

# Introducing the CSFK Ethics Committee (EC)



Introduction, Members, How to reach the EC,  
What incidents should be reported, Why it is  
significant to have such committee



Maria Lugaro

*EC Convenor/Ombudsperson*



Zsófia Fejes

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*CSI*



Ágnes Erőss

*FTI*

<https://csfk.org/intranet/ethics-committee/>



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# What do Ethics Committees (ECs) do?

- **Background**

- the existence of social and ethics committees comes from the field of corporate business, with proven beneficial effect on the functioning of the given companies; e.g. Sims, 1991; Singh, 2011.

- **Purpose of social and ethics committees**

- review and recommend to the management policies and procedures that serve the institutions' interest to maintain high standards of work-ethics and integrity
- gives emphasis and visibility to the structuring of ethical issues (Gennari, 2020).

# Primary tasks of CSFK Ethics Committees (ECs)

- **There are two CSFK ECs:**
  - The *ad-hoc* EC is brought together by the Director General (Etikai Szabályzat 2021/640/1/1 §5): planning an ethics program that usually includes the proposal and updating of the Code of Ethics
  - The permanent EC focuses on equal treatment (DG Decree 2023/1) -> ***This is us!***

# Primary task of the Permanent CSFK EC

To investigate any complaint filed while observing the **principles of equal treatment**.

The permanent Ethics Committee consists of 5-8 persons:

- the Ethics Ombudsperson who leads the Committee ex officio
- the leader of the HR Department (or a labour administration specialist)
- One or two employees of each Institute appointed by the Director

● *The EC is there to help resolve situations*



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## Current members



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The document with the full Rules and Procedure of the CSFK EC can be found via the website

### EC Rules and Procedures

#### Contact Form

#### CSFK EC Contact Form

First contact to the Ethics Committee of the CSFK to report an incident/Első kapcsolatfelvétel a CSFK Etikai Bizottsággal incidens bejelentése céljából

A beírt űrlapadatok mentéséhez [jelentkezzen be a Google-fiókjába.](#)  
[További információ](#)

\* Kötelező kérdés

The email address you would like to be contacted to (it can be any)/Az e-mail cím, amelyen szeretnénk, ha felvennénk Önnel a kapcsolatot (ez bármilyen lehet).

Saját válasz

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Saját válasz

The person(s) on the Ethics Committee you would like to contact (can be more than one)/Az etikai bizottság azon tagja(i), akivel (akikkel) kapcsolatba kíván lépni (lehet több is) \*

- Maria Lugaro (EC Convenor/Ombudsperson)/(az EC összehívója/az ombudsman)
- Zsófia Fejes (HR)
- László Molnár (CSI)
- Ágnes Erőss (FTI)
- István Gábor Hatvani (FGI)
- Zoltán Kern (FGI)

Message (Optional)/Üzenet (nem kötelező)

Saját válasz

Küldés

Űrlap tartalmának törlése

# Brief Summary of the Rules and Procedure of the CSFK EC

The full document can be found via the website and we encourage everyone to read it

## 1. First Step

- The complainant contacts the EC via the anonymous form
- The selected EC member(s) have meetings with the people involved (either audio recorded or with +1 person from the EC present as a witness; a hearing report will be prepared for each meeting)

## 2. Second Step

- The EC holds a meeting and decide how to proceed if the situation was not resolved via an agreement
- Options are to have another round of meetings or to suggest an Action to the Director General



# Goals of the EC

- The EC's main role is to resolve situations, not handing out punishments, instead ...
- ... advising on working towards a healthy, inclusive workplace culture

In fact, focusing on what actions have or don't have legal consequences largely tells people where is the limit they can still get away with, not why their behavior is problematic

- This goal still imposes limitations but to the benefit to the workforce

**Think!** “did my actions make someone uncomfortable?”  
instead of “will I get fired for this?”

# What constitutes harassment, intimidation, discrimination, etc?

Some cases are obvious, but some are not.

The following slides will discuss the nuances of **potential** ethics violations and related concepts

# Key Concepts & Vocabulary

Microaggressions

Pink tasking

Trailblazer tax

Triggers/trigger warnings

Consent

Power Dynamics

# Microaggression

A statement, action, or incident regarded as an instance of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group such as a racial or ethnic minority.

# Microaggression

**Examples** (modified from experiences of students and ECRs):

*“Spanish is distracting, please go speak that somewhere else”* - said by English speaker when two students were collaborating

*“Interesting talk, but I really loved your dress the most”* - said by a senior male faculty member to a PhD student

# Microaggression

**Examples** (modified from experiences of students and ECRs):

When I brought up concerns about the shortlist for a position being all male, the head of the panel says “*now is not the time for that feminist garbage*”

At a pub event outside of work but with work colleagues, a senior male professor says “*it’s all been downhill since we let women in*”

# Microaggression

Did these comments kill anyone? No

Did they make valued members of the community feel unwelcome? Absolutely.

# Pink Tasking

Assigning petty tasks to women despite the fact that they have the same research credentials as other members of a group.



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**Examples:** note taking, preparing coffee, cleaning up after a group meal on a retreat, organizing social events, managing calendars, entertaining invited speakers, sending reminder emails

# Pink Tasking is a microaggression

Example:

*“You don’t want me to wash the dishes, she’s better at it!”*

An excuse born of the fact the men are not expected to perform caretaking/housework duties.

Your female colleague may be better at it, because they’ve been expected to know how to do it, but **that does not make it their job.**

# Pink Tasking

Microaggression example:

*“I’m sorry I can’t take him to lunch, I’m too busy.”* - Women are also busy, and their research is no less important than that of male colleagues. **This also includes devaluing the time of administrative staff. Their time is valuable too.**

These non-science workplace tasks need to be absorbed by everyone, not just by those socially conditioned to accept extra duties.

# Trailblazer tax

Being the first or only one of anything (gender, race, language, LGBTQIA, etc) in a space makes you a *trailblazer*

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Being a trailblazer is a burden because:

- (1) your perspective is not the dominant perspective; and
- (2) accommodations for your difference may not be in place yet

# Trailblazer tax: examples

**Example:** being the only Black or Romani in a collaboration— this person experiences both the difficulty of being Black/Romani globally but also the difficulty of being the only person with this experience on his team, which marginalizes their perspective

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**Example:** the first international hires at Konkoly had to deal with the fact that no paperwork was available in English. This means tasks took them longer than for people who were hired after English paperwork policies were put in place

# Trailblazer tax: “*women just cause problems*”

It is easier to dismiss the views of someone whose perspective is different or in the minority.

Frequently holding a conflicting opinion—because you are the only one in the space with the experience of being female, being LGBT, being Black, etc.—can lead to an incorrect association between your minority status and being “disagreeable” or introducing tension



# Triggering / Trigger warning

This is not a word to use in a derogatory way to describe upsetting someone.  
It has a specific psychiatric meaning.

# Triggering / Trigger warning

When someone is “triggered,” they may experience a horrific flashback to a violent event. The effects of this may or may not be visible.

Someone can be triggered by seeing a sexual assailant, hearing their name, listening to the story of someone else’s assault, being touched without asking, being snuck up on, or many other things.

Being triggered is not a meme/joke, and chances are you know a woman with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

# Triggering / Trigger warning

**Example:** talking to a friend at a conference, he casually said his bank was “*raping him*” by charging undisclosed fees

**Advice:** ask someone before bringing up a difficult/traumatic topic like rape, and never use the term improperly

Same applies to suicide and other sensitive topics.

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Misconception: most sufferers of PTSD are refugees/war veterans.

Not true! The vast majority of PTSD sufferers are women who have been sexually assaulted

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Violations of consent can include:

- obvious things, like touching someone without asking
- less obvious things, like asking someone a sexually explicit question in public

# Consent

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- commenting on someone's appearance in a professional space.

By joining a workspace, women have consented to having their work performance evaluated (usually in a contract). They have not *necessarily* consented to having their appearances evaluated



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Lack of “no” is not the same as “yes”!

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If complimenting a woman’s appearance bothers her because you do not have an **established rapport based on mutual consent**, then it can be considered an ethical violation.

# “Will I be fired for complimenting someone’s looks now?”

Maybe! This is not a black-and-white issue.

If complimenting a woman’s appearance bothers her because you do not have an **established rapport based on mutual consent**, then it can **be considered an ethical violation**.

If you do not know for sure how a comment will make someone feel, it is best not to make the comment! To find out how someone feels about these comments, **ASK THEM**.

# The myth of severe punishments

**Reality:** even serious, high-profile harassment cases drag on, are handled discreetly in-house, and receive vague repercussions if any (“*stop doing it, otherwise...*”)

Victims are more likely to be blamed for “*attacking*” someone and end up leaving the workplace or science entirely

Perpetrators are often defended **even after their transgressions have been proven** because “*think of the science*”

# Here's How Geoff Marcy's Sexual Harassment Went On For Decades

Colleagues looking the other way, dysfunctional sexual harassment policies, and a "culture of quiet" in science enabled Geoff Marcy's harassment to go on for so long.



**Azeen Ghorayshi**  
BuzzFeed News Reporter

Posted on November 12, 2015 at 3:01 am

2015

arXiv > astro-ph > arXiv:2304.00071

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This paper has been withdrawn by Lauren Weiss

[Submitted on 31 Mar 2023 (v1), last revised 7 Apr 2023 (this version, v2)]

## The Kepler Giant Planet Search. I: A Decade of Kepler Planet Host Radial Velocities from W. M. Keck Observatory

Lauren M. Weiss, Howard Isaacson, **Geoffrey W. Marcy**, Andrew W. Howard, Benjamin J. Fulton, Erik A. Petigura, Eric Agol, Daniel Fabrycky, Eric B. Ford, Daniel Jontof-Hutter, Miki Nakajima, James E. Owen, Leslie A. Rogers, Jason Rowe, Jason H. Steffen, Hilke E. Schlichting

2023 - paper withdrawn only after public outcry

# Power dynamic

An unequal environment that imparts privilege or protection from consequences to one party over others

These can be **Voluntary** or **Involuntary**:

**Voluntary**: lines of management, boss vs employee, academic advisor vs student

**Involuntary**: the patriarchy, white/western privilege, ableism, age, wealth—person cannot remove themselves from the power dynamic



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Consent: we, some people of legal age, mutually agree to be in this relationship

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**This is not adequate consent, because the less privileged party cannot defend themselves against the privileged party if something goes wrong.**

# Romantic relationships & Power Dynamics —speaking from experience!

Professor-student and similar such relationships are illegal at many institutes. If it is not illegal, parties should factor the reality of their power dynamic into the decision to be in a relationship.

The responsibility falls on the person in power.

Example: Meridith's own (10-year) marriage

# Long-term (documented) effects of a male-biased culture

**Publishing bias** – women publish fewer papers because they are burdened by the second shift, care duties, and pink tasks at work. They spend more of their time on non-science tasks, not by choice. Statistics on publication rates during the pandemic demonstrate this clearly (see work by Andy Casey, Monash)

**Citation bias** – women's papers are cited less often, regardless of quality, in part because women are excluded from the self-citation networks of the 'Old boys club'

# Long-term (documented) effects of a male-biased culture

**Contribution skew** – when a woman contributes to a paper, she often does an enormous amount of work for 2nd, 3rd...nth author, whereas ‘esteemed male opinions’ are valued to the point where a few emails will land them a place

**Tokenism** – for example: a woman should be on the hiring panel for appearances, but we don’t actually have to listen to her

# Long-term (documented) effects of a male-biased culture

“**more of a comment**” – women’s Q&A time in talks is disproportionately overtaken by men providing their opinions rather than the woman volunteering her expertise. This has become so egregious that moderators in the US have started to disallow comments from senior male faculty entirely

These actions signal to women that they are not deserving of intellectual space

# Yes, there are papers on this:

## PHYSICS TODAY



### Physics papers authored by women are cited less than those by men

11 March 2022

A recent analysis shows a consistent gender citation gap even when factors such as seniority are considered.

[Dalmeet Singh Chawla](#)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1063/PT.6.2.20220311a>

- (1) Meridith's own paper on this topic (and references therein): <https://ui.adsabs.harvard.edu/abs/2022PASP..134h4503J>
- (2) <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41567-022-01770-1>
- (3) <https://www.science.org/content/article/women-researchers-cited-less-men-heres-why-what-can-done>
- (4) <https://pubs.aip.org/physicstoday/Online/5076/Physics-paper-s-authored-by-women-are-cited-less>
- (5) <https://www.nature.com/articles/nj7660-693b>

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Perspective | [Published: 06 October 2022](#)

### Citation inequity and gendered citation practices in contemporary physics

[Erin G. Teich](#), [Jason Z. Kim](#), [Christopher W. Lynn](#), [Samantha C. Simon](#), [Andrei A. Klishin](#), [Karol P. Szymula](#), [Pragya Srivastava](#), [Lee C. Bassett](#), [Perry Zurn](#), [Jordan D. Dworkin](#) & [Dani S. Bassett](#) [✉](#)

[Nature Physics](#) **18**, 1161–1170 (2022) | [Cite this article](#)

**3782** Accesses | **11** Citations | **357** Altmetric | [Metrics](#)

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[Published: 29 June 2017](#)

### Gender bias: Citation lag in astronomy

[Virginia Gewin](#)

[Nature](#) **546**, 693 (2017) | [Cite this article](#)

**2097** Accesses | **3** Citations | **22** Altmetric | [Metrics](#)

**Female first authors' work is cited less often.**



# Improving the culture - Goals:

- Teach members of the center/institutions that microaggressions are real and cause more harm than they realize
- Make clear the rules regarding intimate supervisor - subordinate relationships
- Acknowledge that people who spend their time improving the workplace are doing so at the expense of their research

# Improving the culture - What you can do:

- Solicit opinions from female & non-white experts; add them to the ends of your papers
- Go out of your way to cite your female & non-white colleagues
- Invite women & non-white to contribute to your projects
- Take culture differences into account (i.e., in some cultures, a kiss on the cheek as greeting is normal, but not in others). If unsure, ask.

# Improving the culture - What you can do:

- Do not speak dismissively about triggers, mental health, or sexual violence
- Be careful when, or avoid, starting relationships within power dynamics
- Before complimenting your colleague's looks, make sure you and she/he have established a relationship where such a comment will be well received



Thanks to the +members  
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*Fernando Cruz Saenz De  
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Kereszturi*



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If you have any questions:

EC email: [ec@csfk.org](mailto:ec@csfk.org)

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