ADHO Code of Conduct
Version 1.0.0 – December 2023

Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations (ADHO)

Preamble

This is an expansion of the earlier ADHO Conference Code of Conduct, designed to address all communications and interactions related to ADHO activities.

Note that we make available a short version of the Code of Conduct, with a link to the full version, for inclusion in the Call for Proposals of the annual Digital Humanities conference or on event websites (see Section 5.1).

Substantial work towards what was then called the ADHO Code of Conduct and Complaints Procedure by Karina van Dalen, Brian Croxall, and Maciej Eder was started in 2018. Various matters over the years have highlighted the need for such a policy, and the article in DHQ on the conference published in 2022 again stressed the need for it. Susan Brown drafted the present version of the expanded Code of Conduct in July 2023, and further work on the text by Christof Schöch and Diane Jakacki was performed before approval by the Constituent Organizations Board (COB) in November 2023. The present version of the Code of Conduct was published in December 2023.

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Abbreviations: ADHO = Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations, COB = Constituent Organizations Board, EB = Executive Board.

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1 Summary

The Alliance of Digital Humanities Organisations (ADHO) works actively toward the creation of a more diverse, welcoming, and inclusive global community of digital humanities scholars and practitioners, and is therefore dedicated to the creation of a safe, respectful, and collegial environment for anyone attending its events or participating in its activities.

ADHO recognizes how crucial kindness and generosity are in professional work spaces. We encourage all participants in ADHO activities to work mindfully and respectfully across difference, show compassion and understanding, and be reasonable of expectations we have of one another with regard to cultural difference, academic styles, language barriers, challenges of asynchronous conversations, as well as professional positions, job responsibilities, and the need for work-life balance.

ADHO is committed to fostering and maintaining a scholarly culture of professional respect in all ADHO activities – including communications and interactions in the context of conferences, meetings and events, whether online or in person – within an environment that is free from harassment, discrimination and unprofessional or threatening conduct.

There is no place in ADHO activities for harassment, intimidation or discrimination based on race, religion, ethnicity, language, political stance, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, physical or cognitive ability, age, appearance, or other group status. Unsolicited physical contact, unwelcome sexual attention, and any behaviour that is physically or verbally disruptive, coercive, hurtful, threatening, abusive or aggressive, are likewise unacceptable.

Any person having experienced or witnessed behaviour that they believe constitutes a possible violation of the present Code of Conduct is encouraged to contact one or several of ADHO’s designated ‘trusted individuals’ for support and guidance, for reporting the incident, and for possible further action. Such further action may include launching a conflict resolution procedure and/or filing an official complaint resulting in an investigation of the complaint on the part of ADHO.

This Code of Conduct applies to interactions and communications among participants in all ADHO activities, including (but not limited to) conferences, workshops and other events organised through ADHO as well as meetings of boards, committees, working groups and initiatives directly affiliated with ADHO. It applies to interactions and communications taking place in person or online, synchronously or asynchronously, whether in public or in closed venues,
whether between individuals or in groups, including those that are part of submission, application and reviewing processes.

2 Introduction

The Alliance of Digital Humanities Organisations (ADHO) works actively toward the creation of a more diverse, welcoming, and inclusive global community of digital humanities scholars and practitioners, and is therefore dedicated to the creation of a safe, respectful, and collegial environment for anyone attending its events or participating in its activities.

ADHO is committed to fostering and maintaining a scholarly culture of professional respect in all ADHO activities – including communications and interactions in the context of conferences, meetings and events, whether online or in person – within an environment that is free from harassment, discrimination, and conduct that is unprofessional or threatening. ADHO also aims to support a dynamic conversation with the digital humanities community on all matters related to equity, diversity, and inclusion.

2.1 Values

As articulated on the association’s website, ADHO’s principal purposes are:

- To further, support, and promote digital humanities research and education.
- To serve as a community-based advisory force for the digital humanities.
- To encourage excellence in digital humanities research, publication, partnership, and education.

ADHO is committed to supporting and encouraging participants in a global community of digital humanities scholars and practitioners. We acknowledge that this community must be always and ever more inclusive, diverse, and welcoming to new colleagues as well as long-time collaborators. In order to ensure that this community thrives, ADHO must continue to create safe and respectful spaces in which to work with and learn from others in professional contexts.

We are unwavering in our support and engagement of efforts to discern and weed out structures based upon privilege and bias, and to challenge and change the systems that promote, perpetuate, or tolerate injustice and inequalities. These efforts must be ongoing and woven into ADHO’s own systems of leadership, communication, as well as our community-building activities such as conferences.
2.2 Responsibilities

Maintaining a respectful and professional environment is the responsibility of every participant in ADHO-related activities and initiatives. In keeping with ADHO’s values and commitments regarding equity, diversity, and inclusion, we must all also share the responsibility to prevent harassment, discrimination, and other inappropriate behaviour in our dealings with one another.

When taking up a service role in relation to ADHO, volunteers or remunerated individuals should be informed explicitly that all such roles carry with them the responsibility to adhere to the Code of Conduct. Advertisements for officers or participants in committees or other ADHO activities should contain mention of the Code of Conduct and the expectation that participants will adhere to it and promote a respectful and professional environment.

The COB, the EB, officers, and chairs of ADHO committees and other groups have the additional responsibility to manage and lead the organisation in a manner that fosters an environment of respect in accordance with the values and regulations set out in this Code. (For background and orientation, see ADHO’s page on its governance structure.)

2.3 Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to interactions and communications among participants in all ADHO activities, including (but not limited to) conferences, workshops and other events organised through ADHO as well as meetings of boards, committees, working groups and initiatives directly affiliated with ADHO. It applies to interactions and communications taking place in person or online, synchronously or asynchronously, whether in public or in closed venues, whether between individuals or in groups, including those that are part of submission, application and reviewing processes.

The Code of Conduct does not apply to activities organised by any of ADHO’s constituent organisations (COs) on their own, unless a CO has explicitly adopted or adapted the present Code of Conduct as their own. The Code of Conduct likewise does not cover issues of research integrity and best practices in the context of ADHO-affiliated publications.¹ The Code of Conduct does not supersede governmental, judicial, or legal systems related to the physical locations for conferences, nor professional policies established by institutions or communication platforms. The Code of Conduct does not apply to individuals or organisations not related to ADHO, such as venue staff, passers-by or law enforcement personnel.

Any member of the community feeling the need to invoke the resolution processes proposed here is welcome to do so. However, nothing in this Code of Conduct is legally binding or intended to prevent or discourage someone from choosing an alternative resolution process or

¹On these matters, see e.g., the “European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity” developed by the European Federation of Academies of Sciences and Humanities (ALLEA): https://allea.org/code-of-conduct/ (latest version published in 2023).
legal action. ADHO may itself initiate legal intervention if a crime has been committed or if a situation is escalating rapidly and there is fear or risk of bodily or other grievous harm.

2.4 Limitations

The regulations, measures and procedures outlined in the present Code of Conduct are not exhaustive, and ADHO may take other steps that the EB and/or COB deems fair and appropriate in the circumstances. ADHO will do its best within the constraints of its resources to help address and resolve all reports and complaints, through these and other means.

A code of conduct cannot cover all possibilities, but it is hoped that approaches to unforeseen situations will address breaches of conduct in ways that both address the concerns of complainants and help to foster an environment of care and respect in which all can benefit from and contribute to ADHO activities. Revisions to this Code of Conduct will be made as needed, including as a reaction to input from the community that should be directed at the COB president.

Members of the COB, the EB, committee chairs and the trusted individuals act in good faith on behalf of ADHO in cases of violations of this Code of Conduct, aiming to resolve, investigate and adjudicate reports and complaints. However, they cannot be held responsible for legal actions taken by one individual against another, even if such legal action involves the same behaviour as is the subject of a report or complaint within the framework of this Code of Conduct.

3 Core regulations

3.1 Regulations applicable to all ADHO activities

Open, critically-engaged, and often challenging discourse is expected to flourish within ADHO. Participants in ADHO activities and events are encouraged to respect and celebrate cultural and linguistic differences, and to be mindful of the international nature of our community.

ADHO recognizes how crucial kindness and generosity are in professional and/or academic work spaces. We encourage all participants in ADHO activities to work mindfully and respectfully across difference, show compassion and understanding, and be reasonable of expectations we have of one another with regard to cultural difference, academic styles, language barriers, challenges of asynchronous conversations, as well as professional roles and positions, job responsibilities, and the need for work-life balance.

There is no place in ADHO activities for harassment or intimidation based on race, religion, ethnicity, language, political stance, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, physical
or cognitive ability, age, appearance, or other group status. Unsolicited physical contact, unwelcome sexual attention, and any behaviour that is physically or verbally disruptive, coercive, hurtful, threatening, abusive or aggressive, are likewise unacceptable.

Anyone asked to stop such behavior should stop immediately, even if they were unaware that their behavior might cause discomfort or offense, or even if their behavior was meant to be friendly, ironic or as a joke.

In all ADHO activities, the confidentiality of personal or otherwise sensitive information or communications needs to be respected by all participants. Similarly, the right of any individual not to be included in any audio, video or photographic recording without their consent needs to be respected. Wherever possible, mechanisms for participants to indicate their consent or opposition to such recordings should be put in place.

3.2 Regulations specific to the conference

ADHO organises an annual conference for the benefit of its members and for the advancement of research and scholarship in the variety of disciplines and professions they represent.

For each conference, Local Organisers are charged with including the short version of the Code of Conduct (see Section 5.1) in the Call for Papers and on the conference-specific website, and with making sure that the full version is linked to and easily available to attendees. The full version should not be published separately from the ADHO website; instead, it should be linked to from the short version, in order to ensure clarity on the Code of conduct’s version of reference.

Local Organisers of the conference are listed in the program and should be easily identifiable by their name badges. In the event a participant has been made to feel unsafe or unwelcome, or has witnessed or experienced inappropriate conduct at an ADHO event, the local organisers are available to assist and, if useful, direct attendees to the ADHO trusted individuals.

The Code of Conduct will be introduced at the conference’s opening plenary / keynote, and the person presenting it will inform conference participants of the names of ADHO’s designated trusted individuals, whom they can contact if they feel that the Code of conduct has been violated.

Local Organisers are expected to discuss the code of conduct and the availability of local support for conference-goers with their staff and assistants, and to publicise clear and helpful information for attendees. They may therefore wish to seek advice and examples from past local organisers or DH conference websites.

Conftool installations should require all account holders, including submitting authors, co-authors, reviewers or participants, to agree to abide by the Code of Conduct in all activities relevant to the conference.
4 Complaints procedure

Any person having experienced or witnessed behaviour that they believe constitutes a possible violation of the present Code of Conduct (‘complainant(s)’, in the following), is encouraged to contact ADHO’s designated trusted individuals for support and guidance, reporting the incident, and possible further action. Such further action may include launching a conflict resolution procedure and/or filing an official complaint resulting in an investigation of the complaint on the part of ADHO.

No single path to conflict resolution will fit all situations, so on the part of ADHO representatives, sensitivity to context and flexibility in approach is required. Action may need to be taken speedily, in cases involving social media or other public communications, for instance, or may require considerable follow-up and deliberation.

4.1 ADHO trusted individuals

In an effort to provide mechanisms whereby a complainant can in good faith come to ADHO for support and guidance, reporting of incidents, and possible further action, ADHO will designate four ‘trusted individuals’. Trusted individuals are volunteer representatives of the COB (two members) and the EB (one member) who are nominated for this role by their respective bodies, approved by the COB and appointed on an annual, renewable basis.

Ahead of each annual DH conference, one additional volunteer representative from among the Local Organizers will be nominated by the LOs and confirmed by the COB as an additional trusted individual. The LO representative will engage in an orientation session with the other trusted individuals directly before the conference in order to ensure that all members of the group have a shared understanding of their function and commitment. The LO representative will only be active during the conference and until any complaints submitted in direct connection to that conference are resolved. The current trusted individuals are identified on the ADHO website.

The trusted individuals are committed to being responsive to concerns, reports and complaints related to behaviour that might violate the code of conduct. They are available for confidential written or verbal consultation by individuals who feel that either they have experienced, or that they have witnessed, a possible code of conduct violation. They are prepared to investigate complaints and to share reports with and recommend action to the COB president and EB chair as outlined below. ADHO will facilitate appropriate training opportunities and support for the trusted individuals.

In case of a conflict of interest related to a report or complaint, e.g. when a trusted individual or a person closely related to them is implicated in such a report or complaint, the trusted individual concerned by this conflict of interest will recuse themselves from handling the report or complaint. Another trusted individual will step in in their place. In the event that more
than two trusted individuals recuse themselves, the COB will appoint additional ad hoc trusted individuals as needed.

4.2 Reporting an incident

In the event of a suspected violation of the Code of Conduct, participants in ADHO activities are encouraged to reach out in writing or through a meeting with a trusted individual. ADHO will then ensure that at least two identified trusted individuals work together to communicate (and meet, when possible) with the participants(s) as quickly as possible to understand the situation and identify the people involved in it, assess whether the incident or conflict constitutes a violation of the Code of Conduct, and work with the complainant(s) to determine what – if any – next steps should be taken.

Such an initial report remains confidential between the complainant(s) and the trusted individual, unless they determine together that further steps are needed. In some cases, it may be possible to resolve the situation with the help of the trusted individuals. If that is not the case, the report may lead to a formal complaint, which will be written either by the complainant(s) or by the trusted individuals in consultation with the complainant(s) and from the notes made in the meeting(s) with the complainant(s), who then sign off on the formal complaint. A formal complaint ideally includes the information specified in the appendix (see section Section 5.2).

4.3 Addressing formal complaints

Once the trusted individuals have received a formal complaint, they decide on whether additional investigation of the situation is required, for instance by following up with the complainant, or by consulting witnesses or others with knowledge of the persons or their behaviour, or by gathering evidence and contextual information in other ways, including from the individuals accused of violations of the Code of Conduct (‘respondents’). Respondents should be informed of the complaint against them and be given the opportunity to be heard at an early stage, except in case the trusted individuals determine that doing so would negatively impact the process of addressing the complaint.

The trusted individuals may designate a third party to support them in or conduct parts of the investigation, if this measure supports the fairness and impartiality of the investigation, and if a majority of the trusted individuals agree with doing so.

Once their investigation is concluded, the trusted individuals present the complaint and the substance of their investigation as well as suggestions of further action to the COB president and EB chair (or alternatives in the case of conflict). If the COB president and EB chair determine that further action should be taken, they submit a recommendation to the COB, anonymized and/or with redactions if such is deemed necessary. Any further action needs to be approved by the COB.
4.4 Findings and consequences

Findings may include that the Code of Conduct has been violated and action is required; that misconduct has not taken place; that the findings are inconclusive; or that the complaint does not fall within the scope of the Code of Conduct. Findings as well as decisions taken as a consequence will be communicated both to the complainant(s) and the respondent(s).

As a consequence of a complaint and the findings by the trusted individuals, a reprimand from ADHO may be communicated to the individual found to have been involved in a violation of this Code of Conduct, either privately or publicly. Reprimands may, and in the case of persons appointed to a service role in ADHO must, be communicated to the leadership of the CO of the individual who is the subject of the complaint, if they are members of an ADHO CO. A request for a public or private apology may be made of the subject of the complaint.

Individuals may be temporarily or permanently banned from participation in ADHO conferences or initiatives or deemed ineligible to apply for ADHO awards or bursaries. Members of ADHO committees may be temporarily suspended from their roles, asked to resign, or if they refuse, removed from their positions, in consultation with the EB. Chairs, officers, and others in leadership roles may be asked to resign or removed by a majority vote of the COB. As per the Governance Policy, the COB president may be asked to resign or removed by a super-majority of the COB.

4.5 Fairness of process and confidentiality

All reports and/or formal complaints of code of conduct violations will be treated seriously and impartially, and will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by applicable laws. In the event of conflict or complaint, communications related to ADHO activities may be shared by the trusted individuals with members of the EB, COB, and individuals or organisations involved to help resolve the matter. They will in this case be anonymized or summarised, as needed. In some cases, ADHO may determine that a public statement will need to be made. If that proves to be the case, the identities of complainant(s) will remain confidential unless a request or permission to publish them is received.

ADHO has a responsibility to protect the good standing and safety of complainants and respondents alike. ADHO also has a responsibility to protect those participating in ADHO activities from inappropriate or unjustified complaints and to respect the presumption of innocence in case of a report or complaint.

If a report and/or formal complaint is made about the conduct of any person who has responsibility or authority within ADHO, such as a member of the COB, member of the EB, Committee Chair or other official, or in case of a conflict of interest resulting e.g. from a close personal or professional relationship between such a person and a respondent, that person shall recuse themselves from participating in any aspect of the process set out in this Code of Conduct in relation to such a report.
4.6 Mediation and restorative justice

Mediation, either informally by ADHO officers or by a professional, may be an appropriate option if parties involved in misconduct or conflict are motivated to work through their differences and pursue reconciliation. Restorative justice approaches aim to repair harm by providing an opportunity for those harmed and those who take responsibility for the harm to communicate about and address their needs in the aftermath of harmful behaviour.

5 Appendices

5.1 ADHO Code of Conduct (short version)

The following text should be included in the Call for Papers of the annual conference and on the conference website, as well as on the websites of any other ADHO activity.

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For further information, and as a reference, please see the full ADHO Code of Conduct and the list of current trusted individuals on ADHO’s website.

5.2 Formal complaints format

Please include the following in a formal complaint:

- Your name and contact information;
- Names (real, nicknames, or pseudonyms) of any individuals involved;
- The names of witnesses besides you, if any;
- When and where the incident(s) occurred. Please be as specific as possible.
- Your account of what occurred;
- Screenshots and/or links to communications or online content relevant to your report;
- Any additional material or information relevant to the complaint;
• Some indication of the form(s) of redress, reconciliation, or other action you consider desirable, if you have an idea of that at the point at which you submit the complaint.

5.3 Sources and Resources

• Canadian Association for Theatre Research: https://catracrt.ca/policies-and-procedures/;
• CATR Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Committee: https://catracrt.ca/catr-anti-racism-and-anti-oppression-committee/;
• DHSI Statement of Ethics and Inclusion: https://dhsi.org/statement-of-ethics-inclusion/;
• Digital Library Federation: DLF code of conduct; DLF examples of conduct; DLF Code of Conduct Reporting;
• ACH Conference Code of Conduct: reporting procedure;