

American Association of Certified Orthoptists
POLICY STATEMENT
Participants in AACO Conferences and Events

Policy:

It is the intent of the American Association of Certified Orthoptists (“AACO” or “the Association”) that all attendees at sponsored conferences and events be able to participate in an environment of respect and fairness. Further, the AACO strives to adhere to all requirements which pertain to continuing education accreditation, as well as applicable regulations and laws.

Background:

The AACO Board of Directors believes that all events sponsored by the organization should occur in a welcoming environment that is free of discrimination, abusive behavior, or other conduct deemed offensive. Further, the AACO believes all meeting participants should strive to maintain high ethical standards.

The AACO will not condone behavior considered demeaning, discriminatory, derogatory, or abusive, nor does the AACO have any tolerance for harassment based on an individual's race, ethnicity, religion, sex, national origin, citizenship, age status, sexual orientation, or disability. This includes speeches and/or formal presentations at educational conferences, social events or governance meetings.

Individuals presenting material at an AACO-sponsored conference/meeting are expected to maintain a proper sense of decorum appropriate to a professional meeting. Speakers also must follow the standards set by any accrediting bodies for continuing education credit, including presenting fair, balanced and credible clinical information that is free of commercial bias or financial conflict of interest. All relevant copyright and patent restrictions and/or disclosures must be followed.

Applicable Requirements:

The AACO Board of Directors has adopted the following standards which apply to all speakers, moderators, panelists, participants, and attendees at any event or meeting sponsored by the Association:

1. All participants at AACO-sponsored events, including educational sessions, governance meetings, and social events agree to show respect to others by maintaining a professional demeanor and shall refrain from demeaning, discriminatory, derogatory, or abusive speech or behavior.
2. The AACO has zero-tolerance for any form of discrimination by participants, staff, or volunteers at its events. This includes but is not limited to discrimination or harassment based on an individual's race, ethnicity, religion, sex, national origin, citizenship, age status, sexual orientation, or disability. An individual who witnesses or is the subject of discrimination or harassment is asked to report the incident in a timely way to the AACO representative(s) identified in this policy statement.
3. All individuals participating in any continuing education conference – including speakers, panelists, and moderators – are required to follow the accrediting body’s requirements, including disclosure of commercial interests.
4. Those presenting at an AACO conference are expected to be aware of any material that is subject to a copyright or patent and to comply with any applicable requirements or restrictions.

Enforcement:

The AACO reserves the right to take any action deemed necessary and appropriate, including ejection from an event without warning or refund and prohibiting attendance at any future AACO event. If there is reasonable belief that a violation of a law has occurred, the AACO will refer the matter to the appropriate law enforcement agency and notify the speaker's other professional organizations.

The AACO Executive Committee shall be the body to determine what constitutes an appropriate remedy to an alleged infraction of the stated policies, subject to applicable due process requirements.

Reports of violations of any of these policies may be made to:

- AACO President
- AACO Vice President
- AACO Secretary
- Administrative office

Adopted by the AACO Board of Directors: April 16, 2019, revised March 25, 2022