

Code of Conduct of a Congress member

As a member of the Institution of Chemical Engineers (IChemE) Congress, I commit to abide by this Code of Conduct and the fundamental values that underpin the activities of Congress which are set out as follows:

Our values

Accountability

As a charity, IChemE has a duty to serve the public interest and to provide public benefit. Everything that I do on behalf of IChemE will therefore be able to stand up to public scrutiny. The public can be defined as (but not exclusively) as the media, the Charity Commission, all grades of members, key stakeholders, funders, parliament and the courts.

Integrity and honesty

As a professional body, IChemE strives to maintain high professional and ethical standards. When dealing with colleagues both within IChemE and outside of it, I will therefore conduct myself in accordance with the highest standards of integrity, professionalism and honesty.

Openness and Respect

IChemE seeks to maintain an atmosphere of openness throughout the organisation whilst respecting the need for confidence on occasion. I agree to being open with my colleagues and to respect the needs of others as required.

Additionally, I agree to the following points.

Law, mission, policies

I will observe the requirements of IChemE's governing documents and any related policies and procedures.

I will observe the law and ensure compliance with charitable principles, including relevant Charity Commission guidance, when carrying out my role as a member of Congress.

I will support the pursuit of IChemE's aims and charitable objects and act as their guardian and champion. I will develop and maintain an up-to-date knowledge of IChemE and its environment.

Representation

I will strive to make choices based on merit of arguments presented, online and face-to-face, by the constituents, wider membership, staff, other Congress members and Trustees.

I will remain dedicated to representing collective needs of the membership and IChemE and will respect the collective where there is a conflict with my personal views.

I will always represent the interests of my constituents and wider membership in a fair and balanced manner, when considering what is best for IChemE and its present and future beneficiaries.

I will declare my position as a member of Congress where appropriate.

I will strive to actively engage with my constituents and other members and to respond to their queries.

I will clearly indicate when my statements are based solely on my own opinion.

Conflicts of interest

I will declare any conflict of interest, or any circumstance that might be viewed by others as a conflict of interest as soon as it arises.

I will follow the recommendations of the Steering Group when addressing potential conflicts of interest.

Protecting the organisation's reputation

I will not make public comments about, or on behalf of, the organisation unless authorised to do so.

When I am speaking as a member of Congress, my comments will present an objective account of ongoing or completed work even when the consensus of Congress do not align with my personal views.

When speaking as a private citizen I will strive to uphold the reputation of the organisation, its members and its staff.

I will respect organisational and individual confidentiality.

Personal gain

I will not personally gain materially or financially from my role as a member of Congress, unless specifically authorised to do so, nor will I permit others to do so as a result of my actions or negligence.

I will use organisational resources responsibly. I will document expenses and seek reimbursement according to procedure.

Congress business

I will abide by Congress governance procedures and practices. I will honour the authority of the Chair and respect his or her role as meeting leader.

I will strive to continuously contribute to Congress business, giving apologies ahead of time to the Chair if unable to participate for an entire online session or a physical meeting. I understand that failure to participate in the business of Congress for three or more sessions equates to a breach of this Code of Conduct.

I will study the agenda and other information shared as a part of session and be prepared to debate and vote on agenda items where required.

Where a vote of Congress takes place, I will accept a majority decision as decisive and final.

Person to Person

I will promote and support core values of IChemE by leadership and example and live up to the trust placed in me by the members in the way I interact with my colleagues, wider membership and staff. Where I also volunteer for IChemE in another role, then I will maintain any separation that is necessary between the roles.

I accept my responsibility to raise issues and questions in an appropriate and sensitive way to ensure that Congress can ensure that the Board of Trustees is informed of members' views in a timely and coherent manner.

I will strive to establish respectful, collegial and courteous relationships with other Congress members and remember that we are all working towards a common goal.

I will remain alert to the ways in which my work and behaviour might affect others and respect the privacy, rights and reputations of other parties and individuals.

If I disagree with a statement made, I will remember to respond to the merit of the argument and not focus on the person who made it. I will avoid name-calling, ad hominem attacks, responding to the way the argument is made and not its content and knee-jerk contradictions, acting in an intimidating and hostile manner at all times.

I will engage in debate and voting according to procedure, maintaining a respectful attitude toward the opinions of others while making my voice heard.

I understand that this Code and all relevant policies apply to my conduct as a member of Congress online, including my participation on the Congress collaboration platform, member-only forum, official social media accounts or direct online correspondence and in face-to-face interactions.

Online, Telephone and Physical Contributions

I commit to abide by the Terms of Use of the relevant online forums in which I participate as a Congress member.

I will treat the online forum with the respect that is expected in any professional shared community that has been created with the aim of sharing skills, knowledge and interests through ongoing conversation.

I will use the tools provided to ensure that the discussion space is kept tidy. This means that I will not repost my posts across different threads but will make considered comment on appropriate topic and session threads. I will use tagging and interact with posts (eg: provide timely replies) to ensure members of Congress work well together.

I will ensure that my behaviour contributes to a civilised online discourse and I will seek to add value to the current debate. I will be respectful of the topics and the people discussing them, even if I disagree with some of what is being said.

I will not post anything that a reasonable person would consider to be offensive, abusive, or would amount to 'hate speech'. I understand that defining these terms is up to other members of Congress (which may be expressed as a 'dislike') and I will seek to do my utmost to avoid causing offence to others.

I understand that if any of my comments are deemed as offensive or inappropriate by my peers or do not comply to the norms of polite social media, I may receive both formal and informal warnings from the Congress Chair and authoring rights and my right to attend meetings may be immediately suspended as a result. Further, if asked, I will comply with requests to provide a written explanation.

I will take note of any warning and comply with decisions.

I understand that receipt of three warnings (whether formal or informal) from the Congress Chair in relation to behaviour in online discussions or elsewhere may be considered to be a substantial breach of this Code of Conduct and will therefore be referred to an appropriately convened panel¹.

I further understand that it is possible for one incident of my behaviour in online or physical discussions to be considered so serious that it may be referred to an appropriately convened panel and, if in the reasonable opinion of that appropriately convened panel they may deem my behaviour to constitute a substantial breach of this Code of Conduct.

I will not encourage behaviour in contradiction to this Code with a reply or acknowledgement but I will bring my concerns to the Chair or a member of the Steering Group.

¹ See footnote 2

Enhancing governance

I will participate in induction, training and development activities for members of Congress.

I will continually seek and suggest ways to improve Congress governance practice.

I will strive to identify good candidates and encourage members to run for Congress to ensure even succession.

I will support the chair in his/her efforts to improve his/her leadership skills.

Leaving Congress

Should I no longer meet the eligibility criteria for my Congress seat, unless I am a Student Member Representative, I will inform the Chair of Congress in writing and vacate my seat at the next AGM regardless of the remaining term.

Should I resign from Congress I will inform the Chair in advance in writing, stating my reasons for resigning. Additionally, I agree to participate in any exit interview process.

Should I no longer wish to continue my role, I will inform Chair of Congress forum in writing.

I understand that any substantial breach of the Code of Conduct may lead to a notification of unacceptable behaviour and a warning or, for any significant breach or breaches (in the reasonable opinion of IChemE), the end to my services as a Congress member or, where appropriate, disciplinary action.

I will cooperate, at all stages, with any investigation that is convened by or under the authority of the Chair. I understand that an appropriately convened panel² will consider the outcome of the investigation, and I will be given an opportunity to respond to the outcome of the investigation, and to state my case in writing, to the panel. In the event of a recommendation of the panel that I should be removed from Congress, that decision will be referred to a vote, which may be taken by secret ballot, of all nonconflicted members of Congress, whose majority decision shall be final, in accordance to Regulation 1B. I will not lobby any other member of Congress in a manner calculated or intended to influence its consideration of that decision. Congress will have been provided with the investigatory report, and my response to the outcome of the investigation before the ballot.

I understand that I may be suspended as a member of Congress during any conduct investigation or disciplinary proceedings, and that such a suspension shall remain in force until I have complied with any reasonable directives of the Congress Chair or their delegate.

Acceptance

I understand that until I have acknowledged that I have completed the induction process, read all relevant documents, and confirmed my commitment to this Code in writing, I am unable to participate as an active Congress member and/or take part in the Congress sessions.

² An appropriately convened panel shall consist of two members of the Steering Group. A member of the Steering Group who has been involved in the relevant incident, or has complained of the behaviour in question, shall not be a member of the panel, save where by the nature of the incident, there are otherwise insufficient members available to form a panel. The panel may meet 'virtually' and need not meet in person and shall consider the results of the investigation and any recommendations, and any written response of the member. The panel shall provide a brief written decision as to their decision and any appropriate sanction. The panel will make such decision on the balance of probability. The member in question may appeal any decision (save for a referral to Congress for a vote for removal) within 21 days of being notified of it, in writing to the Chair (or his/her delegate from the Steering group if s/he was on the panel in question). Grounds for appeal are limited to procedural irregularity of the investigation or the panel, manifest unreasonableness of decision in light of the available evidence at the time of the decision, or new evidence coming to light since the panel decision that would have a material impact on the decision.