

ISI Community Principles

If you have recently visited the [What is ISI](#) page on the ISI website, you may have noticed a new page called [Community Principles](#).

In 2014 I wrote a draft statement (“Statement of principle of international cooperation, harmony and tolerance in pursuing the ISI Mission”) intended to go on the Mission & Objectives page, after Objectives. This was not pursued at that time, but when the Executive Committee decided recently to write a statement about expected behaviour, I circulated my 2014 statement. We added a sentence, made some adjustments, changed the title and circulated it to Association Presidents and Council members for feedback and comment. The response was the fastest I have ever seen and unanimous in full support and approval; thank you to Associations and Council.



Part of the Statement reads as follows:

As an international organisation, ISI is committed to acknowledging and taking account of all and any sensitivities across the diversity of individuals, countries and regions. We encourage transparency and openness, while respecting the privacy of the members of our community.

ISI is committed to providing a professional environment free from discrimination on the basis of sex, race, colour, religion, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, and politics.

One of the challenges of a truly international and global community is also one of its benefits and achievements. It is far from easy to step outside one's own reference framework of experience, culture and country, particularly recently with effects of conflict, inequity, populism and natural disasters. But, in coming together as a true statistical community, we are enriched by our diversity. This is demonstrated again and again in the special quality of World Statistics Congresses and Association conferences about which participants invariably comment on the importance and invigoration of meeting, greeting, introducing, putting faces to names, of connecting, and interacting.

Data have never been so important or so emphasized, and, no matter what our differences, we are also a community of defence of statistical and data integrity. It is ironic that only some short years after evidence-based decision-making was a popular term, we are now in an era where distortion, concealment, (genuine) fake news and lies are too often viewed as normal, and where statisticians can be persecuted for adhering to statistical integrity. It is doubly ironic given the importance placed on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Wherever there are data, variation and uncertainty, there need to be statistics and statistical thinking.

The Statement also includes:

Debate is recognised and welcomed as a critical part of decision-making; however, we expect this to occur in an atmosphere of civility and respect.

You may have seen or heard that a number of professional societies, including statistical ones, have been putting up statements about appropriate behaviour at conferences and in general. There have never been reports or rumours about any type of disrespectful or harassment behaviour at ISI conferences or events, but the Executive Committee decided to be proactive with an appropriate general statement which can be quoted and referred to. We must not naively believe that we are immune, and we must always never ignore inappropriate behaviour. WSC and other ISI event websites will refer to the Community Principles with a statement about expected behaviour.

I hope all members are as pleased to see this statement of Community Principles as was Council and the Association presidents.

Helen MacGillivray
ISI President