

# MSL Code of Conduct

Words **bolded** on the first instance of their use in the document have been defined in the appendix (found on MSL website: <https://www.msl.ubc.ca/about-us/code-of-conduct/>).

## 1. General

- 1.1 All personnel of the Michael Smith Laboratories (MSL), including visiting scientists and visiting trainees, agree to abide by the MSL Code of Conduct (hereafter referred to as the MSL COC).
- 1.2 The MSL COC is guided by the resources of the Equity & Inclusion Office and is in line with UBC's policies and BC's Human Rights Code.
- 1.3 The MSL COC applies to all MSL personnel regardless of seniority, level of authority, or status, and will provide all personnel with guidelines for appropriate professional behavior.
- 1.4 The MSL COC applies to all MSL personnel, regardless of their working location.
- 1.5 MSL personnel share responsibility for ensuring and maintaining an environment that is equitable and free from **discrimination**.

## 2. Expectations for the creation and maintenance of a respectful work environment

Concordant with the UBC Statement on Respectful Work Environments for Students, Faculty, and Staff, MSL values respect, **diversity**, **equity**, and **inclusion**, with the ultimate goal of providing a respectful, safe environment for everyone. To achieve this environment, all MSL members and visitors are expected to:

- 2.1 Comply with the UBC Statement on Respectful Work Environments for Students, Faculty, and Staff.
- 2.2 Treat others with respect and dignity.
- 2.3 Interact with others in a professional manner in any form of communication (written, electronic, signs, oral).
- 2.4 Be respectful of the viewpoints, opinions, and lived experiences of others.
- 2.5 Be aware of and never participate in behaviors harmful to others. Examples of harmful behaviors can be found in detail in the UBC Statement on Respectful Work Environments for Students, Faculty, and Staff. The following are condemned by the MSL, and include, but are not limited to:
  - **Bullying and harassment**, even if intended in a joking manner.
  - **Identity-based discrimination** in any form of communication.
  - **Sexual misconduct**
  - **Publication of private communications** (text, verbal, images) without the explicit consent of the other party. This includes, but are not limited to, online posts (e.g. social media), segregated private groups of any kind, sending images to friends.

## 3. Communication in a culturally diverse work environment

MSL recognizes that communication is an important part of our work spaces and that breakdown in or barriers to communication can lead to conflicts. Our experiences, perceptions, cultural/ethnic background and environmental societal norms inform our

**default culture** that plays an important role in communication style including delivery and receipt. Understanding and demonstrating awareness of various contextualizations around communication practices will help to reduce these barriers. All MSL members are encouraged to think about these differences and how they affect their communication with others in the community. As a guide to these issues, please see the document on the final page titled “Communication in a diverse workplace”.

#### 4. **Sexual misconduct**

Concordant with the UBC Sexual Misconduct Policy, MSL supports members of the community who are affected by sexual misconduct. MSL recognizes that people’s experiences will be affected by factors such as power imbalances and privilege, their sex, sexual identity, gender identity or expression, racialization, age, family status, religion, faith, ability, disability, national or ethnic origin, Indigeneity, immigration status, socio-economic status, class, and language. These impact individual experiences of sexual misconduct, the ability to access supports, and limit choices. MSL does not tolerate **sexual harassment, sexual assault** or any other **sexual misconduct**. UBC has established policies, procedures, support services and an investigation office for individuals who have been subjected to any of these violations. As such, the MSL is committed to ensuring that all individuals have the information and support they need to access these services.

For more information about UBC’s Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office (SVPRO) please visit their website: <https://svpro.ubc.ca/>

Also available for support is the AMS Sexual Assault Support Centre (ASAC): <https://www.amssasc.ca/>

#### 5. **Academic freedom**

Scholars have the freedom to teach, exchange ideas or facts, select research topics or teams and other activities, without being targeted for repression, job loss, or imprisonment. The MSL COC should not be interpreted or used to limit this **Academic freedom**. However, Academic freedom does not mean giving a partisan platform for discriminatory ideas (which is fundamentally different from a debate where all academic viewpoints are allowed) or being free from critique or condemnation. Expression within academic disciplines is limited by agreed upon scientific standards of evidence.

For More information on UBC’s policies on academic freedom visit: <https://academic.ubc.ca/academic-freedom>

#### 6. **Employment equity**

MSL is committed to UBC’s Policy on Employment Equity. For more information please visit <https://equity.ubc.ca/how-we-can-help/employment-equity/>

#### 7. **Confidentiality and privacy**

MSL personnel will adhere to all regulations and guidelines specified in the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA), which governs the protection of personal information from any unauthorized collection, use or disclosure to protect

confidentiality and privacy. For more information, please visit <https://universitycounsel.ubc.ca/subject-areas/access-and-privacy-general/useful-resources/>

Additionally, MSL personnel will not publicly disclose information that reveals or implies another individual's **2SLGBTQIA+** status, personal (e.g., religious or political) beliefs or personal lifestyle choices, and/or biographical information without the consent of that individual.

## Communication in a diverse work environment

A culture bump “is described as a phenomenon that occurs when an individual has expectations about another person's behavior within a particular situation, but encounters a different behavior in that situation when interacting with an individual from a different culture Archer (1991).[1]” While it is impossible to be well versed in every style of communication, when you encounter a culture bump, having a discussion around communication style will set the ground for dialogue that will be respectful for all parties involved.

### **Conduct around communication in a diverse work environment:**

**Verbal communication:** Keep your language clear, succinct and concise. Avoid using jargons, slang, ambiguous terms and euphemisms. Listen with the intent to hear and not just to respond.

**Non-verbal communication:** Body language, including hand gestures, facial expressions and postures mean different things culturally. Hand shaking, physical space, direct eye contact etc. are all non-verbal cues that can be misinterpreted. Be aware of the signals being shown or being projected. When in doubt ask and come to an agreement.

**Written communication:** Generally, in written communication tone or intent of the sender may be received differently by the reader. Writing in all caps may be interpreted in various ways by different individuals. When providing written communication, avoid “you” statements if not relevant. Work towards using neutral language and practice the same rules as you would for verbal communication (i.e. avoid slangs, etc.). Avoid using abbreviations unless it is relevant and common knowledge in the workplace.

**Employ reflective listening or paraphrasing.** When appropriate during the conversation, try to paraphrase and repeat the message back to the person (s) communicating. Ask for clarification rather than assume. Refrain from judging the message and work towards understanding the message.

**Be open and inclusive of other cultures and their communication styles.** It is natural to fall back on our default culture style of communication and desire others to assimilate. However it is more valuable, respectful and inclusive if other cultural styles of communication are welcomed and even practiced, as appropriate. Refrain from minimizing, judging or dismissing other styles of communication as “abnormal” and rather practice cultural sensitivity by listening and being open to adjust as well.

[1] Archer, C. M. (1991). Living with strangers in the USA: Communicating beyond culture. Prentice Hall.