

Code of Conduct

Why have a Code of Conduct?

This document explains the expected rules of behaviour for all members of ASEC. It states our organization's values, provides guidance, and recommends action so all members know what is expected of them. The Code of Conduct creates an environment that encourages a specific standard of behaviour, supports our organizational values, lessens confusion and promotes equality and respect within our organization's environment.

Racism in any of its forms is not acceptable. Every individual has the right to a respectful, harassment, and discrimination free workplace. As a member of ASEC, it's your responsibility to bring attention to any incidents of racism you witness, and to speak out on behalf of fellow members who may be victims of racism. If you don't feel comfortable addressing the unacceptable behaviour with your peers, ask a staff member for help!

When all individuals are treated equitably - with dignity, respect, and trust - they feel valued and are more likely to become more involved, collaborate, and enjoy their jobs and roles. This, in turn, enhances our

effectiveness as members and staff of ASEC and promotes the confidence of all our members, our peers, and all those we come into contact with in our work.

How does the code affect me?

ASEC acknowledges it is only through the commitment of our members and staff that we are able to advocate for students and be the drivers of change in Alberta. As our most valued asset, ASEC student leaders must be above reproach in their professional dealings and must demonstrate the highest standards of behaviour. Being accountable means we are trusted and empowered to embrace our responsibility for our actions, decisions, and behaviours. This is because, working together, aligned with the organization's vision, we enable a better life for post-secondary students across the province. We are accountable to ASEC, the ASEC membership, and students in Alberta. It is with this in mind that every member of ASEC is expected to be aware of, and comply with the Code of Conduct and other policies and directives that govern member and staff behaviour.

Disclosure

If you think you may be in violation of the Code, address the situation and make full and prompt disclosure to the Executive Director. Any suspected non-compliance by another individual must also be promptly reported to the Executive Director.



Anyone who knowingly makes a false accusation about non-compliance will be subject to disciplinary action.

Ethical questions

The Code of Conduct can't outline every situation or relationship that might create a conflict of interest. Each of us must understand and apply basic ethical standards ensuring our behaviours and actions do not violate an employee's basic duty of loyalty to ASEC. Rest assured that all of us, at some point, are faced with ethical dilemmas and must struggle to find an answer to the question "What is the right thing to do"?

When in doubt, talk to your peers or one of the ASEC staff members. If you can't arrive at an answer or if your issue is too sensitive to discuss with a peer or staff member, feel free to reach out to one of the following resources for advice:

- Any ASEC staff member
- Executive Director
- ASEC Board Member(s)

Personal conduct

What does this mean? Members will carry out their roles to the best of their abilities, conduct themselves appropriately, and will be considerate and helpful to all people, both internally and externally.

Why is this important? It takes effort from each and every member and staff to make ASEC an impactful and professional organization. The best way to maintain good working relationships is to treat every person the way you want to be treated. This is particularly important for members who interact with external stakeholders, such as other student organizations and most importantly, government officials and staff. This is why members may speak on behalf of ASEC only with the consent of the membership and support from staff. Both ASEC members and staff are seen as ambassadors for students across Alberta, and as such, it is our responsibility to uphold our organization's values and make sure that students get the best value for their fees. This means working to maintain our student members' confidence by acting courteously and responsibly and by providing the best possible level of advocacy.

Sexual Violence and Harrassment

ASEC advocates for and abides by a survivor centric process when it comes to sexual violence and harrassment. A separate policy will be made available to members once finalized. In the case of any conflict or complaint, the process outlined in the appropriate sections of this document will be followed.



Use, collection & disclosure of information

What does this mean? Many student leaders and staff have access to personal information about their peers or access to confidential or financial information pertaining to certain post-secondary institutions, government, and ASEC. Furthermore, there are times when members of ASEC will be privy to information released by our stakeholders in confidence, possibly even embargoed information. This information must be kept confidential and secure, and must only be used for the purpose for which it was collected or provided.

Why is this important? ASEC cannot safeguard its reputation as a professional and trustworthy organization without the support and dedication of its members. As such, all student leaders have the responsibility to maintain and protect confidential personal, business, or financial information they are entrusted with. The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP) governs the way Alberta municipalities use, collect and disclose information. Clear instructions will be provided in cases where there are specific expectations when it comes to sharing, however, please reach out to the ASEC staff if you need any clarification or if you have any questions at all.

Communications

What does this mean? Whether communicating with their peers, staff, or external stakeholders, members must be respectful and follow the established lines of communication between ASEC staff, the Board of Directors, Delegates, and other members.

Why is this important? As a community of advocates, ASEC accomplishes its work through collaboration and decision making that fairly represents the membership and provides the greatest good for the greatest number of students. As such, student leaders must consult ASEC staff before considering committing the organization to legal agreements or before conducting any business on behalf of ASEC. Each decision and each engagement taken upon by members can have ripple effects throughout the whole membership as well as student members across the province. Our organization is most effective and has the most impact when we work together, when our voice is united, and when we move forward as a community.

Interpersonal conflict

What does this mean? Members will conduct themselves with dignity and respect in all interactions with their peers, staff, internal and external stakeholders.

Why is this important? Debate and thorough discussion are at the heart of ASEC's vision and strategy. Being an inclusive organization with a diverse membership means that our community is composed of diverse opinions and perspectives. Furthermore, ASEC represents students from



across the province, with diverse backgrounds and contexts. This is why maintaining respect for each other despite rigorous debate is so essential to upholding a culture of consensus building and togetherness.

ASEC encourages constructive criticisms and suggestions for improvement, when these are provided in a respectful and productive way. If and when conflict arises, ASEC members are expected to make an attempt at resolving any issues at the personal level before turning to another authority for further conflict resolution. However, if at any moment you need support in working through a conflict, please reach out to any of the ASEC staff.

Conflict of interest

What does this mean? A conflict of interest is a situation where personal or professional interests are potentially at odds with ASEC's, or when a member participates in an action that can be perceived as a conflict of interest.

Why is this important? Commitment and dedication from each and every member is needed in order to build and maintain a strong and reliable community of advocates. This is why it is so important that student leaders demonstrate loyalty towards ASEC's interests. It is also very important for individuals to ensure that avocational activities, personal or political affiliations, or employment outside of ASEC do not affect their ability to fulfill any assigned responsibilities.

During your time as a member of ASEC, there might be instances when a real or perceived conflict of interest may arise. Members are responsible for bringing this to the attention of the Executive Director and/or ASEC staff, who will then work with you in finding the best way to move forward.

Gifts/gratuities, personal gain, or favouritism

What does this mean? Student leaders must not give or receive gifts in exchange for actual or perceived special consideration or favours. Although most gifts come with no strings attached, there is always the chance that something is expected or perceived to be expected in return. Student leaders must remove themselves from any decision that may result in actual or perceived personal gain, favouritism or benefit.

Why is this important? ASEC represents the interests of 110,000 students from across the province and works closely with the provincial and federal governments on your behalf. This work requires ASEC's integrity and reputation to remain intact, not only in order to avoid any legal issues, but also because ASEC is accountable to the students it represents.



As a lobby organization, ASEC and all of its member student associations must register with the Alberta Lobbyist Registry. For more information regarding this topic, visit albertalobbyistregistry.ca

Breaches of the Code of Conduct

Any serious breaches of the Code of Conduct by staff are to be reported immediately to the Executive Director, and any serious breaches of the Code of Conduct by the Executive Director are to be reported immediately to the Board of Directors.

Any breaches by ASEC staff will be subject to the disciplinary procedures laid out in the ASEC Policy Manual at the discretion of the Executive Director. If the breach is serious, the individual may be required to take a leave of absence until the matter is resolved, at the discretion of the Executive Director.

Any breach by the Executive Director will be subject to the disciplinary procedures laid out in the ASEC Policy Manual at the discretion of the Board of Directors. If the breach is serious, the Executive Director may be required to take a leave of absence until the matter is resolved, at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

Any breaches by members will be documented by the Board of Directors and brought forward to an in-camera session called for that purpose, with any disciplinary measures to be determined at the discretion of the Board of Directors pending approval by the membership.

Compliance

If any person believes that a peer or staff member has contravened this code of conduct, that person may make a written complaint to the Executive Director, or to the Board of Directors in the case where the issue pertains to the Executive Director.

Written complaints must include the following:

1. the provisions of the ASEC Code of Conduct allegedly contravened and the facts surrounding the allegation, including any witnesses;
2. the name of the individual(s) alleged to have contravened the ASEC Code of Conduct; AND
3. the complainant's name and contact information,

And may be submitted by email to the appropriate contact(s) or delivered to:

Alberta Students' Executive Council
210 11520 100 Avenue NW
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 0J7



Complaints accepted by the Executive Director or the Board of Directors will be investigated. However, if it is determined that a complaint is frivolous, vexatious, or made in bad faith, the Executive Director or the Board of Directors will immediately dismiss the complaint.

If the Executive Director or the Board of Directors determine that informal resolution may be possible, they may, with written consent of both the complainant and respondent members, attempt to resolve the issue through discussion and a mutually agreed upon solution.

If a complaint cannot be resolved informally, the Executive Director or Board of Directors will conduct a formal investigation. Formal investigations must be conducted in a fair, timely, and confidential manner that respects the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice.

The Executive Director or Board of Directors will undertake every reasonable precaution to protect the identity and safety of those involved, and will endeavour to be fair, act with discretion, and follow due process regarding the subject of the complaint. Complaints regarding the ASEC Code of Conduct will be kept confidential unless they suggest that there is an imminent threat to safety or ongoing criminal activity - in which case the complaint will be forwarded to the police.

Amendments

Any amendments to the Code of Conduct shall be the responsibility of the membership.

Code of Conduct declaration

I, _____ have read, understand, and agree to abide by the ASEC Code of Conduct, and I understand that such adherence is a condition of my employment or volunteer work. I understand that a violation of the Code of Conduct may be grounds for termination as a volunteer, or in the case of an employee, may result in immediate dismissal for just cause without notice or pay in lieu of notice.

Signed this _____ day of _____, 20____.

Signature

Printed Name