

MERAS Committee Code of Conduct

Introduction and Scope

This code of conduct applies to members and collaborators of the UNOLS Maintaining an Environment of Respect Aboard Ships (MERAS) Committee while participating in any MERAS meetings, communications, events, or activities. As a committee of volunteers with members and collaborators from a variety of professions, geographic locations, and backgrounds, MERAS fosters meetings and collaborative work efforts that are welcoming, respectful, and inclusive for everyone. Our guiding principles detailed in this document form the foundation on which we engage with one another and do our work.

The MERAS Committee Code of Conduct is intended as a supplement to the UNOLS Code of Conduct. As an evolving document developed collaboratively by committee members, it will be revisited on an annual basis as well as during the onboarding of new members.

Guiding Principles

Contributing to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice

Our environment and awareness of our environment is constantly changing. We embrace opportunities to make recommendations and address changes that will ensure that MERAS Committee members all thrive, including taking steps to guide members in that direction when necessary.

Committing to equal access

The MERAS Committee strives to be an environment free of assumed hierarchies based on experience. Ideas and contributions of all participants made in good faith are valued and encouraged as is asking for clarification or feedback.

In order to provide a welcoming and safe environment, we commit to being considerate in our language use and will treat everyone respectfully regardless of gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, age, body size, race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, level of experience, socioeconomic status or background, parental or marital status, political affiliation, veteran status, pregnancy, genetic information, as well as any other characteristic protected under state or federal law.

Self awareness and growth

We will not always succeed in meeting our guidelines and recognize that achieving our goals is a learning process for everyone as we identify and correct gaps in our pursuit of a culture of belonging and equity. Through this process, we endeavor to work and communicate respectfully with one another.

Actions taken to implement guiding principles

Commitment and expectations

To promote equal access and opportunity for participation by all parties we will check with participants who have not yet contributed to the discussion to speak if they desire, ensuring those who wish to speak can do so.

During discussions we will allow time for reflection and rephrasing of positions as needed.

An agenda and, when appropriate, additional materials will be made available before each meeting to allow time to prepare. Time at the beginning of each meeting will be dedicated to greet each other, review notes from the previous meeting, and share any new communications or updates to ensure all participants are working from the same information.

To foster inclusivity, an orientation meeting will be held for new committee members and existing members will make themselves available as mentors.

This document will be provided to any non-regular MERAS members who are planning to participate in a meeting of the committee as part of the preparatory packet of materials made prior to the meeting.

Conduct

When any behavior or language is unwelcome or exclusionary, regardless of the intent, we will use this as an opportunity for correction and education. The intent is not to criticize, but to publicly acknowledge unintentionally triggering or offensive language or behavior so as to promote mindful change going forward. Anonymous corrective advice will be included in meeting notes when possible and edited as needed during the approval of notes at the opening of the next meeting. Relevant issues may be raised in teleconference chat, verbally, or in person but are encouraged to be timely and public.

The actions above set our expectations for appropriate and inclusive behavior. We commit to a structure that supports a safe and accessible reporting structure to identify unacceptable or inappropriate behavior and to one that holds participants accountable in a way that educates and improves future behavior.

Unacceptable behaviors

MERAS Committee meetings are professional and we acknowledge that our behaviors affect those around us and the perception of our behavior does matter. While unintentional mistakes will happen under no circumstances will MERAS tolerate discrimination, bullying, or harassment of MERAS community members in any form.

Unacceptable behavior includes offensive comments; intimidation; unwelcomed sexual attention or physical contact; use of sexual or discriminatory imagery, comments, or jokes; intentional or

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repeated misgendering; sexist, racist, ableist, or otherwise discriminatory or derogatory language.

Consequences for unacceptable behavior

Unintended unacceptable behavior will be discussed and corrected as part of our effort to continually educate and improve. In more severe instances, an immediate consequence for unacceptable behavior could include removal from the meeting, which would enter the public record as part of our commitment to report harassment. Opportunity will be given for the offender to correct themselves and for the committee to come together to discuss what occurred to determine a way forward if future participation is permitted.

Reporting an incident

Sometimes a direct discussion with the offender can help both parties understand how that behavior has affected others. Depending on comfort level and the severity of the situation, a direct conversation may not be the best route and we encourage reaching out to another committee member or to the UNOLS office when wanting to address or report an issue.

Please refer to UNOLS Shipboard Civility website for guidance on reporting incidents that may occur outside of the MERAS Committee: <https://www.unols.org/shipboard-civility>