

# IUGA Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct

## ***Introduction***

Membership of the International Urogynecological Association (IUGA) entails a responsibility to uphold and further IUGA's aims and objectives as set out in its mission statement and bylaws. IUGA has developed this Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct to clarify expectations of behavior by and among its members. The objectives for this code are:

- To establish a code of behavior, both scientific and social, that will be expected of all members;
- To maintain IUGA's integrity and prevent it being brought into disrepute by the actions of its members;
- To allow members to enjoy the scientific and social aspects of IUGA without disruption from inappropriate behavior of others;
- To maintain the highest level of scientific and professional practice standards.

## ***Vision***

To improve the lives of all women with pelvic floor disorders, at all stages of life, through providing excellent healthcare.

## ***Mission***

The International Urogynecological Association (IUGA) is dedicated to the global advancement of urogynecological knowledge and patient care through education and the promotion of basic and clinical research on disorders of the female pelvic floor.

## ***Strategic Focus Areas (SFAs)***

- Strengthen our position as the premier authority in urogynecology & advocate in urogynecology
- Encourage participation & engagement
- Empower through education
- Foster innovation & research
- Cultivate collaborations & partnerships

## ***Build Trust and Credibility***

The success of IUGA is dependent on the trust and confidence we earn from our members and other stakeholders. We gain credibility through our transparency and integrity. We strive to reach our goals solely through honorable conduct.

We are driven by our commitment to building mutual trust in all partnerships and collaborations, both internal and external. Our aim is always to build relationships which will help all stakeholders succeed in the long term, working every day to build our trust and credibility.

Members must provide true and accurate information on all documents, such as membership application, membership profile, education registration form, conflict of interest disclosure, or volunteer service agreement. Members of IUGA should adhere to rigorous standards of scientific integrity and ethical behavior in the conduct, presentation, and publication of research.

IUGA will investigate all reported instances of questionable or unethical behavior. In every instance where improper behavior is found to have occurred, IUGA will take appropriate action. We will not tolerate retaliation against those who raise genuine ethics concerns in good faith.

### ***Respect for the Individual***

We all deserve to interact in an environment where we are treated with dignity and respect. IUGA is committed to creating such an environment because it brings out the full potential in each of us, which, in turn, contributes directly to the success of the society.

IUGA is committed to providing an environment that is free of discrimination of all types and from abusive, offensive or harassing behavior. Any member or other stakeholder who feels harassed or discriminated against should report the incident to the IUGA Ethics Committee ([ethics.committee@iuga.org](mailto:ethics.committee@iuga.org)).

### ***Anti-Discrimination***

IUGA does not tolerate any form of discrimination, including but not limited to, discrimination based on gender, sex, race, religion, socio-economic status, ethnic or social origin, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation. All those who participate in IUGA activities (including staff) are expected to support an inclusive environment by adhering to the following conduct standards:

- Treat others with dignity and respect at all times.
- Address and report inappropriate behavior and comments that are discriminatory, harassing, abusive, offensive or unwelcome.
- Foster teamwork, encouraging the representation of different perspectives.
- Seek out insights from those with different experiences, perspectives and backgrounds.
- Avoid slang or idioms that might not translate across cultures.
- Confront the decisions or behaviors of others that are based on conscious or unconscious biases.
- Be open-minded and listen when given constructive feedback regarding others' perception of your conduct.

IUGA will not tolerate discrimination, harassment or any behavior or language that is abusive, offensive or unwelcome.

### ***Uphold the Law***

IUGA's commitment to integrity begins with complying with laws, rules and regulations where we do business. Further, each of us must have an understanding of the association's policies, laws, rules and regulations that apply to our specific roles. If we are unsure of

whether a contemplated action is permitted by law or IUGA policy, we should seek the advice from the IUGA Office. We are all responsible for preventing violations of law and for speaking up if we see possible violations.

### ***Proprietary Information***

It is important that we respect the property rights of others. We do not tolerate the acquisition of a competitor's trade secrets or other proprietary or confidential information through improper means, or any attempt thereof. We do not tolerate unauthorized use, copying, distribution or alteration of software or other intellectual property.

### ***Confidentiality and Selective Disclosure***

We do not tolerate the disclosure (whether in one-on-one or small discussions, meetings, presentations, proposals or otherwise) of any material non-public or otherwise confidential information with respect to IUGA.

### ***Duty of Care***

A member's personal, professional, and business affairs should be conducted in a manner that does not adversely affect the reputation of IUGA.

All IUGA members must avoid any relationship or activity that might impair, or even appear to impair, our ability to make objective and fair decisions related to the association. At times, we may be faced with situations where the business actions we take on behalf of IUGA may conflict with our own personal or family interests. We owe a duty to IUGA to advance its legitimate interests when the opportunity to do so arises. We must never use IUGA property or information for personal gain.

### ***Gifts, Gratuities and Business Courtesies***

IUGA is committed to competing solely on the merit of our products and services. We should avoid any actions that create a perception that favorable treatment of outside entities by IUGA was sought, received, or given in exchange for personal business courtesies. Business courtesies include gifts, gratuities, meals, refreshments, entertainment or other benefits from persons or companies with whom IUGA does or may do business. We will neither give nor accept business courtesies that constitute, or could reasonably be perceived as constituting, unfair business inducements that would violate law, regulation or policies of IUGA or would cause embarrassment or reflect negatively on IUGA's reputation. Although we may not use our position in IUGA to obtain business courtesies, and we must never ask for them, we may accept unsolicited business courtesies that promote successful working relationships and goodwill with the firms that IUGA maintains or may establish a business relationship with. Any IUGA stakeholder who offers a business courtesy must assure that it cannot reasonably be interpreted as an attempt to gain an unfair business advantage or otherwise reflect negatively upon IUGA. Please also see our Conflict of Interest policy.

### ***Accountability***

Each of us is responsible for knowing and adhering to the values and standards set forth in this Code and for raising questions if we are uncertain about IUGA policy. If we are concerned whether the standards are being met or are aware of violations of the Code, we must contact the IUGA Office.

IUGA takes seriously the standards set forth in the Code, and violations are cause for disciplinary action up to and including termination of membership or a specified leadership role.

### ***Use of Resources***

IUGA resources, including time, material, reputation, equipment, and information, are provided for official association use. We do not tolerate the use of IUGA as a platform in support of any religious, political, or unrelated activity. In order to protect the interests of the IUGA network, we reserve the right to monitor or review all data and information shared on IUGA platforms. We will not tolerate the use of IUGA resources to create, access, store, print, solicit, or send any materials that are harassing, threatening, abusive, sexually explicit or otherwise offensive or inappropriate. Questions about the proper use of company resources should be directed to the IUGA Office. Members must not misrepresent, or use without the approval of the IUGA Board, the IUGA name, symbols, logos, trademarks, copyrighted material, or member data.

### ***Professional Conduct***

All IUGA members are required to adhere to the four main principles of ethics in healthcare as defined by Beauchamp and Childress: autonomy, beneficence, justice, and non-maleficence. This includes the patient's right to make their own decision, be free from maltreatment, be treated fairly and equally, and have the right to have no harm.

Additionally, any form of scientific fraud, including, but not limited to plagiarism, including a mentor publishing his or her fellow's research without their permission will not be tolerated.

### ***Media Inquiries***

IUGA is a high-profile association in the field of urogynecology. No stakeholder is authorized to provide any public statement on behalf of IUGA unless otherwise specified in writing by the IUGA Office.

### ***Disciplinary Process***

If a member is thought to have violated this code of conduct, the violation should be reported to our independent Ethics Committee by using the email address [ethics.committee@iuga.org](mailto:ethics.committee@iuga.org). The committee will work to properly investigate the claim and make a recommendation to the IUGA Board regarding appropriate action.

By joining IUGA, all members agree to uphold the IUGA Member Code of Ethics as outlined above. Any prosecutable or indictable act by a member might be grounds for termination of IUGA membership as outlined in Article IV, Section 4.02 of the IUGA bylaws.

*Approved by the IUGA Board 2023-11-04*