

ePIC Code of Conduct Policy
Version 2.1 - July 2026
Updated after the ePIC Charter Revision (May 2026)

This document outlines expectations for ethical professional behavior that all members of the ePIC collaboration must follow and how any violations of this code of conduct will be addressed. These expectations are based on the values of the ePIC collaboration.

1. Statement of Values:

The ePIC Collaboration is a diverse international scientific community working collectively to design, construct, commission and operate the ePIC detector to exploit the physics potential of the Electron-Ion Collider. The success of the ePIC Collaboration relies on contributions from all members. Therefore, the ePIC Collaboration strives to provide a welcoming, accessible, safe, and supportive environment free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, where all collaborators representing various cultures and identities are fully included, respected and able to contribute their best work. Sustaining such a peaceful professional environment is the responsibility of all collaboration members.

2. Applicability:

The ePIC Code of Conduct applies to any interaction which would not have occurred without ePIC. This includes not only internal ePIC meetings but also any social gatherings around those meetings, such as dinners and coffee breaks, as well as any meetings or online interactions where someone represents or could reasonably be assumed to represent the ePIC Collaboration.

3. Professional Conduct and Collaboration Culture:

Professional behavior is essential and all Collaboration members are responsible for fostering a respectful, productive and collaborative environment. Therefore, all collaboration members are expected to complete and stay current with the Professional Conduct and Collaboration Culture Training, which will be developed by the Collaboration Culture Committee (CCC) committee specifically for the ePIC collaboration. This requirement includes completing the initial Professional Conduct and Collaboration Culture Training within one year of adopting this policy or within six months of joining the Collaboration. As the collaboration and society evolves, additional training may be implemented by the CCC committee but will not exceed more than 1 required training course per year. Such training will be designed to address the needs of

the Collaboration and will be offered several times throughout the year and at various times via an online format.

The basis of professional behavior includes but is not limited to respectful communication, teamwork and integrity. Collaborators must treat everyone with respect, regardless of their position, age, sex, gender, gender identity, ability, race, nationality, ethnicity, or appearance. Everyone must be given a chance to contribute to discussions. Collaborators should listen actively to others and value their opinions, even if (or particularly when) they differ from their own. Collaborators should be mindful of cultural differences and avoid making insensitive or offensive remarks and avoid comments on physical appearance, even when well-intentioned. We understand that even well-intentioned remarks can have a hurtful impact but we all make mistakes. When called out, one should apologize instead of becoming defensive. Likewise, collaborators should avoid physical contact, unless they have confirmed the other person's consent.

Successful collaboration and teamwork require fostering a collaborative spirit and willingness to share ideas, data, and resources in an environment free from any forms of harassment, discrimination, or bullying. Collaborators must give credit for the original work of others and acknowledge those contributions. They must also be willing to learn from others which requires being open to feedback and constructive criticism.

Collaborators will follow ethical practices and uphold the integrity of the collaboration and the scientific method. This includes demonstrating impartiality. Collaborators must be honest and transparent in their communication and actions. This includes avoiding conflicts of interest and disclosing any potential conflicts of interest promptly. A conflict of interest arises when the personal interests of an individual might adversely affect their duty to make decisions for the benefit of the collaboration. Note that the appearance of conflicts of interest is relevant, not only when the individual feels conflicted. Conflicts of interest can include romantic relationships (disclosure does not need to include the reason or details of a conflict). Collaborators must also maintain appropriate confidentiality of information received as part of committee duties. Likewise collaborators must safeguard information, documents or data internal to the Collaboration, and ensure that such material in our possession is appropriately used and protected.

ePIC will maintain a healthy and safe work environment which requires all collaborators to comply with local safety rules. Collaborators are expected to know and follow applicable laws and regulations.

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72 4. Addressing Violations of the Code of Conduct

73 To ensure that the Code of Conduct is upheld, this section describes the procedures for
74 reporting and handling the reports of violations. The CCC committee will report to the
75 Collaboration Council at least annually on the statistics of reported violations and their
76 handling.

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78 **4.1 Reporting Violations**

79 Individuals who experience or witness any behavior that violates the Code of Conduct
80 are encouraged to report the incident as soon as possible. Violations of the Code of
81 Conduct should be reported to any member of the CCC, the Spokesperson and/or the
82 Collaboration Council (CC) leadership. . The CCC Committee will be notified of all
83 reports and will ensure the procedures described in section 4.2 of this policy are
84 followed. When necessary or required by law, outside parties including local, state, and
85 federal authorities, and people's home institutions will be notified. The relevant
86 collaboration council representative shall also be consulted in such cases.

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88 **4.2 Handling Violations**

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90 All reports of violations will be subject to the following procedure which includes a timely
91 assessment of the reported incident and recommended response. Anyone with a
92 conflict of interest must recuse themselves from participating in any deliberations or
93 decisions in the process. In the event that a misconduct issue cannot be resolved
94 through standard procedures, or if it involves one or more members of the CCC, the CC
95 Chair shall appoint an ad-hoc committee of uninvolved CC members. This committee
96 will review the case, consult with the parties involved, and propose a fair and balanced
97 resolution.

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99 **A. Assessment:**

100 Upon receiving a report, the CCC committee will consult with the Spokesperson's
101 Office and Collaboration Council Chairs. It will conduct an initial review to determine if
102 the reported behavior could violate the Code of Conduct. If the initial review indicates a
103 potential violation, the CCC committee will form a hearing committee of at least three
104 Collaboration members, who are not career-vulnerable, to conduct interviews with the
105 parties involved and witnesses, and review any relevant documents or materials. Input
106 from the relevant parties may be considered when determining the hearing committee
107 membership. The assessment period must be completed in a timely manner and should
108 not exceed six months.

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110 **B. Interim Measures:**

111 During the assessment of the alleged violation, interim measures may be taken to
112 ensure the safety and well-being of collaborators. The CCC committee will recommend

appropriate interim measures as warranted to the Spokespersons. These measures may include, but are not limited to, temporary suspension of the accused individual from attending meetings, no-contact order, alerting local, state, and federal authorities, and/or refusal from deliberations. These measures will be initially effective for a period of 90 days but may be extended as needed for no longer than six months.

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119 **C. Resolution and Disciplinary Action:**

120 Upon completion of the assessment, the hearing committee and the CCC committee
121 will recommend appropriate action.

122 Three tiers of possible actions are foreseen:

123 **Tier 1.** In case of minor violations and with the cooperation of the accused, no formal
124 decision is needed by the Spokesperson's Office or the Collaboration Council.
125 Examples of Tier 1 actions may include but are not limited to:

- 126 • Mediation or verbal discussion of the incident with relevant parties
- 127 • No sanction, but a maintained record of the incident
- 128 • Written warning;
- 129 • Voluntary no-contact agreement;
- 130 • Voluntary refusal from deliberations;
- 131 • Voluntary hiatus and/or resignation from leadership role(s).

132 **Tier 2.** In cases where cooperation and voluntary acts are impractical or impossible,
133 actions are applied after deliberation among the Spokesperson's Office, Collaboration
134 Council Chairs and the CCC Committee, subject to a simple majority vote among the
135 voting members. Voting members here refers to all members of the CCC committee,
136 the Spokesperson's Office and the Collaboration Council Chairs who have not refused
137 themselves. Anyone with a conflict of interest must refuse themselves but others may also
138 choose to do so. Examples of Tier 2 actions may include but is not limited to:

- 139 • Involuntary no-contact order;
- 140 • Involuntary refusal from deliberations;
- 141 • Involuntary hiatus and/or removal from leadership role(s).

142 **Tier 3.** In very serious cases, actions may be necessary that require the entire
143 Collaboration Council to weigh in, and the case may need to be escalated to the CC
144 Chair for action under the Collaboration Charter procedures. The motion to escalate can
145 be made by any member of the hearing committee or CCC committee. After deliberation
146 among the Spokesperson's Office, Collaboration Council Chairs and the CCC
147 Committee, the decision about escalation is then subject to a simple majority vote
148 among all members of the CCC committee, the Spokesperson's Office and the
149 Collaboration Council Chairs who have not refused themselves. Anyone with a conflict
150 of interest must refuse themselves but others may also choose to do so. Examples of Tier
151 3 actions may include but is not limited to:

- 152 • Suspension or permanent exclusion from in-person Collaboration events;

- 153 • Suspension or removal from email lists;
- 154 • Suspension or permanent exclusion from giving talks on behalf of the
- 155 Collaboration;
- 156 • Expulsion from the Collaboration with the right to reapply after a fixed duration;
- 157 • Expulsion from the Collaboration with no right of reapplication;
- 158 • Notification to the appropriate funding agency.

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160 **D. Appeals**

161 Individuals dissatisfied with the resolution of their report or the interim measures may
162 appeal the decision. All appeals must be submitted to the CCC committee and
163 Collaboration Council chairs with a justification of the appeal that should include new
164 evidence or information about the case. When the CC chairs receive a request for an
165 appeal, they will determine if the appeal warrants a formal review. For an appeal to
166 move to the review process, it must be a decision not previously appealed and reviewed
167 by an ad hoc appeal committee, there must be new evidence or information available or
168 proof of a flaw in the original process. The CC chairs will form an ad hoc committee of 3
169 members of the Collaboration Council that will serve as a review board for an appeal.
170 Upon notification of the committee's composition, the individual submitting the appeal
171 may request the recusal of a committee member by providing a written justification
172 based on a potential conflict of interest or bias. The CC chairs and the CCC committee
173 will review the justification and hold the final authority to approve or deny the recusal
174 request. The CCC committee will provide the review board with a summary of the
175 reported violation, the procedures followed and rationale that led to the imposed
176 sanction. The review board will meet with the person who submitted the appeal and
177 review any new information provided. The review board will make a summary of their
178 findings and provide a recommendation. This recommendation may be to deny the
179 appeal and uphold the original sanction, alter the previous sanction, or recommend a
180 majority vote of the Collaboration Council to repeal the previous sanction.

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184 **4.3 No Retaliation:**

185 The Collaboration strictly prohibits any form of retaliation against individuals who report
186 violations of the Code of Conduct or participate in the investigation process.

187 A deliberate false accusation or retaliation is itself a serious violation and will be subject
188 to disciplinary action.