

Global Young Academy (GYA)

Code of Professional Conduct

June 2022

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## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AGM Annual General Meeting

EC Executive Committee

ECR Early Career Researcher

GYA Global Young Academy

GM General Meeting

MD Managing Director

# 1. Introduction and Purpose

We, the members, alumni and Office staff of the Global Young Academy (GYA), are committed to providing an environment that fosters the exchange of scientific ideas and open debate while providing a safe platform for Early-Career Researchers (ECRs) to express their voices.

We are committed to equal opportunities and treatment for all members and alumni, regardless of race, colour, national or ethnic origin, religion or religious belief, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, disabilities and medical conditions, or any other reason not related to scientific merit.

[1]

The GYA as an organisation creates and promotes environments free from discrimination and harassment. All GYA members, alumni and Office staff are expected to uphold scientific integrity and professional ethical standards and comply with the community's agreed standards of behaviour.

This Code of Professional Conduct (hereafter *The Code*) aims to establish guidelines and agreed on procedures for the professional and responsible bearing of GYA members and alumni (in conjunction with the GYA Alumni Policy). *The Code* requires GYA members to conduct themselves with dignity, honesty, integrity and respect when interacting with other members, alumni, Office staff, partners of the GYA or the general public.

The specific objectives of the Code are:

- To formalise the GYA's commitment to its ethical and guiding principles;
- To outline its guidelines, regulations and principles;
- To establish transparent, fair and agreed-on procedures to follow in case of any violation of those principles.

# 2. Organisational Scope

This *Code* applies to all GYA members, alumni and Office staff.

This *Code* is presented and approved by the GYA's Executive Committee 2021/22 and endorsed by the General Assembly in 2022. It incorporates the Ombudsperson concept, which the 2020/21 EC discussed and was confirmed by the 2021 AGM.

## 2.1. Code life cycle

This *Code* is to be evaluated by GYA's Executive Committee **at a minimum every two (2) years** based on its success in dealing with any cases. The outcome of the first evaluation is to be shared at the AGM 2024, if not earlier. If the assessment concludes that *The Code* is still valid, it is to be renewed for another two (2) years (or as the need arises). If the EC identifies substantial shortcomings, *The Code* will be revised and the amendments presented at the following AGM.

## 3. Principles and values of the GYA

These guidelines are based on the fundamental principles and values of the GYA, as outlined in the GYA's Constitution. There is a clear emphasis on diversity and respect, goals of equity and equality [2] and a mission to have inclusive and impactful policies that maximise the voice and role of young researchers. Of particular relevance are sections 2.2.2 and 3.8.3 of the Constitution, which were developed into the wording below in GYA's annual membership call (text from 2021):

*"The GYA is a global organisation that places a high value on its diversity. We encourage applications from all qualified candidates. All applicants receive consideration and will not be discriminated against with regard to race, colour, ethnicity, religion, creed, sex, marital status, ancestry, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, physical or mental disabilities, or other factors. We especially encourage women and applicants from different minority groups and from diverse disciplines including the natural, physical and social sciences as well as the arts and humanities and people working in government, industry, and non-governmental sectors to apply."*

But we not only strive for diversity in our membership; we, via the Constitution, call for active engagement, for *"developing policies to remove obstacles to participation in science for women, racial, ethnic or sexual minorities, and other under-represented groups"*.

In addition to the principles of **internationalism and diversity**, which are also spelt out as the first principle in the preamble of the Constitution, the GYA is also **independent**, meaning that it operates independently from governments, national senior and young academies, funders, and businesses as a not-for-profit organisation. As researchers, the GYA expects evidence-based solutions to society's problems. Our academy seeks to contribute innovative and science-based policy ideas to the debates of concern to young scientists and the wider community. GYA members **strive for the highest quality** in their activities and jointly work for excellent contributions to science and public service.

The values from the Constitution were reiterated and strengthened by the [Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Young Academies \[3\]](#), which the GYA initiated and signed together with 35 other Young Academies in November 2019.

The GYA Constitution recognises the need to protect the values of the Constitution in point 6.9:

*“The Executive Committee can, by a unanimous decision, suspend a member who seriously damages the interests of the GYA until a termination of the member's membership is voted on in the following General Meeting.”*

By establishing this *Code*, we understand that we need more instruments to ensure that we fulfil the claims of our guiding principles as laid out in the Constitution. Expelling a member should always be the last resort. The GYA defines itself as a learning organisation, and as a diverse and young community, we are constantly searching for a better understanding of each other and believe in restorative justice when things have gone wrong. We may come across clear violations, e.g., against our academic principles, where we can quickly agree on how we need to react as a young academy. Dealing with conflict between individuals' cultural or religious beliefs and our principles poses a more complex challenge. This Code outlines expectations for how such disputes should be managed. The aim is to offer instruments to guide us if the universality and interdependence of the fundamental human rights enshrined in our founding document are challenged.

## **4. Definitions of offences and violations of principles**

This section aims to outline the boundaries of what is considered ethical behaviour by the GYA. The list provides definitions of some critical violations of GYA's principles, but by no means it is exhaustive.

### **4.1. Intellectual property right violation – plagiarism**

“Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work or ideas as your own, with or without their consent, by incorporating it into your work without full acknowledgement. All published and unpublished materials are covered under this definition, whether in manuscript, printed or electronic form”. [4]

In particular, our definition of plagiarism is:

- To steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own.
- To use (another's production) without crediting the source.
- To commit literary theft.

- To present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source. [5]

We consider and investigate any plagiarism within GYA documents. If a plagiarism charge is being investigated by a member's institute/university/or any other recognised body, the member is expected to inform the GYA Office immediately.

#### **4.2. Falsification of information in the application process**

Fake or misleading information in the context of the GYA is defined as a member giving any false information to the GYA officially, for example, during the application, a nomination, or election process or any other GYA activity, regarding their personal information and qualifications, including (but not limited to) degrees, publications, achievements, awards, background, etc.

#### **4.3. Criminal offences**

While some matters of fact are universally accepted as "criminal offences" such as murder, rape, illegal drug trafficking, etc., some are criminal in a country-specific manner. We understand that some acts, such as anti-government protests, etc., might be considered crimes only in some countries. We are also aware that fabricated allegations might exist. [6] Hence, members should immediately report to the GYA Office or the Ombudsperson if they face any criminal charges. However, whether the same will be considered a violation of GYA principles or not will be decided by an Ad Hoc Advisory Committee as stipulated below.

#### **4.4. Discrimination**

Discrimination is defined as any action or behaviour that results in adverse or preferential treatment related to but not limited to race, colour, religion, sex (including sexual orientation, gender identity, or pregnancy), national origin, age, disability, language or genetic information (including family medical history). In particular, an individual's right to life, dignity, property, etc., cannot be denied based on the grounds mentioned above.

#### **4.5. Sexual harassment**

Sexual harassment is referred to as an act about gender or sexual identity that is unwelcome, sexual advances, a request for sexual favour or other implicit or explicit conduct of a sexual nature that interferes with the target's ability to participate in GYA meetings and activities and their overall wellbeing [7]. Sexual harassment may include but is not limited to unwanted touching, offensive jokes with sexual connotations, sexual slurs, offensive objects or pictures with sexual connotations, etc. Sexual harassment is not acceptable and is grounds for report.

However, some actions may be inadvertent or only offensive within specific cultures. In a global organisation such as the GYA, respecting members' social and cultural differences is essential. An act that is considered a sexual advance/offence in one culture might not be considered as such in another. If any member objects to behaviour from another member, this objection must be respected - and this learning be evident in avoiding that behaviour going forward.

#### **4.6. Other harassment and unacceptable behaviour**

Harassment is unwelcome conduct (speech, act or behaviour) that is based on but not limited to race (including ethnicity and citizenship and national origin), colour, religion, sex (including sexual orientation, gender identity, or pregnancy), age, disability, body size, marital status, genetic information (including family medical history), or any other reason not related to scientific merit.

"Offensive conduct may include, but is not limited to, offensive jokes, slurs, epithets or name-calling, physical assaults or threats, intimidation, ridicule or mockery, insults or put-downs, offensive objects or pictures, stalking, unwelcome attention, and interference with work performance." [8].

Harassment in a team occurs when a team member or group of members feel threatened or get belittled by their colleagues or governing bodies. Behaviour acceptable to one person may not be acceptable to another, so use discretion to be sure that respect is communicated. Harassment intended in a joking manner that causes harm still constitutes unacceptable behaviour. Retaliation for reporting harassment is also a violation of this policy, as is reporting an incident in bad faith. [9]

In short, the members are committed to creating a supportive, respectful and tolerant environment and avoiding creating a negative environment that is intimidating, hostile, or offensive.

#### **4.7. Financial misconduct**

Any GYA members who receive funding from the GYA or any other source in the name of the GYA must provide accurate account details, including all earnings and spending, to the GYA Office. The GYA auditor will be responsible for the final check. No money can be used for spending on something that does not have prior approval from the competent authority. No money should be collected in the name of the GYA or for GYA activities without prior permission.

#### **4.8. Misconduct on GYA project delivery and commitments**

GYA members and alumni participate in projects and programmes of internal nature or cooperate with external partners with prior agreed outputs and outcomes, sometimes of strategic importance.



Any behaviour or decision that might deliberately jeopardise the progress of such projects and endanger completion and success is considered misconduct.

## **5. Conflicts of interest**

A "conflict of interest" is defined as follows by the OECD [10]: "An individual or a corporation (either private or governmental) is in a position to exploit his/her/their own professional or official capacity in some way for personal or corporate benefit." To prevent situations where a member's conduct is induced or appears to be induced by a conflict of interest or a potential conflict of interest, and determine whether a member's "interest" fits this category, a full disclosure of interests is mandatory. Alternatively, the members can recuse themselves from the situation where the potential conflict of interest exists.

Conflicts of interest are governed within the GYA by a Conflict of Interest Policy, which the EC enacted in August 2018. The policy aims to govern all internal decision-making processes. This document refers to this policy [11]

Referring to the GYA's new member selection process, the correct application of the conflict of interest policy stipulates that any member of the Membership Selection Committee is seen as an interested person as soon as they know the applicant or is at the same institution as the applicant. In applying the conflict of interest policy, these Committee members must recuse themselves from reviewing the candidate in question. In addition, present and former Co-Chairs and present EC members must refrain from writing letters of commendation for applicants to avoid casting doubt on the selection process.

## **6. Use of official confidential and personal information**

All GYA members and alumni who have access to information owned by the GYA are expected to know and understand the relevant access and privacy requirements and take measures to enforce the confidentiality and security of information throughout the organisation.

The GYA is committed to the careful and confidential use of personal information regarding its members and alumni. Access to and knowledge of the content of member and alumni records will be limited to persons who need the information for legitimate business or legal purposes.

Due to the GYA's legal seat within the EU, we are bound to apply the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in Germany (Datenschutzgrundverordnung). The following documents direct the GYA: (i) New member GDPR Document and (ii) [Privacy Policy](#) [12]

## **7. Virtual presence of GYA members and alumni**

### **7.1. Social media reporting on AGMs and other events**

To find a balance between the needs and expectations of speakers and attendees of GYA events, and to make the meetings a safe and comfortable space for everyone, the chair of the meeting will ask all attendees to adhere to the following guidelines before they tweet (or blog, or Instagram, or Pinterest, or Google+, or LinkedIn, or share information through any other communication platform).

At our AGMs and other public events, during the Keynote, Panel, and Member Lightning Talk sessions, we encourage open, respectful discussion of content on social media (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, Google+, etc.) and blogging platforms.

While the default policy during all public events is to allow open discussion of presentations on social media and blogging platforms, we respect any request from speakers not to share the contents of their presentations online. Speakers who do not wish to share their research on Twitter, Facebook, or other social networks should announce it before and during their presentation. We encourage speakers to use an opt-out Twitter image on every presentation slide to ensure the preference is known. [An example of an opt-out Twitter image can be found here.](#) [13]

GYA elections are an internal GYA-member process. Therefore, it is not appropriate to share the details on social media – for example, we do not share the number of votes scored by each candidate or whether there are run-off ballots. The final selection (successful candidates) can be announced and celebrated.

During all internal sessions and whenever in doubt, the [Chatham House Rule](#) [14] applies by default: participants are welcome to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor those of any other participant, should be revealed unless there is express permission to do so.

## **7.2. Group e- messaging platforms**

All GYA social messaging platforms (such as WhatsApp, Telegram, etc.) are fully self-administered by the membership and are not official communication channels. GYA members and alumni create and moderate unofficial groups around regions, working groups, activities and thematic areas.

The GYA leadership and Office do not control, monitor or endorse messaging platforms and social media outside of official emails, official GYA platforms in social media and the GYA website and intranet. However, if there is a breach of the GYA professional code of conduct, a case should be raised as described in section 10 of this *Code*.

- The information shared in GYA social media groups is considered informal private chats unless otherwise specified.
- Promote yourself and/or your organisation in moderation. We would love to follow your continued success. Please provide context so that others can join you in celebrating. However, the shared information is expected to be somehow related to GYA efforts.
- A more extended conversation with a single person can seem disrespectful to other members, particularly in a large group. For one-to-one discussion, consider the private chat option. A personal chat option should also be used for private conversation that does not concern a larger group of members.
- We understand that there are a range of cultures, beliefs and lived experiences within our community. We thrive on sharing and learning, and we are supportive. A respectful disagreement is a very foundation of seeking knowledge and understanding. Please maintain mutual respect while disagreeing and ensure a balance between a robust debate and what may be perceived as a needless provocation.
- People usually remember you based on what you post; feel free to be as generously pleasant as possible. Be mindful of how your thoughts and the words you use to express them might affect other people.

### *Four Gates of Speech*

Before sharing or posting a message on a GYA e-messaging platform, consider these The Four Gates of Speech:

- Is what I am saying true?
- Is what I am saying necessary?
- Is it said in a kind and respectful way?
- Is this the appropriate time?

### **7.3. Public comment on behalf of the GYA / GYA representation**

When making written or oral comments which can reasonably be ascribed to be the official view of the GYA and which can reasonably be expected to become public, GYA members and alumni must ensure that they either refer to agree upon positions of the GYA or have the required authorisation to speak on behalf of the GYA.

Such authorisation can be obtained by contacting the Co-Chairs (if necessary, Co-Chairs can bring the intended comments to EC or authorise the GYA MD accordingly); and discussing with them the contexts of the public comments and how they might impact the GYA. If no such authorisation is given, members should refrain from making comments or statements that could be interpreted as a statement on behalf of the GYA.

The GYA Office, under the leadership of the Managing Director and Co-Chairs, will confirm statements on short notice (24 hr turnaround) if the respective positions are built on existing discussions within the organisation. If the statement's content is new to the organisation, 48 to 72 hours turnaround decisions are to be expected. [15]

The aforementioned does not apply to statements made by GYA members and alumni relative to their respective fields of expertise or other circumstances where their membership is recognised and stated.

## **8. Interpretation**

This *Code* should be read in conjunction with existing GYA policy documents and regulations. The Code is not only an abridged version of rules already contained in other policy documents and regulations but also contains additional procedural guidelines.

## **9. Compliance with *The Code***

GYA members, alumni and GYA Office staff must familiarise themselves with this Code and ensure that they comply with the letter and the spirit, the intention and the content of the Code. The primary responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Code rests on each member.

Every GYA member and alumni have the right and responsibility to ask questions, seek guidance and express concerns regarding compliance with *The Code*. New members of the GYA need to sign a copy of *The Code* during their Inauguration month.

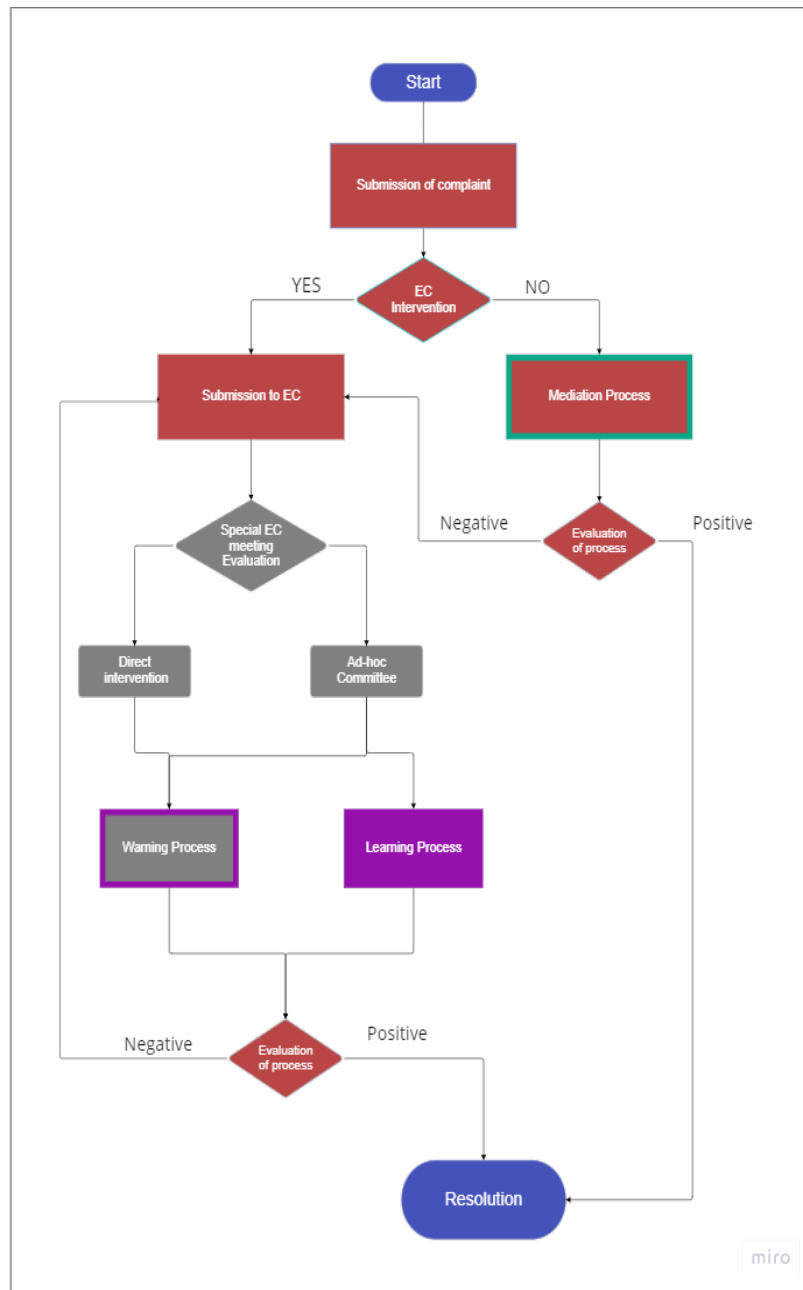
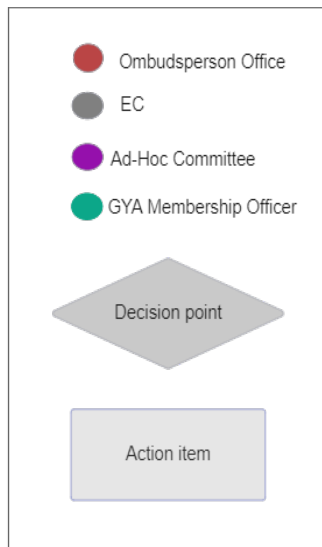
## **10. Monitoring and enforcement**

In the event of a violation of *The Code*, members of the GYA community have the right to lodge complaints and participate in proceedings without reprisal or threat of retaliation. Those with leadership authority (e.g., GYA Office staff, EC members, co-leads of activities groups) are expected to be proactive in promoting respect for the general principles articulated in Section 3 and, under the guidance of the Ombudsperson, bear a special responsibility to actively participate in the mediation and conflict resolution procedures dealing with alleged violations of those principles.

Those who receive complaints or believe there are violations of the GYA Code of Conduct shall promptly notify the Ombudsperson (directly or through the Office) to enable the Office to provide or initiate the appropriate procedure for remedial or disciplinary measures.

The flowchart below summarises the process.

***Flowchart of the process***



### 10.1. Submission of complaint: Ombudsperson

To help manage complaints regarding this *Code*, the GYA members select an individual ombudsperson or a team of up to three members or members and alumni (See Appendix for 2021 Ombudsperson Policy document). The GYA Membership Officer will support the Ombudsperson, especially when mediation effort is applied. The Co-Chairs support the Office of the Ombudsperson whenever necessary unless the issue is with the Co-Chairs. There will be a separate list of members who have agreed to be consultants for the Ombudsperson. The Ombudsperson is to correspond/speak with the member to understand the issue thoroughly and subsequently correspond/communicate with any other people involved (with the reporting member's agreement) to understand their perspective.

The Ombudsperson will hear the complaint and conduct a first evaluation of the case. If the Ombudsperson concludes that the situation can probably be settled through a mediation process, the GYA Membership Officer may also assist. In the case of a mediation process, if no resolution is reached, the matter will be submitted to the EC. The Ombudsperson Office will submit in either case a report to the EC with the description of the process and conclusion; the case is then formally closed by the Ombudsperson.

## **10.2. Monitoring and Enforcement Process**

If the Ombudsperson decides, after the first evaluation or after an unsuccessful mediation process, to send the matter to the EC, the CCs call for an urgent EC meeting. The Ombudsperson presents the case in the EC meeting. The EC needs to agree on one of the two ways forward:

- a. Confirm the Ombudsperson's decision that mediation is not likely to bring success, and direct intervention is needed (*Warning system*).
- b. Formation of an *Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee*. An Ad Hoc Advisory Committee comprises the Ombudsperson, the GYA Membership Officer, EC members and other GYA members with relevant scientific expertise, knowledge of the local context, global perspective, and representing the diverse nature of the membership. The *Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee* will look into the matter further and suggest whether the case is grave enough to go through punitive measures/warning system or a learning process.

Punitive measures could range from temporary exclusion from nominations for GYA opportunities, removal of privileges associated with funding opportunities, or, in the most challenging situations, suspension or revocation of GYA membership following constitution 6.9. The *Ad Hoc Advisory Committee* might also suggest to the EC to suspend the member because they have seriously damaged the interests of GYA (to be confirmed in the following GM). Other punitive measures could be excluding the member from nominations for GYA opportunities for a specific time, the dissolution of internal groupings in GYA and the like.

Complaints found – after an investigation by the Ombudsperson – to be not well-grounded will not be pursued further.

### **10.3. Guiding Principles for the monitoring and enforcement process**

Those dealing with alleged violations of the *Code* shall be guided by fairness, equality, and access principles. The accused person and the alleged victim or opponent are meant to be included in the process.

*All persons involved in any mediation or conflict resolution will keep all information relating to queries completely confidential.*

Avoiding damage to the GYA means acting quickly before the damage can become widespread. Therefore, the procedure aims at a first evaluation of the situation by the Ombudsperson within 48 hours. This initial assessment includes setting up a timeframe for the further steps. In the case of a minor offence, the mediation shall be set up within a month. In the case of a significant violation, the *Ad Hoc Advisory Committee* shall be formed within another 48 hours at the latest to guarantee a swift reaction. The *Ad Hoc Advisory Committee* decides on the pace of its proceedings after judging the concrete nature of the offence.

## **11. Appeals processing**

Individuals who have been found to have violated the *Code* have the opportunity to appeal if they have grounds for believing the process or those involved in it were unfair. Appeals may be brought against either the decision of whether or not a *Code* violation occurred, how investigations were conducted, or against the sanctions placed on individuals due to their offence (s) of the Code.

The appeal is to be submitted to the GYA Managing Director, whose responsibility is to evaluate if the case is to be reopened. If so, the GYA Managing Director can call upon the closest immediate past Co-Chair that was not involved with the specific case.

## **12. Alumni expectations and procedures**

Basic principles described in this *Code* are expected to be respected by the GYA alumni. Further expectations and procedures for GYA alumni are described thoroughly in the [GYA Alumni Policy](#) [16].



## 13. References

- [1] As per the GYA Constitution, see <https://globalyoungacademy.net/constitution/> , esp. sections 2.2.2. & 3.8.3.
- [2] See GYA constitution <https://globalyoungacademy.net/constitution/>
- [3] See at: <https://globalyoungacademy.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Declaration-YAs-2019.pdf>
- [4] Quoted from <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism>
- [5] Reference: <https://www.plagiarism.org/article/what-is-plagiarism>
- [6] False or malicious allegations means allegations that are knowingly, deliberately or recklessly inaccurate or misleading, so as to gain some competitive advantage or cause harm to a person or entity, quoted from <https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/false-or-malicious-allegations>
- [7] As defined for the UN by UNWomen: <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/pdf/whatissh.pdf>
- [8] Quoted from <https://www.doi.gov/employees/employmentlaw/eo-harassment-0>, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Harassment. Complete text: <https://www.eeoc.gov/harassment>
- [9] Reference: <https://sfgov.org/dosw/sexual-harassment-frequently-asked-questions>
- [10] Quoted from Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development: Glossary of statistical terms: <https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=7206>
- [11] GYA conflict of Interest Policy is available for members download here: <https://intranet.globalyoungacademy.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/08/20180828Conflict-of-Interest-Policy.pdf>
- [12] (i) GYA GDPR declaration is signed by all members upon induction, a copy can be retrieved from the Office, (ii) <https://globalyoungacademy.net/privacy-policy/>
- [13] [http://egu2016.eu/egu2016\\_twitter\\_no.png](http://egu2016.eu/egu2016_twitter_no.png)
- [14] See: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/about-us/chatham-house-rule>
- [15] GYA is a member driven organisation. Decisions are generally taken by the elected leadership, the Co-Chairs and EC often consult with members active in the respective field. This may take some time.
- [16] <https://intranet.globalyoungacademy.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/11/Alumni-Policy-Addendum.pdf>

All referenced websites were last accessed on 3 June 2022

## 14. Appendix

**GYA Ombudsperson** , EC 2022/21 proposal, confirmed by the AGM 2021

This is a point of contact in case members need support and help in conflict resolution or facilitating relationships within the GYA. While we hope that GYA members will usually be able to openly discuss possible misunderstandings or sources of conflict, in some situations this may not be successful or promising and they may feel unsure about what to do. Any issues discussed with the ombudsperson will be kept confidential. If the ombudsperson requires additional input from other members (e.g., guidance from the Co-Chairs, Managing Director, or the Executive Committee), the ombudsperson will first seek permission from the member/members involved.

Here are some examples of situations in which an ombudsperson may be beneficial, including:

- **Conflict Resolution:** There is a disagreement between GYA members that they have been unable to resolve and require some mediation.
- **Cultural Advising:** In a meeting, discussion or email exchange, a member made a comment which felt inappropriate to another member, but they are not sure if it is cultural difference or actually inappropriate, or how to respond. Another example is how we greet each other – in some cultures hugging or touching is inappropriate, but in others it's an expression of welcome, inclusion.
- **Conflict during Working Group Activities:** There is a misunderstanding or miscommunication during a working group activity that requires support from outside (or a non-supportive response).
- **Intellectual Contribution/Authorship:** Conflicts arising from distribution of authorship, plagiarism, lack of acknowledgement of contribution. We can consider DORA principles or other agreed upon framework as required.
- **Managing quality issues:** A submission or contribution to an output is not seen to be of high enough quality resulting in a dispute. Guidance on how one might effectively work with the contributor to respectfully improve the submission if there are conflicts. It must be noted that there is an existing Output Review Committee in GYA to handle the quality of submissions.
- **Problem with Inclusion:** A member felt excluded from contributing to a GYA output or project.
- **Misunderstanding with the Office:** A member felt disrespected or unfairly treated by a staff member of the office (or vice versa).
- **Advising the Office:** Office members may also approach the ombudsperson to mediate tensions or address difficulties at the workplace.
- **Dissatisfaction with process** (e.g., by Co-Chairs, EC, Office, a Committee, or Working Group): A member feels there has been inadequate or inappropriate process followed in making a decision.

**Composition:** The ombudsperson will be a group of members or a combination of member and alumni of the GYA with some experience in mediation. They will be supported by the Co-Chairs and EC, unless the issue is with the Co-Chairs and EC, in which case there will be a separate list of members who have agreed to be consultants for the ombudsperson. These members will also have committed to keep any information relating to queries completely confidential.

**Responsibilities:** The ombudsperson may:

- Correspond/speak with the member to fully understand the issue.

- Correspond/speak with any other people involved (with the reporting member's agreement) to understand their perspective.
- Try to facilitate a resolution between the members
- Consult with the office/Co-Chairs/EC as needed (with the reporting member's agreement)
- Respond to the people involved about the ongoing progress when asked.