

# Code of Conduct for Social Safety

## 1. Introduction

Study Association Nitocra aims to provide a safe and inclusive environment that brings out the best in people, with respect for the diversity within Study Association Nitocra.

Study Association Nitocra is a diverse and inclusive organisation. This means that there is room for differences in the broadest sense of the word. We are proud of the diversity among our members, and we feel it is important that people are treated honestly and with respect. We therefore do not tolerate any form of harassment.

Inclusivity also means that there is room for every member to express their views, regardless of their position or place in the association. Everyone is heard and taken seriously in a respectful manner in this, and we discuss the content with respect for the individual.

A safe and inclusive environment requires an active contribution from everyone involved with Study Association Nitocra. This not only concerns personal behaviour, but also involves a vigilant attitude towards any form of undesirable behaviour. This in turn will provide a space where people are comfortable with voicing their boundaries.

The Code of Conduct for Social Safety aims to promote a safe and inclusive environment by:

- providing a clear definition of undesirable behaviour;
- providing support for members to hold others accountable for violation of the rules of conduct;
- paying attention to the enforcement of the rules of conduct and the sanctions attached to any violation;
- supporting the professional attitude of members by describing the association's expectations.

## 2. Scope and definitions

### 2.1 Scope

This code applies to:

- Members of Study Association Nitocra;
- Alumni of Study Association Nitocra;
- Guests to activities of Study Association Nitocra;
- Benefactors of Study Association Nitocra.

Hereinafter collectively referred to as "persons involved with Study Association Nitocra".

### 2.2 Definitions

#### ***Undesirable behaviour***

Behaviour that is perceived as unwelcome or offensive and which has the purpose or effect of making persons involved with Study Association Nitocra no longer feel safe or comfortable within the association and the behaviour continues after being told to stop.

#### **Types of undesirable behaviour:**

##### ***Aggression and violence***

Undesirable behaviour in which a person is psychologically or physically harassed, intimidated, threatened, or assaulted (in person, online, by phone) in circumstances related to their connection with the association.

Aggression and violence includes, but is not limited to:

- Swearing;



- Throwing objects;
- Pushing;
- Pulling;
- Hindering;
- Grabbing someone and/or blocking their way;
- Spitting;
- Hitting or destroying another person's items and/or property;
- Threats.

Threats can be made with words or through the use of physical force. The purpose of the threat is to influence someone's behaviour by instilling fear.

Examples of threats are:

- The threat of negative consequences (e.g. death or physical or mental violence);
- The – potentially unjustified – filing of a complaint, about a person, the person's loved ones or the person's property;
- Blackmail.

### ***Discrimination***

Undesirable behaviour in which improper distinction is made between groups or individuals with regard to religion, world view, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, political affiliation, disability, skin colour, age, education level and appearance or otherwise as referred to in Article 1 of the Constitution that is unwelcome or unwanted, or is reasonably perceived as such by the person confronted with it.

### ***Intimidation***

Undesirable behaviour that has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person and of creating a threatening, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.

For example:

- Putting unacceptable pressure on someone (e.g. peer pressure);
- Abusing a position of power in relation to positions within the association;
- Publicly embarrassing someone.

Stalking is a specific form of intimidation. Stalking is deliberately and systematically harassing and/or intrusively following someone with the result that the person no longer feels safe. Stalking can take place at work, at home, online, or in public.

Examples of stalking are:

- Following someone;
- Threatening with violence;
- Unsolicited phone calls and messages;
- Ordering something in someone else's name.

### ***Sexual harassment***

Undesirable behaviour in the form of any unwanted sexual advances (verbal, non-verbal, or physical), unwanted sexual attention or behaviour with sexual connotations. The basis of sexual harassment is the absence of consent. Sexual activity requires consent, which is defined as a positive, unambiguous, and voluntary agreement to specific sexual activity during a sexual encounter.

Examples of sexual harassment are:



- Sexually-oriented comments and swear words;
- Sexually-oriented jokes, messages, pictures, or gestures;
- Staring on purpose or asking intimate questions;
- Sending unsolicited pornographic images or texts or looking at the same deliberately within view of others;
- Grabbing someone, blocking their way;
- Sexual assault and rape.
- In cases of sexually inappropriate behavior, the Board will support the victim by assisting them in contacting “Centrum Seksueel Geweld” (0800-0188).

### **Bullying**

Undesirable behaviour that involves systematically and severely hindering or harassing someone or causing physical or emotional distress, aimed at the same person, often over a prolonged period. Bullying within the organisation is the systematic action of causing psychological, physical, or sexual distress — orally, in writing, or virtually (cyberbullying) — by one person or a group, as a result of which the reporter can no longer function optimally within the organisation.

Bullying takes many forms, including:

- Forcing someone into social isolation, such as by not inviting them for a social event or by not talking to them;
- Hindering someone to partake in events, for example, withholding vital information, removing someone’s name from signup sheets;
- Embarrassing someone, exaggerating mistakes, humiliating someone;
- Spreading libel and slander or maliciously gossiping about someone.

### **Complaint/report**

We speak of a “complaint” and a “report” of undesirable behaviour when those involved discuss or describe, in formal or informal contact with a board member or confidential contact person, a concrete event in dealing with the other person that has been experienced as undesirable. The term “report” is also used when describing an official report submitted in accordance with Section 5.

### **3. Undesirable behaviour**

Study Association Nitocra sees undesirable behaviour as behaviour that is perceived as unwelcome or offensive and which has the purpose or effect of making persons involved with Study Association Nitocra no longer feel safe or comfortable. So it does not primarily relate to the intention of the offender, but about how the recipient perceives it.

Where the line is drawn between desirable and undesirable behaviour is different for everyone. It will therefore always be necessary to carefully determine which type of unacceptable behaviour has occurred, and the behaviours will be tested against this Code of Conduct.

Study Association Nitocra rejects any form of undesirable behaviour. Study Association Nitocra implements a zero-tolerance policy on a number of specific behaviours. This means that these behaviours — independent of intentions or context — are never acceptable and that in the case of objectively established zero-tolerance behaviours, appropriate action in the form of a sanction will be taken immediately.

Zero-tolerance behaviour includes:

- *Verbal aggression*: yelling at a person or a group of people, swearing at a person or group of people;



- *Physical aggression*: every type of physical aggression;
- *Sexual harassment*: touching without consent of the person involved, looking at pornographic images in view of others, sending pornographic images, using sexually oriented swear words. Sexual assault and rape;
- *Stalking*: every type of stalking;
- *Discrimination*: every type of discrimination;
- *Threats*: every type of threat.

#### **4. Expectations**

Study Association Nitocra expects persons involved with Study Association Nitocra not to display undesirable behaviour. Undesirable behaviour should therefore always be addressed, and persons involved with Study Association Nitocra are expected to be open to being held accountable for their behaviour. In most cases addressing those involved directly is the first step in stopping the undesirable behaviour. This Code of Conduct provides a framework for assessing behaviour.

Persons involved with Study Association Nitocra play different roles. Study Association Nitocra is keen to specifically articulate the expectations in the context of social safety for a number of roles.

##### **Confidential contact person**

A confidential contact person is the first point of contact for anyone who is dealing with, or has questions about, transgressive behaviour. The confidential contact person offers a listening ear, gives advice and refers. They also advise and encourage the association about possible preventive measures.

A confidential contact person does not handle complaints themselves but points the way to a good solution. They are well aware of the available support options, inform people about procedures and possible next steps or refer to the confidential counsellors of WUR, who are trained to provide substantive guidance.

The confidential contact person is obliged to keep the information confidential, and as such, provide a safe channel for reporting or talking about anything regardless of the severity. They will treat the person with respect and ensure privacy, confidentiality, and neutrality.

The confidential contact person of S.A. Nitocra can be contacted by the contact details that can be found on the private part of the Nitocra website ([nitocra.nl](http://nitocra.nl)).

##### **Board members**

Board members must set an example for the association. They are expected to be aware of the existing dependency and power inequality in relation to other persons involved with Nitocra. Board members must strive that private and/or professional interests do not mix.

Board members are responsible for maintaining a safe and positive environment in the association. This includes being aware of and responsive to any concerns or incidents that may arise and ensuring a safe and inclusive environment for all persons involved with Study Association Nitocra. Board members must also be open to being held accountable themselves.

In order to achieve this, Board members are expected to be open and approachable, asking for feedback, recognising undesirable behaviour and making it a topic for discussion, and, if necessary, initiate interventions aimed at stopping undesirable behaviour and towards structurally improving the association's environment.



Board members will provide a safe channel for reporting and will always take any type of formal or informal report of undesirable behaviour seriously. Board members will take responsibility for the report, will treat both reporter and defendant with respect, and will take appropriate measures in which the Board members and reporter will protect the defendant by ensuring privacy, confidentiality and neutrality. The board will provide support for both the reporter and the defendant.

### **Persons involved with Study Association Nitocra**

Members, including Board members, and other persons involved with Study Association Nitocra are expected to be respectful towards all persons involved with Study Association Nitocra. This applies to all events and activities of the association, so also to social events. It also applies to external events that the person involved with Study Association Nitocra attends as a Nitocra member. Persons involved with Study Association Nitocra are encouraged to directly address those involved as a first step in stopping the undesirable behaviour.

### **Bystanders**

Bystanders are asked to play an active part if they witness unacceptable behaviour. This includes actively intervening in the situation, such as by speaking out against the unacceptable behaviour or by persuading others to respond to the unacceptable behaviour while also taking their own safety into account.

There are situations where there is a culture of behaviour in which undesirable behaviour is normalised or does not seem to be perceived as undesirable. Some examples are sexually charged jokes and innuendo. In that case, bystanders can report to a Board member or to a confidential contact person.

## **5. Reporting undesirable behaviour**

It is important that undesirable behaviour is addressed: either by addressing those involved directly or by contacting a third party. In most cases addressing those involved directly will suffice and this is encouraged by Study Association Nitocra. Study Association Nitocra places great importance on reports of undesirable behaviour and wants to remove any obstacles with regard to reporting. A report can be made in any formal or informal way.

A report can be made with the Board or with a confidential contact person. Study Association Nitocra takes every report seriously and encourages persons involved with Study Association Nitocra and bystanders to make a report when undesirable behaviour has occurred. Every report deserves a follow-up, aimed at stopping the undesirable behaviour. In the process of handling reports, Study Association Nitocra aims to respect reporter and defendants.

Study Association Nitocra ensures the safety of the reporter so that reporter is not negatively affected by their report. Reporting anonymously is possible (as well as remaining anonymous), but it is encouraged to make a personal report to reduce the chances of a false accusation. In the event of criminal offences, reporting to the police is strongly recommended.

## **6. Compliance and enforcement**

Study Association Nitocra does not tolerate, condone, or ignore undesirable behaviour. Displaying undesirable behaviour cannot be without consequence. Undesirable behaviour may result in different measures. Finding an appropriate measure requires careful consideration. Often a conciliatory



meeting, making agreements, mediation, or an apology will suffice. Sometimes, more severe measures, such as the suspension or the expulsion of a member, are appropriate.

In the event of a violation of the Code of Conduct, the Board or general members meeting can take measures, such as a warning, or (temporary) exclusion of activities of the association, and in extreme cases, termination or suspension of the membership of the association, all in line with the statutes and internal regulations. The Board also has the right to deny membership to a person if social safety concerns about this person have been reported. Board members must be held accountable for their actions. Measures, including suspension from the board and termination of membership, can be taken by the executive board or the general members assembly in line with the statutes of Study Association Nitocra.

Article 3.5 of the Study Association Nitocra Statutes specifies that a member may be suspended for a maximum of three months. During this suspension period, the member cannot exercise their membership rights. However, their membership obligations remain in effect.

Before appropriate measures are taken, an investigation, for example in the form of a conversation with both the reporter, defendant and possible other persons involved, will always be conducted during which the facts must be properly established, relevant circumstances must be considered, and a hearing must take place. Depending on the severity and the context, the investigation will be conducted by the Board or by an external party. If necessary, further measures such as suspension during the investigation may be taken pending the outcome.

If there is a justified suspicion of a criminal offense, Study Association Nitocra may hand the matter over to the relevant authorities, such as the police. For some serious offences, Study Association Nitocra is legally obliged to report them to the police (Phone number: 0900-8844).

### **6.1 Assessment framework**

When imposing an appropriate measure or sanction, it is not only about the identified undesirable behaviour but also about the nature and intention of the defendant, the circumstances under which the behaviour took place, and the impact on the victim.

In any case, the following aspects are weighed in determining an appropriate measure for persons who have demonstrably engaged in undesirable behaviour:

- The severity of the behaviour and the context in which the behaviour took place;
- The question of whether it relates to a single occurrence of behaviour or whether it is a repeat offence or part of a behavioural pattern;
- The question of whether the defendant(s) can reflect on their own behaviour, are remorseful, and are able to learn a different behavioural pattern;
- The question whether the defendant(s) were held accountable or warned before;
- The extent to which the safety of others is at stake;
- Personal circumstances of the defendant(s).

### **7. Conclusion**

Study Association Nitocra sees social safety as an essential pillar of its foundation. Every person involved with Study Association Nitocra is personally responsible and accountable for their own behaviour. This Code of Conduct provides clear standards in relation to the norms for desired behaviour, but no Code of Conduct can include every situation that people may find themselves in. When faced with questions or dilemmas about what to do, the recommendation is always to coordinate internally and in a friendly, professional way whenever possible. The Board and all parties involved are committed to responding quickly and appropriately to incidents while adhering to this code of conduct, the by-laws, rules from the WUR and Dutch law.