Code of Conduct VIP, Study Association Psychology Groningen

Purpose

This Code of Conduct is intended to promote a healthy and safe environment that supports the enrichment of the academic experience, particularly regarding the social, emotional, and professional development of all members. Members have the right to interact with one another in an environment that is free from discrimination, intimidation, violations of physical integrity, bullying, and violence. In addition to these rights, members also carry certain responsibilities.

General Responsibilities

VIP requires that members:

- Adhere to socially acceptable standards of conduct;
- Behave in a responsible manner and take accountability for their actions and choices;
- Respect others, their property, and their rights;
- Follow all safety procedures;
- Report inappropriate (sexual) behavior if they see it happening;
- Listen to and comply with the instructions of those in charge (the VIP board and committee members).

Participation in Activities

In principle, all VIP members are free to participate in VIP-organized activities. Participation is always at the participant's own risk. However, the VIP board reserves the right to set participation requirements, deny or revoke access, or remove individuals from an activity, provided there is a justified reason for doing so.

Inappropriate Behaviour

Everyone within VIP should feel safe and accepted. Discrimination, intimidation, coercion, abuse of power, violations of physical integrity, bullying, violence, drug use, and other forms of undesirable behaviour are not tolerated within VIP. Discrimination may relate to, for example, beliefs, political views, gender, sexual orientation, background, culture, disability, or illness. Members are responsible for knowing and upholding the rules surrounding these matters in order to maintain and protect the safe and healthy environment of our association. No distinction will be made between VIP members when it comes to the consequences of inappropriate behaviour.

Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour

We strive for a safe environment in which everyone feels respected and welcome. Sexual misconduct is not tolerated within our association. Sexual misconduct includes all forms of behaviour or communication of a sexual nature that are experienced by another person as unwanted, uncomfortable, or inappropriate. The form it takes may vary depending on context, relationship, and impact. Everyone, regardless of age, role, or gender, has the right to bodily integrity and respect. All members and individuals involved with VIP are expected to respect these boundaries.

Alcohol Use

The consumption of alcoholic beverages is permitted at various VIP activities. At no time may the board and/or members pressure anyone into consuming alcohol. Drinking is entirely voluntary and at the participant's own risk.

Excessive consumption of alcohol is explicitly discouraged. Members over the age of 18 are responsible for their own conduct and for the safety of those around them while under the influence. Repeated violations of this policy may result in, for example, removal from the event or activity.

Members under the age of 18 are not permitted to consume alcohol at VIP-organized activities. The board will monitor underage members during events and may sanction those who consume, have consumed, or possess alcohol. Members who intentionally provide alcohol to minors may also face sanctions.

It is not permitted to bring alcoholic beverages to (external) locations or activities unless explicitly authorized by the board. If permission is granted, all rules outlined above remain in effect.

Drug Use

A zero-tolerance policy applies to the possession, use, or distribution of illegal drugs during all VIP-organized events and activities. This includes, but is not limited to, substances listed in Schedules I and II of the Dutch Opium Act, substances covered by the Medicines Act, designer drugs, and research chemicals. Cannabis also falls under this policy and is not permitted. Separate rules apply to alcohol, as outlined elsewhere in this Code of Conduct.

The board may sanction violators of this zero-tolerance policy and has the authority to report drug use and/or possession to external authorities, such as the University or the police.

If an individual is removed from an event due to drug use and/or possession at an activity where VIP provides transport (e.g., trips), the offender must pay for their own return transportation.

Damage or Theft

VIP is explicitly not liable for damages caused by members or participants through their own actions, nor for theft or stolen goods. Members and participants are responsible for their own behaviour and belongings.

Damage to VIP property or third-party property used or rented by VIP may be recovered from the responsible individual, but only in cases of clear negligence or intent, and provided the damage can be reasonably and demonstrably attributed within a reasonable timeframe.

Intimidation / Bullying / Cyberbullying

All members must respect the rights of others. Intimidation, bullying, or cyberbullying of any kind directed at members or participants will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary measures.

Violence

Members may not endanger or threaten the physical or mental well-being of others. It is also prohibited to bring objects to VIP activities that could pose a safety risk to others.

Consequences for Inappropriate Behaviour

Consequences for misconduct as described above, and for other unacceptable behaviour, will depend on the situation and circumstances. The board will determine what consequence is fit for the situation. Possible consequences include, but are not limited to, a formal warning, revocation of certain privileges, withdrawal of (active) membership, and exclusion from events or activities.

Members may submit a written objection to a sanction within two weeks of its imposition. Only objections with sufficient reasoning will be considered. The board will rule on the objection within two weeks. Submitting an objection does not suspend the sanction. The board will always act in accordance with VIP's statutes and internal regulations.

If a member is suspended or has their membership revoked, they may appeal the decision within a month following the receipt of the notification. The appeal will be discussed during the first general members meeting following the appeal. The General Members Meeting must decide on the appeal within two months. If there is no general members meeting planned in this period, an additional general members meeting will be planned. The final decision will be communicated in writing within one week after the relevant meeting. During the appeal period and throughout the process, the member will remain suspended. If the person who gets suspended wants to discuss the suspension during the general members meeting, it will be discussed beforehand with, if applicable, the 'victim' to make sure their well-being is taken into account and precautions can be taken if needed.

General Infractions

Board members will address both members and external individuals engaging in inappropriate behaviour and may issue an official warning. If the behaviour continues or is repeated, the person must leave the event or activity. Tickets will not be refunded.

Major Infractions

Inappropriate behaviour within committees or structures that creates an unsafe or unhealthy environment may result in the withdrawal of (active) membership. Prior to such a

decision, the individual has the right to a meeting with the current VIP board to present their side of the story.

Reporting Incidents and Questions Regarding the Code of Conduct

If any violation of this Code of Conduct occurs, members or participants may report it to the board. The board will assess the report and determine a reasonable course of action.

For reporting violations or questions regarding the Code of Conduct, members can contact the board at: vip.gmw@rug.nl. Anonymous messages can be submitted via the VIP mailbox in the Heymans Building, next to the service desk at the main entrance.

VIP also provides confidential advisors who can be contacted for issues related to this Code of Conduct. They can be reached at: trustpersons@vipsite.nl.

Members can also submit a formal complaint via the Complaints Structure, which can be reached at complaintsstructure@vipsite.nl.

In all cases not covered by this Code of Conduct, the board will determine further actions.

Amendment of the Code of Conduct

Proposals to amend the Code of Conduct may be submitted by the board or by at least ten members. Proposed amendments must be communicated to all members at least five working days before the general members meeting in which they will be discussed.

Amendments to proposed changes must be submitted in writing (in duplicate) to the board no later than two working days before the meeting.

Final Provisions

This Code of Conduct replaces all previous versions. This Code of Conduct shall enter into force on September 23rd 2026. Thus adopted in Groningen, September 23rd 2026.