

Exciton Science Misconduct Reporting Policy and Procedure

Overview

Exciton Science expects professional and appropriate conduct from its members at all times as outlined in the Exciton Science Code of Conduct. This involves scientific and ethical integrity, respectful behaviour towards others and equality of opportunity and treatment for everyone. Members of Exciton Science are expected to work proactively to promote good professional conduct within the Centre and our scientific community and to help each other to resolve issues, if they occur.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to establish the procedures that will be followed by Exciton Science in the event of misconduct being reported either against an Exciton Science member or an attendee of an Exciton Science organised event.

Scope

The scope of this policy is limited to:

1. Members or guests of Exciton Science
2. Grievances linked to or based on deviations or violations from Exciton Science Code of Conduct

Definitions

Exciton Science Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee member – A member of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC) of the ARC Centre of Excellence in Exciton Science. Members are listed on the Exciton Science website's 'EDI' page. Contact equity_diversity@excitonscience.com to reach all committee members.

Senior Exciton Science Members – A Chief Investigator, Associate Investigator, and or, Chief Operating Officer.

Exciton Science Responsible Delegate – Any member of the EDIC, Senior Member of Exciton Science – such as a Chief Investigator or Associate Investigator – or Professional Staff team member.

Exciton Science Partner University – A university named in the Exciton Science Participants Agreement or any university where an Exciton Science member is employed or enrolled.

Partner Organisation – An organisation named at Schedule A of the ARC Funding Agreement with the University of Melbourne for the ARC Centre of Excellence in Exciton Science or a named Exciton Science Affiliate Organisation, such as a Connect Program partner.

Reporting a Violation

While minor concerns can often be resolved by discussion with the parties involved, if appropriate, if the affected member is not able, or does not feel empowered to do this, they are encouraged to seek help from

- a trusted colleague
- the activity organiser
- a member of the Exciton Science Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee
- a Senior Exciton Science Member
- a member of Exciton Science Professional Staff team; or
- an Exciton Science Responsible Delegate.

While this should be done as soon as possible, the fact that there has been a delay should not be used as a reason not to act or report a violation.

The purpose of the Exciton Science Responsible Delegate is to be a point of contact/liaison to assist and support someone who may have grounds for a complaint. The Exciton Science Responsible Delegates commit to supporting anyone who raises a concern by listening to them, taking their concern seriously, considering their wishes, and by acting through the referral of the complainant to the correct channels for professional support and or making a formal complaint to the appropriate university.

The role of assessment and review of complaints lies with the Exciton Science partner university of the complainant. Therefore, if the complainant seeks to move forward with lodging a formal complaint with either their home institution, or the institution of the respondent, the Exciton Science Responsible Delegate will refer the complainant to the relevant HR department at the Exciton Science partner university or organisation. All further action will be handled in accordance with the relevant university or organisation's policy.

Managing Unacceptable Behaviour

A formal report of misconduct or potential misconduct is not required for an employer to manage unacceptable behaviour. Action may be taken by a Senior Exciton Science member to manage and minimise damaging behaviour through conversations with the accused.

Management of problem behaviour does not necessarily need to be managed through a formal HR misconduct reporting process, and advice on mediation and conciliation is available to all members.

Senior Exciton Science Members may take actions which they deem necessary, in line with the principles of conciliation and their own university or organisational guidelines, values and principles, to manage a situation in the interests of all members of Exciton Science.

Assisting Delegates in Reporting Behaviour

The Exciton Science Responsible Delegate may speak to another member of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, and or a Senior Exciton Science member if appropriate, to seek further advice on how to best assist the complainant, and while they may relay details of the incident, no identifying attributes will be disclosed unless the complainant provides express consent.

Anyone who experiences, observes, or has knowledge of a violation of the Exciton Science Code of Conduct can bring it to the attention of one of the Exciton Science Responsible Delegates. It can also be reported to a representative of the university, if appropriate.

It is acknowledged that a person may find it difficult to discuss a concern or make a statement, in which case they are encouraged to seek the help of a trusted friend and/or seek professional help from their workplace or university, trained counsellor, or another source. Exciton Science Responsible Delegates can guide the person where to seek help from within their University.

Misconduct reports can be made in confidence with no further action undertaken against the accused. The Exciton Science Responsible Delegate must ensure that the person reporting the offending behaviour is appropriately advised of the support services available to them, as well as any options to pursue the matter further if they wish.

Exciton Science Events

If an Exciton Science Responsible Delegate is notified of a situation, which presents the risk of harm to the Exciton Science community, they should report the behaviour to an appropriate Senior Exciton Science Member (the COO or a CI), with the express consent of the complainant, so that immediate action can be undertaken to reduce and prevent any further harm or risk to any member of the Exciton Science community.

In the event that a breach of the code of conduct has been reported or witnessed at an Exciton Science event, and it is believed by the appropriate Senior Exciton Science Members to require immediate action, the requisite senior person is urged to take action and is granted full discretion, with no prejudice to further judgement, to ask the accused to leave the event as soon as possible.

It is important to emphasise that these actions are entirely at the discretion of the senior Exciton Science Member, and confidentiality will be of highest priority.

Consequences

Consequences for unacceptable behaviour are complex and varied and will be made in accordance with the principles of managing unacceptable behaviour as outlined above, or on the recommendation of a university's HR department.