

IRWO

insights

Issue #2, Spring 2024

Welcome to Issue #2 of IRWO insights.

The role of the Independent Respectful Workplace Office (IRWO) is to provide you with support so that you can uphold the [Respectful Workplace Policy](#) and help maintain a respectful environment for everyone working in the Legislative Assembly. In [Issue #1](#), we introduced you to the IRWO and provided a brief overview of our role. Issue #2 focuses on two topics: Education and 'Participant Groups.'

We are proud to announce that the *IRWO and the Respectful Workplace Policy e-Course* is now available! We created the e-Course to assist you in learning more about the IRWO, the *Respectful Workplace Policy*, and your responsibilities. As you move through the training, we ask you to reflect on what negative behaviours in the workplace are, how they might impact you and others, and what you might do if you witness or experience such behaviour in the future. Your participation in the e-Course is strongly encouraged, regardless of whether you have received other similar

training. As this is the first training offered through the IRWO, you will find at the end of the e-Course an opportunity to provide your feedback, which we would appreciate.

So that you can get better acquainted with the IRWO, we are also providing you with a brief overview of who the *Respectful Workplace Policy* applies to (the 'Participant Groups') and when the IRWO gets involved.

On behalf of the IRWO and the team, we look forward to supporting you and the Legislative Assembly in maintaining a respectful workplace.



Neelu Chauhan,
Barrister & Solicitor
Registrar, IRWO



How would you answer these questions?

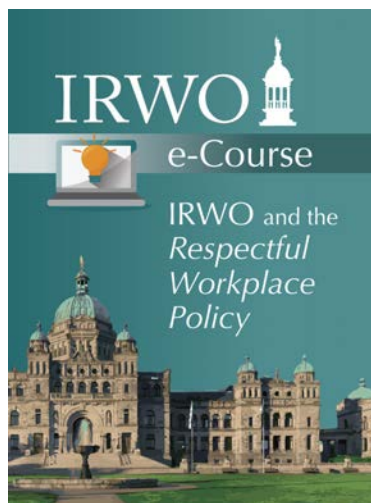
Test your perceptions and understanding by thinking about these questions now, then again after completing the *Respectful Workplace Policy e-Course*.

- ***What does a respectful workplace mean to you?***
- ***What are some potential impacts if negative behaviours in the workplace are not addressed?***
- ***Have you ever witnessed or experienced behaviour in a workplace that concerned you? If yes, did you know what to do?***

The IRWO and the Respectful Workplace Policy e-Course

The *IRWO and the Respectful Workplace Policy e-Course* will empower you with the necessary tools to uphold the [Respectful Workplace Policy](#). You will learn about workplace issues such as disrespectful behaviour, harassment, discrimination, and violence, and what to do should a concern arise.

Easily accessible 24/7 through irwobc.ca/training, only taking up to an hour of your time, and available to Participants in the Legislative Assembly *Respectful Workplace Policy*, we encourage you to learn more about the IRWO and the *Respectful Workplace Policy* by taking this training.



True and False Quiz

Q1

Scenario: You are feeling uncomfortable because you keep hearing from your colleagues that an employee in a different work group is constantly making critical comments specifically about your work. You have told your supervisor about this, but nothing has happened.

True or False: You can contact the IRWO to seek advice and support on how to deal with this behaviour.

Q2

Scenario: A Legislative Assembly Administration manager is known to shout and use coarse language around staff. They have never directed this behaviour towards you, but you have been present when it has occurred. Other colleagues have complained to you about this behaviour, but they are afraid to report it.

True or False: You can contact the IRWO to seek advice and support on how to deal with this behaviour even though it is not directed at you.

Q3

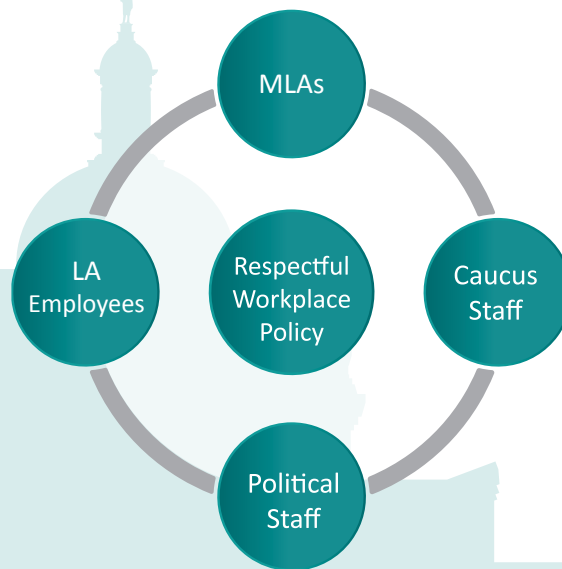
True or False: If you file a complaint with the IRWO, the matter will definitely be dealt with through an investigation.

How did you do? We suggest that taking this training will ensure you have the knowledge base to know when to contact the IRWO and how the IRWO can help.

(Answer key: Q1:True – Q2:True – Q3:False)



When does the *Respectful Workplace Policy* apply?



In the Legislative Assembly, you and your Participant Group interact with Participants from other Participant Groups:

- **MLAs**
- **Caucus staff members**
- **Political staff members**
- **Legislative Assembly employees (Administration)**

The *Respectful Workplace Policy* establishes shared workplace standards of conduct among Participants. There are a few exceptions (e.g. Constituency office staff of MLAs are not generally covered by the Policy, except in relation to events occurring on the legislative precinct, and interactions between MLAs in the context of parliamentary proceedings are not covered by the Policy).

What happens when an issue arises between you and someone from **another** Participant Group?

The Legislative Assembly's *Respectful Workplace Policy* provides a common standard which governs interactions and applicable procedures to follow when concerns arise between Participants from different Participant Groups. This is when the IRWO can get involved, and we can offer a range of resolution processes (from supported dialogues and mediations to formal investigations).

What happens when an issue arises between you and someone from the **same** Participant Group?

Each Participant Group is guided by its own distinct workplace policies, agreements, and standards of conduct. Participants who share a common workplace policy should follow that policy.

The IRWO can provide initial support and advice with any issues involving concerns about a respectful workplace, regardless of which Participant Group is represented. The assistance may take the form of coaching (which typically involves a discussion on strategies for managing challenging workplace behaviours or interpersonal relationships) or advising you on which respectful workplace policy applies to the situation.

Confidentiality

All concerns will be handled in confidence to the greatest extent possible without compromising the safety of personnel, the fairness of investigations, or the resolution of reported incidents.

The Respectful Workplace Policy

Purpose

- Assists Participants to work in a respectful workplace
- Establishes a complaints process to resolve complaints promptly and fairly

Covers Negative Employment-Related Behaviours Between Participant Groups



Applicable to

Interactions not covered by a common workplace conduct policy between these Participant Groups



MLAs



Caucus Staff



Political Staff



**Legislative Assembly Employees
(Administration)**

Not Applicable to

- Constituency office staff
- Interactions between MLAs in the context of parliamentary proceedings
- Interactions between Participants who share a workplace conduct policy

Participant Responsibility Examples

- Do not engage in disrespectful, harassing, discriminatory, or violent behaviour
- Report inappropriate behaviour that you experience / witness to management or the IRWO

Manager Responsibility Examples

- Ensure your staff are aware of and understand the Policy
- Take steps to resolve situations that you are aware of immediately, consulting with the IRWO where required

Visit irwobc.ca/resources for past newsletters and other resources to assist you in understanding and accessing the IRWO.

Visit irwobc.ca/training to access training programs.

Contact the IRWO to request assistance or submit a complaint: info@irwobc.ca