

Code of Conduct

Las Cumbres Observatory Science Collaboration



The mission of the Las Cumbres Observatory is to advance our understanding of the universe through science and education with our unique global telescope network. A key component of LCO's global network is our vibrant science collaboration -- a highly diverse group of institutions and individuals around the world who have different backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences. We are all citizens of the community of science, and each of us shares responsibility for the welfare of this community. All scientists should act ethically in the conduct of their research, in teaching and education, and in relations with both members of the public and other members of the scientific community. The maintenance of a set of ethical standards for work-related conduct requires individual and institutional commitments:

1. to act ethically in one's professional activities,
2. to encourage ethical behavior by students, postdocs, colleagues, and employers,
3. and to report unethical actions so that they can be addressed

This Code of Conduct provides ethical principles that all members of the LCO Science Collaboration will adhere to in our professional activities and interactions with each other. It is the responsibility of all members of our Collaboration to familiarize themselves with ethical issues, as well as procedures related to the oversight and maintenance of ethical standards for research and conduct.

Guiding Principles:

- LCO desires all Collaboration members to be scientifically successful.
- The climate within the Collaboration will be respectful and professional.
- All members can expect that their contributions will receive fair and appropriate credit in all forums.

Rules for Conduct:

1. Collaboration members utilize their own process for allocating time while honoring the LCO policies and procedures for observing time (see Appendix A).
2. All Collaboration members should be treated with respect. Abusive, demeaning, humiliating, or intimidating behavior and abuses of power will not be tolerated.
3. Collaboration members will:
 - a. work to provide an environment that encourages the free expression and exchange of scientific ideas,
 - b. promote equality of opportunity and fair treatment for all their colleagues, regardless of gender identity and expression, race, ethnic and national origin, religion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, veteran status, etc.
4. Key Projects, and other collaborations, should have written rules for authorship agreed to in advance. Other individuals who have contributed to a study should be appropriately acknowledged.

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5. Proper acknowledgement of the work of others should always be given. Data provided by others must be cited appropriately, even if obtained from a public database.
6. Criticism and debate are normal parts of the intellectual process, but only when conducted with civility and professional respect for all parties. Personal attacks or verbal abuse, whether oral or written, in any communication forum, will not be tolerated.
7. All members shall respect any confidentiality restrictions on any information they have access to, such as unpublished results or telescope proposals, and shall not exploit access to privileged information.

Violations of the Guidelines:

When collaboration members witness or experience violations of this code they should not remain silent. All of our organizations have their own processes for handling conduct complaints. Actions in response to violations could include talking privately with the person and/or asking for help from a more senior person in their organization and/or reporting the violation to LCO. LCO will provide assistance in resolving issues for any Science Collaboration member.

Consequences for Code of Conduct Violations:

It is our hope that most ethical issues we encounter can be dealt with through honest communication, education, and a commitment to do better. It is up to individual institutions to implement consequences with respect to their LCO time allocation. Depending on the severity of the violation, LCO may limit access to telescope time that LCO allocates directly, and if necessary, pursue the adjudication and/or reporting mechanisms available in the astronomical community, for example to the AAS and US funding bodies. This includes LCO Regular and Key Project proposals and sold time. Consequences could include not being able to apply for time for a semester up to not being allowed to be a principal or co-investigator on LCO Key Projects.