**GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AFRICA**

**CODE OF ETHICS**

**(The “Code”)**

**1.1 Vision and Purpose**

The Geological society of Africa (GSAf) seeks to promote the advancement of the geological and earth sciences generally in Africa by encouraging and supporting geoscience research, education, professionalism , practice and training; the establishment of national Societies; and organisation of conferences and other meetings. It also seeks to promote the sustainable and environmentally sensitive development of the mineral, water and hydrocarbon resources of the continent and the wider applications of geoscience to improve the socio-economic conditions and quality of life of the African peoples.

The purpose of the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (the “Code”) is to foster a culture of integrity and excellence through our work as a Society and in furtherance of GSAf’s tax-exempt charitable, educational, and scientific purposes.

In adopting the Code, GSAf also underscores the importance of making ethical decisions in service to the sciences, humankind, and in stewardship of Earth

**1.2 Persons to Whom the Code Applies**

This Code applies to GSAf Members as defined in the GSAf Amended constitution as currently in effect and as may be amended in the future. GSAf Members include

Ordinary Member

· Associate Member

· Life Member

· Institutional Member

· Fellow

(Each a “Member” and collectively, the “Members”).

Pursuant to the Constitution. All Members must comply with this Code as a condition of GSAf Membership

2 **Taking Responsibility: Mandatory GSAf Member Responsibilities**

GSAf provides professional growth opportunities for earth scientists at all levels of expertise and from all sectors. As Members, we each have a responsibility to act with professionalism and integrity—regardless of our career level or job title. This means creating an organization and culture of inclusivity, equity, safety, and respect where all members have an equal opportunity to participate, contribute, be appropriately credited, and succeed in their careers. The following mandatory standards apply to all of us:

* We will comply with the Code and related policies;
* We will cooperate to the best of our ability if asked to take part in an investigation of an allegation of a Code violation; and
* We will not represent ourselves as a spokesperson for the Society without express authorization by the President and Council of GSAf.

**3. Promoting a Culture of Scientific and Research Integrity**

GSAf is committed to promoting a culture of scientific, research and professional integrity across the geosciences

* We will maintain the highest standards of intellectual and personal honesty. We will avoid bias in reporting the products of our work;
* We will take responsibility for our actions and contributions in all phases of our research and reports. We will follow accepted practices and, to the extent possible, we will conduct research that is replicable and reproducible; produce research records and professional reports that are clear, transparent, and verifiable; distinguish observations from interpretations; and report uncertainties in research and study results in the context of complex natural systems. We will responsibly conduct sampling activities in our research to preserve Earth’s geoheritage for future generations;
* We will give full and proper credit to the creativity, ideas, contributions, and work performed by colleagues, subordinates, and students. We will cooperate with other researchers whether in academia or industry whenever possible, to ensure rapid interchange and dissemination of knowledge in the earth sciences;
* We will contribute to training and mentoring future geoscientists as opportunities permit to sustain the future of the geoscience profession;
* We will seek to demonstrate the relevance and importance of the geosciences to the general public and to future generations. We will strive to communicate our knowledge about Earth to protect the environment and provide appropriate stewardship of natural resources. To the extent we communicate with the public on these topics, we will do so with care and precision; and
* We will protect confidential and proprietary data entrusted to us in our professional capacity. We do not engage in [research misconduct](https://www.geosociety.org/GSA/Membership/Code_of_Conduct/GSA/Membership/Code_of_Conduct.aspx?hkey=1a11cac9-2183-4e8f-8cbd-3d930591fb56#Research_Misconduct), including [fabrication](https://www.geosociety.org/GSA/Membership/Code_of_Conduct/GSA/Membership/Code_of_Conduct.aspx?hkey=1a11cac9-2183-4e8f-8cbd-3d930591fb56#Fabrication), [falsification](https://www.geosociety.org/GSA/Membership/Code_of_Conduct/GSA/Membership/Code_of_Conduct.aspx?hkey=1a11cac9-2183-4e8f-8cbd-3d930591fb56#Falsification), or [plagiarism](https://www.geosociety.org/GSA/Membership/Code_of_Conduct/GSA/Membership/Code_of_Conduct.aspx?hkey=1a11cac9-2183-4e8f-8cbd-3d930591fb56#Plagiarism); and
* We will take all reasonable steps necessary to ensure safety in the laboratory, field, and other professional settings. We will notify the appropriate authorities of any violations or incidents that appear to create a threat to public health and safety.
* We will not presume to be experts in fields other than our own, or accept professional obligations that we are not competent to discharge.
* When advice is sought or proffered, we will provide reliable and objective opinions consonant with our knowledge and ability, and make clear to the recipient any possible dangers or serious consequences inherent in the neglect of advice.

**4. Promoting a Culture of Respect, Fairness, and Inclusivity**

GSAf is committed to promoting a culture of respect, fairness, and inclusivity across the earth sciences in furtherance of its purposes to advance the geosciences. GSAf does not tolerate discrimination or harassment based on [Protected Characteristics](https://www.geosociety.org/GSA/Membership/Code_of_Conduct/GSA/Membership/Code_of_Conduct.aspx?hkey=1a11cac9-2183-4e8f-8cbd-3d930591fb56#Protected_Characteristics), which include race, ethnicity, colour, national origin, ancestry, sex, creed, religion, age, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, veteran status, marital status, medical condition, pregnancy, education, class, political affiliation, parental status. All people deserve to work in a safe, supportive, respectful, inclusive, and welcoming environment that encourages diverse points of view and backgrounds in order to engage in open and honest communication.

* We will listen to others’ points of view, seek to understand them, and conduct ourselves in a professional manner even when it is not reciprocated;
* We will exemplify high standards in science, teaching, management, and interactions with others, particularly when we are in a position of power or privilege, serving in roles that may include professors, research supervisors, managers in government , private companies or industry labs or facilities, or any other senior geoscientist positions;
* We will treat students, workers and subordinates respectfully, without exploitation, and provide a safe, supportive environment to encourage learning and professional development;
* We will strive to promote diversity among conveners and presenters when organizing panels, keynotes, and other invitational sessions; and
* If we choose to drink alcohol or use other legal intoxicants in any professional settings, we will do so responsibly without compromising our ability to act professionally.
* We will use legitimate, unbiased criteria when making decisions and taking actions that affect the work, educational, and/or professional opportunities of students, colleagues, and other professional contacts;
* We will not [discriminate](https://www.geosociety.org/GSA/Membership/Code_of_Conduct/GSA/Membership/Code_of_Conduct.aspx?hkey=1a11cac9-2183-4e8f-8cbd-3d930591fb56#Discrimination) against, [harass](https://www.geosociety.org/GSA/Membership/Code_of_Conduct/GSA/Membership/Code_of_Conduct.aspx?hkey=1a11cac9-2183-4e8f-8cbd-3d930591fb56#Harassment), [sexually harass](https://www.geosociety.org/GSA/Membership/Code_of_Conduct/GSA/Membership/Code_of_Conduct.aspx?hkey=1a11cac9-2183-4e8f-8cbd-3d930591fb56#Sexual_Harassment), [bully](https://www.geosociety.org/GSA/Membership/Code_of_Conduct/GSA/Membership/Code_of_Conduct.aspx?hkey=1a11cac9-2183-4e8f-8cbd-3d930591fb56#Bullying), or engage in [retaliation](https://www.geosociety.org/GSA/Membership/Code_of_Conduct/GSA/Membership/Code_of_Conduct.aspx?hkey=1a11cac9-2183-4e8f-8cbd-3d930591fb56#Retaliation) against others in our professional activities.

**5. Avoiding Conflicts of Interest**

As Members, we may be involved in various professional activities on behalf of the Society that could give rise to real or perceived conflicts of interest; i.e., situations where our personal interests or relationships could interfere with our ability to make objective decisions on GSAf’s behalf. Examples include selecting candidates for leadership or committee roles; evaluating and approving Members for honours and awards; and/or reviewing proposals, grant applications, or journal articles.

In this regard,

* We will demonstrate transparency in making decisions on behalf of GSAf.
* We will proactively disclose any real or perceived conflicts of interest that reasonably could make someone question our judgment, honesty, or objectivity to the appropriate stakeholders.
* We will comply with GSAf’s constitution if we serve as Council members, officers, and/or committee members.

**PART B**

**6. Complaint-Handling Policy - Code of Ethics**

GSAf has adopted the [Complaint-Handling Policy - Code of Ethics](https://www.geosociety.org/documents/gsa/about/ethics/ethical-violations-policy.pdf) to further its commitment to provide a professional, ethical culture across the geosciences.

Please refer to this policy for details on filing a complaint and the rules GSAf uses for processing possible violations and, where appropriate, determining disciplinary or remedial action.

**6.1 Complaint-Handling Policy & Procedures – Code of Ethics**

The Geological Society of Africa. (“GSAf”) adopts this Complaint-Handling Policy & Procedures – Code of Ethics (the “Code”) as the only rules for processing possible violations of the GSAf Code of Ethics & Professional Conduct and applicable provisions of the GSAf Constitution related to conduct of Members.

This Policy is applicable to GSAf members, who, pursuant to the GSAf Constitution, are categorized section in 1.2 of this code

The Members understand and agree that this Policy contains a fair process for resolving all matters under the GSAf Code of Ethics and that they will be bound by decisions made pursuant to this Policy. As Members, individuals accept that they will accept the exclusive  
authority of GSAf to apply the GSAf Code of Ethics, this Policy, and other relevant GSAf policies to resolve ethics matters. This Policy is not a formal legal process and the procedures described are designed to operate without the assistance of attorneys. GSAf is committed to promoting a professional, ethical culture across the geosciences. This Policy is designed to encourage Members’ compliance with the GSAf Code of Ethics. In addition to protecting the interests of GSAf, the GSAf Code of Ethics and this Policy are also designed to protect Members through the use of reasonable due process procedures against patently false, malicious, or groundless accusations. Recognizing that each case is different, GSAf is committed to applying discipline in a fair and consistent manner. In no event shall GSAf take disciplinary action under this policy based on considerations of race, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, or any other legally-protected characteristic.

6.2**. GSAf Ethics Committee.**

a) Authority.

GSAf’s constitution, Section 48, governs Member discipline, and reads in pertinent part as follows: “Any fellowship, membership, or affiliation in the Society may be terminated or suspended by the Council, after a hearing or opportunity to be heard, for conduct deemed prejudicial to the interests of the Society.”

b) Purpose.

The GSAf Council (the “Council”) recognizes that when a Member engages in conduct that violates the GSAf Code of Ethics, such conduct may be prejudicial to the Society’s interests. accordingly, and pursuant to the GSAf constitution, the GSAf Ethics Committee (the “Committee”) was constituted and authorized to receive and review each complaint alleging a violation of the GSA Code of Ethics (a “Complaint”). The Committee will act in good faith, exercise honest judgment in furtherance of GSAf’s interests,.

c) Composition.

The Committee generally will be comprised of three individuals: GSAf’s Past President, GSAf’s General Secretary, and GSAf’s Ethics & Compliance Officer (“Ethics Officer”) or another member of GSAf’s management staff appointed by the General assembly. GSAf will maintain a pool of qualified former Presidents who may be called upon to serve on the Ethics Committee in case there is a real or perceived conflict of interest involving either the Past President or the General Secretary. The pool will consist of all former Presidents, or those who have finished their initial terms serving on the Ethics Committee.  
Former Presidents will be part of the pool for four (4) additional years after they end their terms as Past Presidents. If a real or perceived conflict of interest prevents a GSAf Past President or General Secretary from serving on the Ethics Committee, this individual shall be replaced by drawing from the pool described above. The most recent former President will be asked to serve first, and if he or she has a conflict, the next most recent will be asked and so on. If none of the former Presidents is available to serve due to a conflict of interest or another reason, GSAf’s President shall nominate alternate individual(s) to the Committee for the Council’s consideration; the Council shall appoint replacement members to the Committee in situations involving a real or perceived conflict of interest in its sole and final discretion. If a real or perceived conflict of interest prevents GSAf’s Ethics Officer or another member of GSAf’s management staff from serving on the Ethics Committee, the Executive Director shall have the discretion to find a replacement drawing from GSAf’s management staff.

d). Other Complaints.

The Committee shall handle all complaints that may arise within the scope of this policy and conduct of members.

6.3 . **General Provisions.**

a) The following individuals may be referenced in this Policy collectively as  
**“Participants:”  
i.** Respondent: A Member who is the subject of a Complaint or investigation;

ii. Complainant: An individual, group, or organization that initiates a Complaint;  
and  
iii. Witness: An individual who provides written or oral testimony in connection with a Complaint.  
b) Timing. GSAf will make every reasonable effort to follow the time requirements noted in this Policy and yet, GSAf’s failure to meet a time requirement will not prohibit the final resolution of any ethics matter, or otherwise prevent GSAf from acting under this Policy. Participants are required to comply with all time requirements specified in these Procedures. The Committee may grant time extensions or postponements at their discretion, as applicable, in response to a Participant’s timely request.

c). Other Proceedings.

If GSAf is made aware that a Member is the subject of an investigation and/or civil, criminal, or other proceedings before a court, regulatory agency, or other third party, the Committee may determine, in its sole discretion, to reject, dismiss, begin, continue, or hold processing a Complaint. Furthermore, the Committee may rely upon information collected by a third-party investigation and/or the findings in another proceeding for use in its review of a Complaint or matters that are substantially related to such third-party investigations or proceedings. In the event that the Committee rejects or dismisses a Complaint under this subsection

A Complainant may refile a Complaint upon the completion and closure of the other proceeding.  
d) Confidentiality.

GSAf will strive to maintain the confidentiality of Complaints without compromising GSAf’s ability to complete the investigation process in the Policy. While GSAf will make a reasonable effort to safeguard the privacy of Complainants, Respondents, and other witnesses, it may be necessary, as GSAf may determine in its sole judgment, for GSAf to share information about Complaints to complete a Complaint investigation. Participants are required to maintain the confidentiality of materials submitted to or received by GSAf as part of this Policy, however, Respondents are permitted to disclose such information to Witnesses and third parties as is reasonably necessary for a defense. In its sole discretion and at any time during the Complaint process, GSAf may determine that some case-related materials and information is not confidential and shall be disclosed or noticed to the appropriate governmental, professional, similar bodies of any action concerning a Respondent, or other third parties as appropriate to address a Complaint.

e). Failure to Cooperate.

If any Participant refuses to fully cooperate with GSAf concerning matters arising under this Policy without good cause, the Committee or the Council, as applicable, may: terminate the Complaint of an uncooperative Complainant; or impose any preliminary sanction or requirement included within this Policy if a Respondent is uncooperative. In the event that a Respondent fails to provide a response, the Committee may proceed without the Respondent’s participation and the Respondent will forfeit any right to an appeal

f). Withdrawal.

During the course of any Complaint review process, should a Respondent withdraw as a Member, the GSAf may, at the sole discretion of the Council, cease to consider the Complaint

g.) Records.

GSAf shall maintain all official records, including Complaints, developed pursuant to this Policy in accordance with GSAf records retention and destruction practices. All other records including, but not limited to, records and notes, of Committee members, investigators, and other third parties shall be destroyed after the closure of any case.

**6.4 Filing a Complaint and Initial Review**.

a) Any individual, group, or organization that experiences, observes, or is otherwise aware of Member’s conduct that may violate the GSAf Code of Ethics or related policies, may file a Complaint with the General Secretary, the Ethics Officer, or any GSAf Officer. Prior to filing a Complaint,

b) GSAf encourages, but does not require, potential Complainants to get in touch with the Ethics Officer so appointed by Council or the General Secretary to clarify whether the concerns raise an issue covered by the GSAf Code of Ethics and whether mediation or another form of alternative dispute resolution appears appropriate.

c) Complaints must be made in good faith by using and providing all information  
requested on the GSAf’s Ethics Complaint Form. “Good faith” means there is a reasonable factual basis for the allegations in the Complaint. A Complainant who  
files a Complaint in bad faith may be subject to review and discipline for violation of the GSAf Code of Ethics pursuant to this Policy.

d). Upon receipt of a Complaint, the Ethics Officer or the Executive Director will first assess a Complaint in his or her sole discretion to determine whether the Complaint is: i. Incomplete (e.g., filed anonymously) or contains factually unreliable or insufficient information; ii. Patently frivolous or trivial; iii. The subject of a proceeding described in Section II(c) of this Policy; or iv. Directed against an individual who is not a Member

e). If the Ethics Officer or the Executive Director reaches a conclusion that the Complaint is covered under Section 6.4 (d) of this Policy, then he or she may, in his or her sole discretion, reject or dismiss the Complaint and may re-initiate the Complaint at a later time. In a situation in which the Complaint is incomplete, the Complainant may resubmit a complete Complaint for consideration. The Executive Director shall inform the Council of all determinations reached under this Section 6.4 (e).

6.5 **Preliminary Review of Complaint**

a.) After an initial review pursuant to Section 6.4(d)-(e) of this Policy, the Ethics Officer or the General Secretary will review each Complaint to determine whether the alleged conduct is covered by the GSA Code of Ethics.

b.) For complete Complaints, a case will be initiated, and an investigation opened pursuant to this Policy when the Ethics Officer or the Executive Director determines, in his or her sole discretion, the Complaint raises issues covered by the GSA Code of Ethics. In making such evaluations, the Ethics Officer or the Executive Director will consider whether: i. a proven Complaint would constitute a violation of one or more specific GSAf Code of Ethics provisions, and ii. Relevant and reliable information will be available concerning the Complaint upon reasonable investigation. If the Ethics Officer or the General Secretary determines that the Complaint does not satisfy the considerations in Section 6.5 (b) of this Policy, the Complaint will be dismissed. The Executive Director will notify the Complainant that the Complaint is being dismissed and the reason for the dismissal.

**6.6 Notice of Complaint**

a). If the Complaint will result in the opening of a case and investigation pursuant to Section 6.5 (b) of this Policy, the General Secretary shall initiate the Committee by  
forwarding the Complaint to the Committee.

b). The Committee shall notify the Respondent of the Complaint so that the Respondent has an opportunity to be heard. Notice will consist of sending the Respondent a copy of the Complaint and relevant supporting materials, if any. Where appropriate, GSAf may choose to redact the names of individuals named in a Complaint before sending this information to the Respondent where the Committee, in its sole discretion, determines that withholding that information is appropriate.

c.) The Respondent shall have thirty (30) calendar days from the date of receipt of the Complaint to provide a written response to the Committee (the “Response”). In a Response, the Respondent shall disclose all relevant information about the existence and status of any other legal or other proceedings, whether closed or open, concerning the subject of the Complaint and any other information relevant in a defense against the allegations in the Complaint.

d). In the event that the Respondent fails to cooperate as defined in Section II (e), the Committee shall take steps as provided for in Section II (e).

6.7 . Interim Action to Prevent Harm

a) Upon receipt of a Complaint, the General Secretary may evaluate whether interim action(s) are appropriate to prevent the possibility of further alleged harm, pending the outcome of an investigation. Examples of such steps may include, but are not limited to, temporary suspension of a Member, his or her consideration for an honor or leadership role, or the privilege of attending GSAf events.

b) The General Secretary shall make a recommendation to the Ethics Committee regarding any proposed interim action(s); the Ethics Committee shall review such recommendations and take such interim action(s) in its sole discretion. In reaching a decision regarding interim action(s), the Ethics Committee will reasonably balance GSAf’s legitimate interest with the Respondent’s right to due process, fairness, and confidentiality.

c) For a Respondent subject to any interim action(s), if an investigation is completed and results in a finding that no violation has occurred, the Ethics Committee will restore the status or privileges removed as part of any interim action(s) to the extent reasonably possible.

**6.8. Investigations**

a) Upon receipt of a timely Response, the Committee will manage the investigation of the Complaint, which such investigation may include the information or findings of a third-party investigator.  
b) GSAf is committed to completing investigations that are prompt, thorough, and impartial. However, because every Complaint is different, there is no set time period by which an investigation must be completed under this Policy.

c) The Committee, in managing the investigation, may engage any investigator it deems qualified, provided that the investigator is capable of reviewing the allegations  
and information presented in a good faith, objective manner in compliance with this Policy. An investigator may be the Ethics Officer, or the Committee may select another qualified individual(s), including, but not limited to, individuals who have served in leadership capacities as Members or third parties trained as attorneys or investigators.  
d) The Committee shall oversee the objective gathering and analysis of pertinent evidence. An investigation may include a review of the allegations in the Complaint; interviews with the Complainant, the Respondent, and any other relevant witnesses; and the collection and analysis of relevant documents.

e) The Respondent will be given a fair opportunity to prepare and respond to any new information that is learned during the investigation and present evidence to refute it in writing.

**6.9. Reaching a Determination**

a) At the conclusion of the investigation, the Committee shall, within a reasonable period of time, using the information provided by the investigator (which may include a draft report), prepare a written investigation report summarizing the findings of fact, the evidentiary basis for these findings, and a conclusion as to whether the Respondent’s conduct violated the GSAf Code of Ethics.

b) The Committee shall submit to the Council its written report together with a copy of any materials prepared by the investigator that informed the Committee’s report. The Committee’s report will incorporate the investigator’s findings of fact and set forth the Committee’s analysis and conclusion as to whether the Respondent’s conduct violated the GSAf Code of Ethics. If the Committee finds that the Respondent’s conduct violated the GSAf Code of Ethics, the report also will include the Committee’s recommended disciplinary action for the Council’s consideration.

c) The Council will review the Committee report as soon as practicable. In general, Council will aim to review the Committee’s report and make a determination within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving the Committee’s report. If the Committee issues a report more than thirty (30) calendar days before a regularly scheduled Council meeting, Council will aim to meet virtually (by telephone or video conference)to review the Committee’s report and make a final determination. While the Council may not change any findings of fact, the Council may seek additional information from the Committee as appropriate to reach a determination. The Council shall make the determination for GSAf as to whether the Respondent’s conduct violated the GSAf Code of Ethics. If the conduct constitutes a violation, the Council shall take appropriate disciplinary action.

d) Once the Council has made a determination and reached a decision on any disciplinary action, it will direct the Executive Director to notify the Complainant and the Respondent of the findings, determination, and any discipline in writing.

**6.10. Appeals**

a) A Respondent who believes that the Council has reached its decision in error due to:  
a) a procedural error; b) new or previously undiscovered information; or c) an arbitrary and capricious manner may submit a written appeal within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving the Council’s determination in writing. Any appeal must be sent to the Ethics Officer or the General Secretary, who will forward the request for appeal to the Council.  
b) The Council shall review timely appeals requests as promptly as practicable and make a final decision. Once the Council completes the appeal review using any information provided by the Respondent and collecting any additional responsive information from the Complainant or others as needed in the Council’s sole discretion, the Council will make a final determination. The Respondent will be notified in writing of the Council’s final decision and any applicable disciplinary action. The Respondent shall have no further right to an appeal.  
c) If a Respondent fails to file an appeal within thirty (30) calendar days, the disciplinary action authorized by the Council, if any, shall go into effect and the Respondent has no further rights to request review or any other appeal; the decision and disciplinary action determinations are final.

**6.11. Disciplinary Actions Available**

When a Respondent is found to have violated the GSAf Code of Ethics, the Council may order one or more of the following disciplinary or remedial actions:

a) Private reprimand and censure, including any appropriate conditions or directives;  
b) Membership probation for specified period of time, including any appropriate  
restrictions or conditions concerning membership and any other conditions or  
directives;  
c) Suspension of membership for a specified period of time, including any appropriate  
conditions or directives;

d) Revocation of honors and awards, including but not limited to medals and fellowships awarded by GSAF and

e) Termination of membership.

Appropriate conditions, restrictions, or directives may include, but are not limited to: prohibition against serving on a particular GSAf committee; no admittance to participating in a particular GSAf-hosted event; undergoing ethics education; and issuing a private apology. For each of the above-listed disciplinary actions except (b), the Council shall determine whether and, if so, how, to publicize the disciplinary action(s)without publicizing offender’s names.

f) If Infraction is of a criminal nature, the Council will recommend as the case may, be reference to appropriate prosecutorial of judicial authority

**Appendix A: Glossary**

1. **Bullying** means using power or perceived vulnerability to harm, intimidate, coerce, and/or sabotage an individual’s professional or academic work or efforts. Bullying may occur in person, in writing, or via any form of electronic communication.

2. **Discrimination** means treating individuals differently because of **Protected Characteristics**, resulting in unfair treatment and the denial of opportunities in educational, employment, funding, and/or other professional activities.

3. **Harassment** is a type of discrimination characterized by unwanted, demeaning, disrespectful behavior toward individuals based on **Protected Characteristics**. Harassing behavior ranges from verbal comments, such as epithets and slurs, to visual displays to physical conduct, such as threating or blocking someone’s way.

4. **Protected Characteristics** refers to factors that are not relevant and must not be considered in making decisions about an individual’s competence or qualifications. This includes race, ethnicity, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, creed, religion, age, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, veteran status, marital status, medical condition, pregnancy, education, class, political affiliation, and parental status.

5. **Research or Reporting Misconduct.** which includes:

* **Fabrication**—“making up data or results and recording or reporting them.”
* **Falsification**—“manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record.”
* **Plagiarism**—“appropriating another person’s ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit.” GSA interprets this definition broadly to forbid plagiarism in verbal or written communications.

6. **Retaliation** means punishing someone for engaging in a legally protected activity. Generally this involves taking adverse action against individuals because they have complained about a legal or policy violation instead of using legitimate, unbiased criteria to make the decision.

7. **Sexual Harassment** means unwelcome or unsolicited sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, conversations about sexual activities, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

**Appendix B: Process Used to Create this Code of Ethics**

The first step in the development of this Code was to understand the ethics and compliance issues facing the geoscience community as well as the values and perspectives of our Members. This was accomplished in various ways, including an Internet survey involving GSAf staff, committee members, and Councilors; reviewing GSAf position statements; and researching best practices in developing ethics standards in profit and not-for-profit organizations, including other professional societies.

This extensive research culminated in the creation of an outline, which was presented to and approved by the GSAf Council in June 2022. At that time, the GSAf Council appointed an ad hoc committee to write the Code.

The committee started by writing a draft, which was then circulated to all GSAf Members during a comment period. The committee kept a log with every comment and reached a consensus on whether and how to adapt the draft to address Member concerns. At the end of this process, the committee presented a final recommendation to the GSAf Council

In June 2022, the GSAf Council approved this Code and subsequently presented to the General assembly which approved it in July 2022 during the 18th General conference and the 28th Colloquium of African Geology of the GSAf , which for the first time in the Society’s history sets forth standards of conduct that may be enforced against our Members who violate them. The Code also includes standards, which more fully embody GSAf’s values and make a more enduring statement to our Members, our profession,