



Code of Conduct

Fundamental Principles and Scope

CRANE is committed to creating an inclusive and supportive environment, where all staff and members feel welcomed and accepted - irrespective of background, beliefs and cultures. We all share a responsibility to actively foster this environment.

Freedom of speech¹. CRANE recognises that freedom of speech enables the pursuit of knowledge. Freedom of speech and academic freedom are protected by law though these rights must be exercised within the law. They are a core foundation of this code of conduct. Vigorous academic debate will not amount to harassment when it is conducted respectfully and without violating the dignity of others or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

All CRANE members, including staff, and external stakeholders, are expected to adhere to this Code of Conduct.

By adhering to these principles, we aim to foster a collaborative and respectful environment conducive to academic and personal growth for all members of CRANE.

All CRANE members are expected to adhere to their own institution's harassment-related and equality policies when interacting within the network.

1. Expectations and Standards of Behaviour

In particular, we set out the following expectations:

- Dignity and respect. Treat one another with dignity and respect, appreciating all forms of diversity and having an awareness and consideration of others.
- Recognition of differences. Recognise that differences can lead to varying expectations and interpretations of behaviour but should be respectful of others' opinions and feelings.
- Constructive interaction. Work constructively to make others feel supported and included - actively encourage participation and recognise the benefit of hearing from diverse voices.
- Professional Conduct. Build relationships based on mutual respect and professionalism, and help maintain an environment free from discrimination, bullying, and harassment. We expect members of the network to follow their institution's harassment-related policy, and to complete their institutional training on equality and/or harassment.
- Inclusive language. Acknowledge differences among people and communicate in an inclusive way.

¹ [Regulatory advice 24: Guidance related to freedom of speech - Office for Students](#) - The guidance, effective from 1 August 2025, relates to free speech duties under the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023. As the regulator for Higher Education in England, the OfS regulates matters relating to free speech and academic freedom.



- Awareness. Engage with relevant training and awareness events and resources offered by CRANE.

2. Preventing bullying and harassment

CRANE is committed to fostering an inclusive environment for all members, aiming to prevent any form of harassment or victimisation. We expect all members of our community and its external stakeholders to treat each other with respect, fairness, and consideration. CRANE adheres and follows its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. For further information, please refer to the harassment-related policy of your institution.

Specific Contexts: CRANE staff and members must be aware of any power dynamics - including those related to seniority, gender or other social identities- in relationships and avoid any form of bullying, harassment or discrimination. Those providing feedback need to ensure feedback is focused on the work and tailored to experience level, and interactions are always respectful.

3. Responsibilities of moderators, organisers and Chairs of meetings at online and face to face environments

Setting expectations. Moderators, organisers and Chairs have a responsibility for promoting and delivering the principles of the Code of Conduct. Expectations of behaviour should be clear in all contexts. Different ways to do this can include: by signposting this Code of Conduct; by starting every meeting with a reference to respect and expected behaviours.

Intervention. Moderators, organisers and Chairs must challenge poor interactions and/or share appropriate feedback with participants to avoid further instances or escalation.

Promoting inclusion and respectful communication. Moderators, organisers and Chairs must remind participants of the importance of respectful behaviour and constructive communication. They must also offer support to new members or those who could be less familiar with specific forms of interaction.

4. Conferences and events

Conferences, network activities, meetings and events should provide a respectful and inclusive environment conducive to the free exchange of ideas. Participants are expected to abide by this Code of Conduct.

Freedom of speech. Freedom of speech and academic freedom are protected by law though these rights must be exercised within the law. Vigorous academic debate will not amount to harassment when it is conducted respectfully and without violating the dignity of others or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

While open discussions, debates and challenge are essential elements of academic interaction, they should be conducted with respect for all involved.

Respectful Interaction. Challenges should be directed towards ideas and should never be personal attacks on individuals expressing them. Participants should be aware of



how impactful tone, language, including body language, are. Aggressive or intimidating language is not acceptable, and disruptive behaviour such as persistent intervention or repetition of remarks or questions must be avoided. All participants must respond appropriately to requests from the Chair.

Responsibility of Organisers and Chairs. Organisers and chairs of events and meetings have a responsibility for promoting and delivering these principles. Expectations should be clearly set out to participants, for example, sharing this Code of Conduct in advance, and/or stating the event rules during an introduction. The Chair of an event must challenge poor interactions and/or share appropriate feedback with participants to avoid further instances or escalation.

Inclusive Participation. Chairs and moderators should actively ensure balanced participation. They should be mindful of potential biases – for example, unintentionally giving preference to certain groups (such as men or more senior participants) when selecting questions or contributions – and take steps to encourage a diversity of voices in discussions.

Respectful Communication. All participants are expected to communicate respectfully and professionally. Avoid expressions or assumptions that exclude, stereotype, or diminish others based on characteristics such as gender, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, career stage, or background

Supporting Less Experienced Members/Speakers. Organisers should provide support to less experienced members, for example, by fostering a constructive atmosphere when they present, allowing only clarification questions during their presentations, or reserving more detailed questions for afterwards.

5. Support and Awareness Resources

CRANE aims to highlight resources to help members understand and adhere to the conduct standards, and any awareness workshop designed to support the network.

Workshop Engagement. CRANE will encourage engagement in relevant sessions and through awareness resources or events across the network.

Active Bystander Workshop. To support CRANE members to respond confidently if inappropriate behaviour or language is seen or heard, Active Bystander Workshops will be offered annually, and participation will be encouraged.

6. Addressing and Resolving Incidents.

Seeking Support. If behaviour violates the Code of Conduct, anyone who experiences or witnesses it is encouraged to raise concerns as soon as possible through the following routes:

- Designated event contact. CRANE events will identify a designated contact for Code of Conduct concerns, support, and guidance.
- University Reporting Channels. Depending on local procedures, these options may include:
 - Speaking to a supervisor, line manager, or HR team.
 - Speaking confidentially to a Harassment Advisor (trained to listen and provide guidance without initiating a formal process).



- Utilising an informal resolution service (if available), which involves trained resolvers supporting parties involved through a collaborative process.
- Formal Process. Formal complaints will be handled in accordance with the relevant University's Harassment Policy. Consulting a Harassment Advisor is recommended for guidance through this process.
- Cross-University Incidents. When incidents involve individuals from different Universities, the matter is to be raised with the institution of the person whose conduct is in question, as that is where formal procedures can be followed. If the incident occurs at an event hosted by another University, the host institution may also be informed so that appropriate steps can be taken to ensure a safe and respectful environment.
- Reporting to CRANE. To report the incident to CRANE, write to our EDI contact, Rosa Arias-Yague at edi@cs.ox.ac.uk. Such reports help the network monitor the environment and improve future practice.

Consequences of Breach. Anyone asked to cease unacceptable behaviour is expected to comply promptly and without delay.

If a CRANE Network+ member engages in behaviour that violates this Code of Conduct, the CRANE Management Group may take proportionate and appropriate action, taking into account the severity of the behaviour, its impact, and whether it forms part of a pattern of conduct. Such action may include, but is not limited to, temporary or permanent exclusion from Network events or activities.

A breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action. Breaches of behaviour or conduct in members working for CRANE should be reported to the appropriate level of management. If a criminal offence is suspected the matter may be reported to the police or other relevant authorities.

Please get in touch if you would like to suggest improvements or provide feedback on this Code of Conduct.

Code of Conduct owner: CRANE Management Group

Policy Approved by CRANE Management Group 20/05/2026

Revisions will be undertaken as needed.