

AGA Whistleblower Policy¹

The American Gastroenterological Association requires directors, officers, volunteers and employees to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. As employees and representatives of the AGA, we must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling our responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

Reporting Responsibility

It is the responsibility of all directors, officers, volunteers and employees to comply with the Code of Ethics and Conduct and to report violations or suspected violations in accordance with this Whistleblower Policy.

No Retaliation

No director, officer, volunteer or employee who in good faith reports a violation of the Code shall suffer harassment, retaliation or adverse employment consequence. Anyone who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment, censure, or expulsion from membership. This Whistleblower Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees and others to raise serious concerns within the organization prior to seeking resolution outside the organization.

Reporting Violations

For Employees: Employees should share their questions, concerns, suggestions or complaints with someone who can address them properly. In most cases, an employee's supervisor is in the best position to address an area of concern. However, if you are not comfortable speaking with your supervisor or you are not satisfied with your supervisor's response, you are encouraged to speak with someone in the Human Resources Department or with the AGA Compliance Officer. The Human Resources Department is required to report actual or suspected violations of the Code of Ethics and Conduct to the General Counsel and to the Organization's Compliance Officer. It is the Compliance Officer who has specific and exclusive responsibility to investigate all reported violations.

For Directors, Officers, and other Volunteers: Directors or Officers should report suspected violations of the Code of Ethics and Conduct to the General Counsel and to the organization's Compliance Officer. It is the Compliance Officer who has the responsibility to investigate all reported violations.

Compliance Officer

The organization's Compliance Officer, who serves as chair of the AGA Audit Committee, is responsible, in consultation with the General Counsel and chair of the AGA Institute Ethics Committee, for investigating and resolving all reported complaints and allegations concerning violations of the Code and, at his/her discretion, shall advise the Executive Vice President and/or the governing board and/or the audit committee and ethics committee. The Compliance Officer has direct access to the audit committee and is required to report to both the audit committee and the governing board at least annually on compliance activity.

¹ Approved by the AGA Governing Board (1) VOTED, Mar. 2005; Revised (4) VOTED, Apr. 2011; (10) VOTED, May 2018.

Accounting and Auditing Matters

The AGA Audit Committee shall address all reported concerns or complaints regarding corporate accounting practices, internal controls or auditing. The Compliance Officer shall immediately notify the audit committee and the AGA Secretary/Treasurer of any such complaint and work with the committee until the matter is resolved.

Sexual Harassment Allegations

As outlined in the AGA Code of Ethics and Conduct, an allegation of sexual harassment will be investigated and adjudicated under the terms set forth within this policy; the Chair of the AGA Institute Ethics Committee shall be notified by the Compliance Officer of any such allegation, and the ethics committee will be consulted before the matter is resolved.

Acting in Good Faith

Anyone filing a complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation of the Code of Conduct must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation of the Code. Any allegations that prove not to be substantiated and which prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense.

Confidentiality

Violations or suspected violations may be submitted on a confidential basis by the complainant or may be submitted anonymously. Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

Handling of Reported Violations

The Compliance Officer will notify the sender and acknowledge receipt of the reported violation or suspected violation within five business days. All reports will be promptly investigated and appropriate corrective action will be taken if warranted by the investigation. In all instances, the accused individual will be afforded appropriate due process rights, including being given the opportunity to defend themselves either in writing and/or in person.