence.

### POLICY

#### 1. GENERAL

It is the policy of APAS that acts of discrimination, harassment, or violence committed by any member of, visitor to, or group within the APAS community are strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.

This policy is not intended to preclude the right of any individual to access legal remedies, which may be available including those under *The Alberta Human Rights Code, Criminal Code of Canada, Occupational Health and Safety Act, Regulated Health Professionals Act*, or civil action.

#### 2. APPLICATION

This policy applies to all APAS employees - full-time, part-time, and temporary, and persons acting on behalf of APAS, such as contractors and consultants.

The policy applies to all APAS work environments including its premises, communications systems, and areas outside of APAS where employees are performing job responsibilities (e.g. conferences, seminars, post-secondary institutions sites) or any location where the contact will have a direct impact on an employee.

#### 3. RESPONSIBILITIES

As an organization, APAS will provide employees with education related to discrimination, harassment, and violence; encourage staff to report incidents of discrimination, harassment, or violence; and ensure reported complaints are investigated.

APAS management will protect their employees from discrimination, harassment, and violence by stopping any incidents they become aware of, responding immediately to complaints, disciplining those found contravening this policy, and by performing their duties in a manner that does not contravene this policy. Failure of management to react to either complaints or witnessed cases of discrimination, harassment, or violence may result in disciplinary action.

APAS staff will report any instances of discrimination, harassment, or violence they are aware of and will perform their work in a manner that does not contravene this policy.

**PROCEDURE:**

1. An employee who has a complaint alleging violation of this policy should make their disapproval known to the harasser and request all that offensive behaviour cease.
2. Employees exposed to potential or actual situations of violence in the workplace should take one or all of the following actions, depending on the severity and location of the situation:
  - Leave the area immediately.
  - Lock office doors and remain inside to call building security.
  - Call for assistance from a co-worker, building security staff, or 911.
3. The complainant should maintain a personal written record of the alleged nature of the harassment, discrimination or violence, date(s), time(s), behavior, and witness(es).
4. If the actions have not ceased, the complainant is encouraged to make a written complaint to the Executive Director, or the Chair of the Board of Directors, as appropriate. The Executive Director will investigate the complaint.
5. All complaints and investigations will be handled as confidentially as practical and appropriate under the circumstances. APAS shall make every effort to safeguard the confidentiality of all records relating to complaints, including contents of meetings, interviews, results of investigations, and other relevant material.
6. Where an employee of APAS is performing job responsibilities and feels harassed, discriminated against, or violated in some form by a client or a member of the public, they are to discuss this issue immediately with the Executive Director to determine the most appropriate course of action.
7. Any employee who has violated the APAS policy against discrimination, harassment, and violence will be disciplined according to the severity of the actions, up to and including dismissal.
8. Any false and fabricated charges against innocent employees, which undermine working relationships and personal dignity, will not be condoned. Any employee found to be engaged in such behaviour will be subject to disciplinary action.
9. When the facts upon which the complaint is based occurred more than six months before the complaint is made, the Executive Director will decide whether to deal with this complaint.

**DEFINITIONS**

<b>Discrimination</b>	Discrimination is any act or omission based on race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, physical disability, mental disability, marital status, age, ancestry, place of origin, family status, source of income, sexual orientation, or political belief when that act or omission results in loss of or limit on opportunities to work or which offends the dignity of the person.
<b>Harassment</b>	Harassment is conduct or comments that are intimidating, threatening, demeaning, or abusive and may be accompanied by direct or implied threats to status or job. Harassment can occur between people of differing authority or between people of similar authority. Harassment may be directed at an individual or at a group. Harassment has the impact of creating a work environment that is hostile and limits individuals in their pursuit of their work goals.

<p><b>Sexual Harassment</b></p>	<p>Sexual harassment is a form of prohibited conduct, specifically gender discrimination. Examples of sexual harassment include stalking, threatening, touching, display of pornographic materials, demands for sexual favours, and suggestive remarks or innuendos.</p>
<p><b>Violence</b></p>	<p>Violence, whether at a work site or work related, means the threatened, attempted, or actual conduct of a person that causes or is likely to cause physical injury.</p>
<p><b>Work Site</b></p>	<p>A location where an employee is, or is likely to be, engaged in any occupation and includes any vehicle or mobile equipment used by an employee in an occupation.</p>

