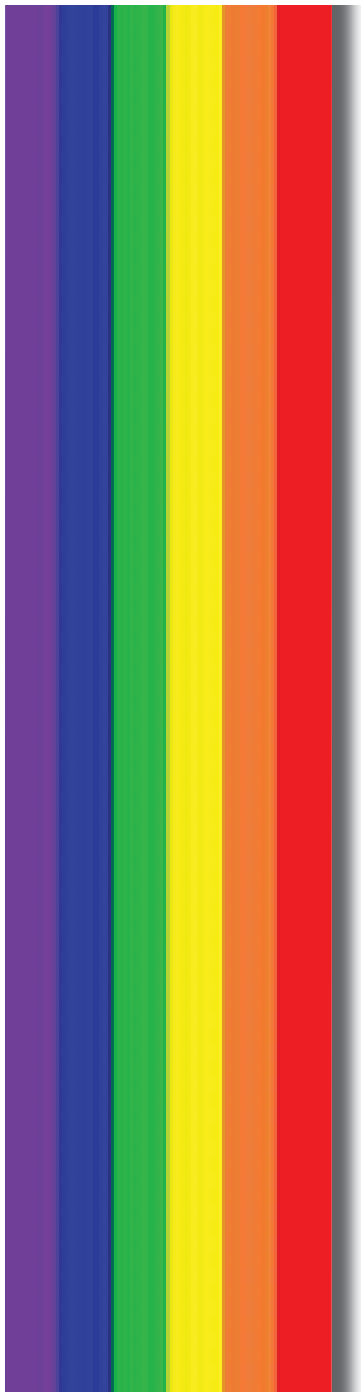


# APAGS-CLGBTC Climate Guide

For LGBT and Allied Students and Professionals



APAGS Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and  
Transgender Concerns  
2010

Dear Colleague,

Finding a work place, internship site, or academic programming that is welcoming to LGBT individuals can be challenging. The American Psychological Association of Graduate Students (APAGS) Committee for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Concerns (CLGBTC) has created this guide to help you determine if an organization will be welcoming to you.

This guide does not guarantee that you will have a positive experience, but it should help you to ask the types of questions that allow you to make an informed decision about whether an organization will be welcoming.

This product has been in development for three years. While we are happy to present this finished product to you, we also invite comments for future changes. Please send comments to the committee at: [climateguide.clgbtc@gmail.com](mailto:climateguide.clgbtc@gmail.com)

Thank you,

lore m. dickey, MA

Frank Golom, MA

Mike C. Parent, MS

Bekah Jackson, MA

Troy Loker, MA

Ryan Cheperka, MA

APAGS-CLGBTC Committee Members



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## USING THE GUIDE

The APAGS-CLGBTC Climate Guide is intended to be a resource for LGBT students and allies to evaluate potential sites for graduate school training, practica, pre- and post-doctoral training, or professional work (“sites”). The guide is divided into two sections. First, important questions related to sites, organized into domains, are presented. Questions for each domain were identified by the committee as being important to LGBT and allied students and as being answerable through research on sites using the Internet and other resources.

The second section contains a list of potential questions for sites, focusing on information that might not be readily obtainable through research and that might best be answered through interviews with site staff.

We recognize that not all questions are applicable to all persons using the guide or all sites the guide might be used to evaluate. As such, there is no single rating scale provided to judge or compare sites. Instead, the guide is intended to facilitate evaluation of sites according to the personal needs of the user. To this end, at the end of the Climate Guide we have included a worksheet that can be used to evaluate sites based on individual needs and priorities.

We also hope that site administrators will use the guide to help inform policies and procedures to make their site more inclusive and welcoming to LGBT students and allies.

# Section 1

## EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

*The external environment represents any outside condition or situation that influences the performance of the site with respect to LGBT issues, and can set the boundaries and context for the site's policies and procedures.*

- Does the country the site is in recognize same-sex marriages?
- Does the state/province recognize same-sex marriages?
- Does the state/province have laws protecting same-sex domestic partners?
- Is sexual orientation covered under state/province nondiscrimination law?
- Is gender identity covered under state/province nondiscrimination law?
- Does the state/province have hate crimes legislation regarding sexual orientation and gender identity?

# Section 1

## ORGANIZATIONAL TRACK RECORD

*Individual and organizational performance is the outcome or result, as well as the indicator of effort or achievement, for individuals and organizations.*

- Does the organization have any type of award recognizing accomplishments by LGBT members?
- Does the organization have any type of award recognizing contributions to the LGBT community?
- Have members of the organization been recognized by an LGBT service group (HRC, Point Foundation, etc.)?
- Has the organization itself been recognized by an LGBT service group?
- Has the organization, or members of it, received any recognition for not being LGBT friendly?
- Is there an LGBT affinity group?

# Section 1

## LEADERSHIP

*Leaders are executives providing overall organizational direction and serve as behavioral role models for all employees.*

- Have leaders in the organization been publically supportive of LGBT issues and individuals?
- Are there currently openly LGBT individuals in high-level leadership positions?
- Have there historically been openly LGBT individuals in leadership positions?
- Is there a committee that deals with LGBT issues in advising decision-making?
- Are managers exposed to LGBT issues in mandatory diversity training?

# Section 1

## MISSION AND STRATEGY

*Mission and strategy are what the organization's top management believes is, and has declared to be, the organization's mission and strategy and what employees believe is the central purpose of the organization.*

- Does the organization have a strategy for addressing LGBT issues?
- Is diversity part of the mission and strategy of the organization?
- Does a commitment to diversity explicitly include LGBT issues?
- Is service to LGBT communities a part of the mission of the site?
- Does the site enact service to LGBT communities?
- Does the organization have LGBT stakeholders?
- Are there explicit and achievable goals for the organization regarding LGBT issues?



# Section 1

## ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

*“The way we do things around here” or the collection of overt and covert rules, values and principles that are enduring and guide organizational behavior.*

- Are LGBT concerns included in discussions about diversity?
- Does the organization consider diversity within the LGBT community?
- Are LGBT issues addressed in promotion materials, marketing materials, or employee resources?
- Is there a designated space for LGBT employees to meet?
- Are LGBT issues discussed in supervision?

# Section 1

## STRUCTURE

*Structure is the arrangement of functions and people into specific areas and levels of responsibility, decision-making authority, communication and relationships to ensure effective implementation of the organization's mission and strategy.*

- Is there a specific office or person dedicated to LGBT concerns or issues?
- Is the office given sufficient resources and staff? Does the web site list one person or many?
- Do divisions within the organization have culturally competent services?
- Does the organization have an LGBT student group, employee group, LGBT office, etc?

# Section 1

## SYSTEMS (POLICIES AND PROCEDURES)

*Systems are standardized policies and mechanisms that facilitate work, primarily manifested in the organization's reward systems, management information systems and in such control systems as performance appraisal, goal and budget development and human resource allocation.*

- Does the organization have an LGBT listserv or equivalent?
- Is there a Safe Zone or similar program?
- Is there an Ally training program?
- Does the organization actively recruit LGBT employees?
- Has the organization responded positively to local or national initiatives to gain LGBT rights?
- Does the organization have a position that explicitly prohibits political involvement?
- Is the organization affiliated with a religiously conservative organization?
- Does the organization provide partner benefits?
- Does the organization have sexual orientation nondiscrimination policies?
- Does the organization have gender identity nondiscrimination policies?

# Section 2

## QUESTIONS FOR SITES

*The following questions concern topics that might not be easily accessed from outside of a site, and are intended for LGBT persons and allies to bring to current members of the site (e.g. on phone interviews, at live interviews).*

- Where is the office located (is it in a high profile area or is it hidden somewhere that makes it harder to gain access to)?
- Does the site have gender-neutral (unisex) restrooms?
- Are LGBT persons at the site able to openly identify as LGBT?
- Do/did LGBT persons at the site feel safe coming out?
- Are LGBT persons able to talk about their personal life in a way that doesn't rely on "code" (e.g., using the correct gender for your partner rather hiding your relationship)?
- Do organization members with whom LGBT persons work talk with LGBT members about their personal lives in a manner similar to how they talk with heterosexual members about their personal lives (e.g., ask about how your partner is doing just like they would ask how someone else's wife or husband is doing)?
- If news of "life accomplishments" (marriage, baby, etc) are announced in publications, does this include the events for LGBT individuals?
- Are employees able to put photos in their work area of their chosen family?
- Do LGBT persons at the site feel comfortable and supported in addressing LGBT issues related to any coursework, research, or clinical experiences?
- How much autonomy do LGBT persons at the site have?
- Are LGBT persons at the site allowed to gather and meet as a group in a safe space?
- Are LGBT individuals comfortable pursuing initiatives of interest/importance to them?
- What is the organization's track record regarding LGBT discrimination?

## Section 2

- How many complaints of LGBT discrimination have been placed? In the workgroup? Against an employee? Against a supervisor?
- Are research projects on LGBT issues supported by administrative personnel (e.g., are research funding sources available, is there an unwritten policy regarding not supporting this type of research)?
- Do colleagues demonstrate heteronormative bias in their daily conversations?
- Do LGBT employees at the site feel fairly compensated for their work?
- Does the organization, or members of the organization (particularly those in power roles), actively consider LGBT issues as relevant (i.e. in coursework, research, clinical work)?
- To what extent are LGBT issues addressed across course content?
- Is knowledge of LGBT issues expected? (or, is it viewed as more of a “special interest?”)
- Are LGBT individuals engaged in their organization to a similar degree as heterosexual individuals?
- Is work that incorporates LGBT issues and concerns met with support and encouragement or with roadblocks?
- Are LGBT issues incorporated across the organization?
- How do LGBT issues get assigned (i.e. only to the LGBT staff member)?
- When referring to other employees/students, are LGBT individuals outed as the spokesperson for all LGBT people?
- Are LGBT employees asked explicitly about their needs?
- Does the organization collect systematic data on the needs and experiences of LGBT employees?

# Worksheet

## WORKSHEET

The following page is intended to be used for personal evaluation of sites. For each site, record important strengths and weaknesses that may be especially important for you. Then, for each of the seven categories, record a score for the site based on how well the site performed in the each category from Section 1.

Site:		External Environment	A B C D F
Strengths	Weaknesses	Org. Track Record	A B C D F
		Leadership	A B C D F
		Mission & Strategy	A B C D F
		Organizational Culture	A B C D F
		Structure	A B C D F
		Systems	A B C D F

Site:		External Environment	A B C D F
Strengths	Weaknesses	Org. Track Record	A B C D F
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		Organizational Culture	A B C D F
		Structure	A B C D F
		Systems	A B C D F

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doi:10.1177/014920639201800306<sup>1</sup>

Rankin, S. (2003). *Campus climate for sexual minorities: A national perspective*. New York: N.Y.: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute.<sup>2</sup>

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doi:10.1037/0003-066X.45.2.109<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This is the model that was used as the basis for the development of the Climate Guide.

<sup>2</sup> This is an example of a work that addresses LGBT campus climate.

<sup>3</sup> This reference is for a general article regarding organizational culture.