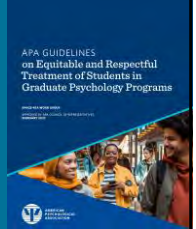


Guideline 2: Policies and Procedures

APA Guidelines on Equitable and Respectful Treatment of Students in Graduate Psychology Programs

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April 18, 2024



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DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The author has not received any commercial support for this presentation and reports no other conflict of interest.

The author has been contracted as an independent contractor for this presentation and may receive compensation for this work based on the terms of an agreement that has been reviewed and approved by the American Psychological Association (APA) in accordance with its policy.

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PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

This section of the series will focus on the **Guideline #2: Policies and Procedures** (APA Guidelines on Equitable and Respectful Treatment of Students in Graduate Psychology Programs)

1. Describe strategies for **developing, implementing, enforcing, and revising** policies and procedures in graduate programs to support equitable, ethical, inclusive, and respectful practices and processes.
2. Describe **opportunities for graduate students' empowerment and participation** in policy and procedure development, implementation, enforcement, and revision.

WORK GROUP HISTORY

EARLY INSPIRATION:

"Principles on the Fair, Equitable, and Respectful Treatment of Psychology Graduate Students: A Student Bill of Rights" (APAGS)

Vision to "...promote the fair, equitable, and respectful treatment of every psychology graduate student throughout their education and training..." (APAGS, 2017)

AIM:

The APAGS-BEA Work Group was convened by APAGS and the Board of Educational Affairs (BEA) in late 2018.

To identify practices and policies for graduate programs that promote equitable and respectful treatment of graduate students.



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PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

APAGS-BEA Work Group 2019-2023



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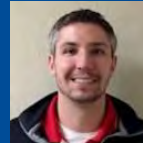
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WORK GROUP STATEMENT

“Promoting an equitable and respectful academic learning context for the next generation of psychologists is essential to the ongoing health of our discipline and profession.

The *APA Guidelines on Equitable and Respectful Treatment of Students in Graduate Psychology Programs* represent a critical next step in articulating psychology’s commitment to the well-being of graduate students who are truly the future of psychology.”

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Who is here today?

- ☐ Undergraduate Student
- ☐ Graduate Student
- ☐ Postdoctoral Fellow
- ☐ Graduate Program Faculty
- ☐ Research Advisor
- ☐ Clinical Supervisor
- ☐ Training Director
- ☐ Administration

EQUITABLE & RESPECTFUL TREATMENT GUIDELINES APA 2024

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SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT

Spanned the darkest days of the [pandemic](#) against the backdrop of [compounding race- and class-related disparities](#) further intensified in the summer of 2020 by the murder of [George Floyd](#) and violence against the [Black Lives Matter \(BLM\)](#) protestors across the United States.

Growing consciousness of [what it means to enact meaningful change](#) in well-established systems of privilege and power (*e.g., APA Racism Resolution; Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Framework*).

Hope that this document will [contribute to the well-being of all graduate students](#).

Acknowledging that the education and training community in psychology will need the [flexibility to contextualize and operationalize](#) the below four dimensions in the [rapidly and continuously evolving social and professional context](#).

EQUITABLE & RESPECTFUL TREATMENT GUIDELINES APA 2024

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Special APA Member Town Hall The Racism Pandemic



APA Council Resolutions October 2021:

- ✓ APA's Apology to People of Color in the U.S.
- ✓ APA's Historical Chronology examining psychology's contributions to systemic and structural racism and upholding White supremacy
- ✓ Role of Psychology and APA in Dismantling Systemic Racism Against People of Color in the U.S.
- ✓ APA Resolution on Advancing Health Equity in Psychology

PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT



Role of Psychology and the American Psychological Association in Dismantling Systemic Racism Against People of Color in the United States
OCTOBER 2021



APA RESOLUTION on Harnessing Psychology to Combat Racism: Adopting a Uniform Definition and Understanding
FEBRUARY 2021

FEB 2021 Resolution: Psychologists should consider the following four levels of racism:

1. **Structural** (laws/policies/practices that produce cumulative racial inequities, including the failure to correct explicitly racist laws/policies/practices)
2. **Institutional** (policies, practices, procedures of institutions)
3. **Interpersonal** (implicit or explicit)
4. **Internalized**

Guideline #2: Policies and Procedures
is consistent with the antiracism commitments of the American Psychological Association



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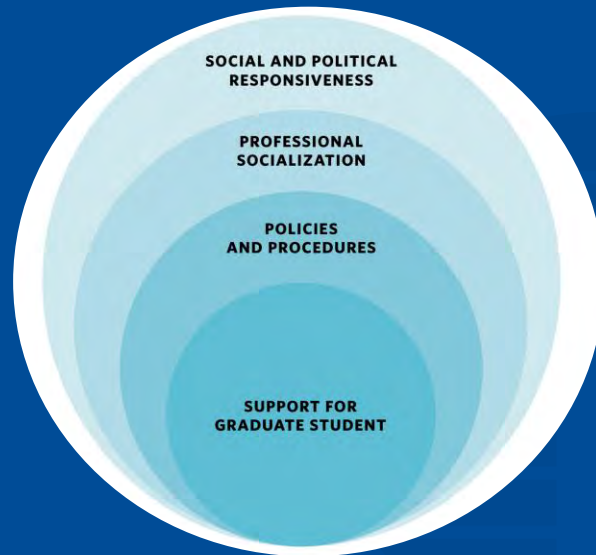
Guidelines Sections

Guideline #4

Guideline #3

Guideline #2

Guideline #1



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9 GUIDING PRACTICES



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2. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

GUIDELINE 2

Programs strive to be transparent, fair, and consistent in developing, implementing, and enforcing policies and procedures. Programs are encouraged to consider actively recruiting students to participate in the process of creating and revising policies.

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL
RESPONSIVENESS

PROFESSIONAL
SOCIALIZATION

POLICIES
AND PROCEDURES

SUPPORT FOR
GRADUATE STUDENT

2. Policies & Procedures

2.1 Transparency and Fairness in the Creation, Communication, and Implementation of Policies and Procedures

2.2 Privacy

2.3 Inclusion of Graduate Students in Creating and Evaluating Policies and Procedures Related to Their Treatment

What setting do you work in?



- ☐ University/College
- ☐ Medical School/Other Academic
- ☐ Private Practice
- ☐ Hospital/Community Health Organization
- ☐ Government/VA Medical Center
- ☐ Business/Industry
- ☐ School/Educational Setting
- ☐ Other

GUIDELINE #2: Policies & Procedures

- Grounded in inclusive and equitable practices to combat systemic and institutional racism.
- Commitment to social justice (prevention; advocacy)
- Focuses on change both through *statement* and *action*

Wilcox et al. (2024b): Although training programs may state commitments, this does not necessarily translate to action

2.1. Transparency and Fairness in the Creation, Communication, and Implementation of Policies and Procedures

2.1.1. Promoting and preserving procedures and policies that are fair and equitable.

... **actively address** social, cultural, and/or economic contexts that unfairly marginalize or reward students differently based on their identities and circumstances (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, religion, disability, immigration status) (2.1.1.1.); **addressing problematic policies** (2.1.1.2.); and **reasonable compensation** ... and **time expectations** for degree advancement and completion (2.1.1.3.).

2.1.2. Providing complete information about program requirements, policies, and procedures.

... **accurate information** about program costs, requirements, and application (APA, 2017, Standard 7.02) (2.1.2.1.); communicating **program expectations before admission** (2.1.2.2.), **evaluation criteria** and **deadlines** with sufficient time for to raise questions and comply (2.1.2.3.)

... Engage in regularly scheduled reviews of program culture with input from students ... **with specific attention to when culture/expectations translate into informal rules/policies** (2.1.2.4.)

Writing rules and policies to avoid unspoken, informal and inconsistent implementation (2.1.2.5.)

Informing about their professional, ethical, and legal obligations when assigned to an external site (2.1.2.6.)

CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Actively address social, cultural, and/or economic contexts that unfairly marginalize or reward students differently based on their identities and circumstances (2.1.1.1.)

Engage in regularly scheduled reviews of program culture with input from students ... **with specific attention to when culture/expectations translate into informal rules/policies** (2.1.2.4.)

Writing rules and policies to avoid unspoken, informal and inconsistent implementation (2.1.2.5.)

- Work to foster program-level understanding of systems of oppression and individuals' embeddedness in them.
- Incumbent upon faculty to engage in **critical consciousness** development and to examine own program through this lens (Freire, 2000): (a) Critical Reflection (awareness); (b) Critical Motivation (commitment); (c) Critical Action (transformative action; Diemer et al., 2021)
- The role of –isms and white supremacy in shaping:
 - **Notions of “professionalism”** (Mokhachane et al., 2023)
 - **Hidden curriculum** - unwritten rules, social norms, and expectations that exist within academia (Elliot et al., 2020; Enders et al., 2021; Hokins et al., 2024. .)
 - Definition of **what counts** as “scientific” (APA, 2021)

2.1. Transparency and Fairness in the Creation, Communication, and Implementation of Policies and Procedures

2.1.3. Recognizing in writing students' general and educational rights in a publicly available document.

... Promoting, protecting, safeguarding, and advancing students' rights to **freedom of speech** and independent thought (2.1.3.1.), **organizing** to support causes (2.1.3.2.), and when federal or state **laws unfairly or unreasonably impede a student's ability to continue their education** based on their identities and circumstances (2.1.3.3.)

2.1.4. Recognizing and promoting students' educational rights.

... Freedom of **inquiry and dissemination of findings** (2.1.4.1.), **protection from exploitation** and/or perform tasks unrelated to the scope of their graduate and professional education (2.1.4.3), and ensuring **publication credits** (2.1.4.4.) (APA, 2017, Standard 8.12).

2.1.5. Establishing and providing graduate students clear internal procedures for reporting grievances to program, department, and/or university officials and appealing decisions involving student treatment.

... **Due process** (2.1.5.1.), **alternative recourses** when **conflicts of interest** exist between or among graduate students and faculty, program coordinators, training directors, supervisors, and/or other stakeholders (2.1.5.2.), and **prohibiting retaliation** against graduate students, as well as faculty and staff who advocate for graduate students, for filing grievances, appealing decisions, or participating in grievance investigations (2.1.5.3.)

CRITICAL and EQUITY-MINDED POLICY ANALYSIS (CPA)

"Well-intentioned attempts to advance an equitable policy may unwittingly perpetuate discourses and practices that reinforce inequity" (Allan, 2010, p. 30).

Policy development, implementation, enforcement, and revision as:

- Political and value-laden process (a socially constructed process that changes over time)*
- Biased and imbued with the values of those who created them (Bacchi, 2000; Chase et al., 2014)**

Six Considerations:

- (a) the difference between what a policy espouses vs how a policy is enacted in practice;
- (b) how a policy originated - what it was meant to address or solve, and how it has developed over time;
- (c) how a policy distributes knowledge, power, and resources ("winners" and "losers");
- (d) how a policy can maintain socially stratified systems, institutionalize inequality, and sustain privileges associated with dominant groups
- (e) how non-dominant groups engage or resist a policy.
- (f) where is a policy silent - represents choices of what is and is not valued (Bacchi, 2000; Martinez-Alemán, 2015).

2.2 Privacy

2.2.1. Safeguarding academic, personal, and program performance information

Providing and reviewing...

- **Confidentiality** of students' self-disclosure of views or beliefs (2.2.1.3.) *
- **Limitations** related to the confidentiality of their academic, personal, or program performance records, including information about mandatory or permissible exceptions (2.2.1.1.)**
- Policies and procedures that **govern allegations** against a student's judgment, competence, or character **during orientation** (2.2.1.2.)

2.2.2. Avoiding the disclosure of personal information related to sexual history, abuse, treatment, or personal relationships (APA, 2017, Standard 7) ***

- **Right to refrain from personal disclosures**, unless otherwise required (2.2.2.1.) (APA, 2017, Standard 7.04).
- **Nondisclosure protections** and identifying and a neutral third party who does not evaluate graduate students and is trained to handle questions or concerns in the program about personal boundaries and disclosures (2.2.2.2.).

2.3 Inclusion of Graduate Students in Creating and Evaluating Policies and Procedures Related to Their Treatment:

Involvement (2.3.1.), **representation** and **participation** of graduate students from minoritized groups *while not shifting the burden of correcting systemic inequities to the minoritized students themselves* (2.3.2.).

Opportunities for input and feedback while **protecting from retaliation** (2.3.3.)

Acknowledging and managing power differentials that may preclude students from providing authentic input and feedback (2.3.4.)

TAKE-AWAYS: Policy Best Practices

- Recognize that we all are subject to the influence of **bias and assumptions**.
- Spend sufficient time and attention evaluating your policy and looking for **disparate impact** - *If disparities are identified, how can they be mitigated or eliminated?*
- Consider whom have you **consulted** while creating/revising your policies to ensure that you have been inclusive rather than exclusive - *Use campus resources such as the Diversity Community of Practice to help evaluate your policy.*
- Establish **periodic revision timelines** to evaluate your policy and its implementation.
- Pay attention also to these areas throughout your policy documents:
 - a. **Contacts** – consider contacts listed within the context of the needs of the intended audiences
 - b. **Definitions** - review or add definitions that would add to the reader's understanding of the basic policy or procedures.
 - c. **Use of pronouns** - avoid use of gendered pronouns (her/she).



Share via Chat

What are some contextual factors that make it challenging to enact this Guideline?



Share briefly in chat...

As you move forward, what is one specific action step you can commit to taking in the next two weeks to enact this Guidelines?

Thank you!

Questions?

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