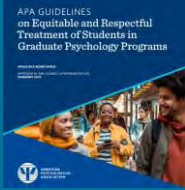


Guideline 4: Social and Political Responsiveness

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

Erica H. Wise, Ph.D., and Melanie M. Wilcox, Ph.D., ABPP

March 28th, 2024



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APA MISSION STATEMENT

“Our mission is to promote the advancement, communication, and application of psychological science and knowledge to benefit society and improve lives.”

“We do this by:

- Utilizing psychology to make a positive impact on critical societal issues.
- Elevating the public’s understanding of, regard for, and use of psychology.
- ***Preparing the discipline and profession of psychology for the future.***
- Strengthening APA’s standing as an authoritative voice for psychology.”

<https://www.apa.org/about>



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BLOG

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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WORK GROUP CONTEXT AND SCOPE

“Our work 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. We are aware of the 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).

The Work Group hopes this document will contribute to the well-being of all graduate students while 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. The Work Group understands that the guidelines may not be applicable in all situations faced by the education and training community in psychology.”



Poll: who is here?



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



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Guidelines Sections



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4. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL RESPONSIVENESS

GUIDELINE 4

Equitable and respectful program practices involve making visible the sociopolitical context that informs education and training. This involves fostering critical awareness, action and modeling a commitment to social justice through the culturally responsive practice of psychology.

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“When we lack courage in our language, our actions will lack courage.”

~ Dr. Thema Bryant, Past-President of the American Psychological Association, May 26th, 2022



Racism



- The APA is—finally—reimagining its approach to, and understanding of, racism



Guideline 4 is consistent with the recent antiracism commitments of the American Psychological Association

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Structural Competence

- It is incumbent upon us to be well-prepared to understand, and prepare our trainees to understand, *social and systemic forces, and their historical antecedents, that result in individual health outcomes*

Structural Competence was included for the first time in the most recent APA Inclusive Language Guide

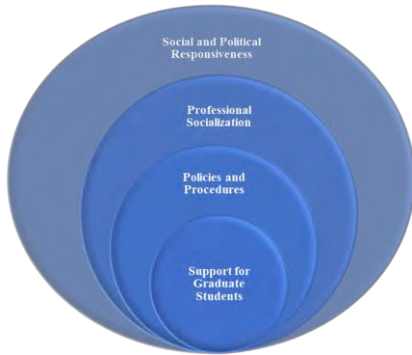
Structural Competence: “...the trained ability to discern how a host of issues defined clinically as symptoms, attitudes, or diseases (e.g., depression, hypertension, obesity, smoking, medication, “non-compliance,” trauma, psychosis) also represent the downstream implications of a number of upstream decisions about such matters as health care and food delivery systems, zoning laws, urban and rural infrastructures, medicalization, or even the very definitions of illness and health” (Metzl & Hansen, 2014, p. 130).



See above article for more

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4. Social and Political Responsiveness



4.1 Cultural Competence and Humility

4.2 Cultural Context and Embeddedness

4.3 Fostering Critical Consciousness

4.4 Responsiveness to Sociopolitical Events

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Share briefly in chat...



✓ *What are some of the context factors in your setting that may make it difficult to enact this Guideline?*

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4.1 Cultural Competence and Humility

- Grounded in cultural and structural competence as well as the Multicultural Orientation model
 - Cultural Humility, Cultural Comfort, and Cultural Opportunities (e.g., *broaching*)
- Commitment to social justice (prevention; advocacy)
- *Demonstrating* these commitments not just in word, but also in action
 - Wilcox et al. (2024b): Although training programs may *state* commitments, this does not necessarily translate to action

4.1 Cultural Competence and Humility

Graduate programs may consider enacting values of equity and respect by:

- 4.1.1. Committing to diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice.
 - 4.1.1.1. Demonstrating diversity and equity values in their endeavors.
 - 4.1.1.2. Prioritizing the broad goal of social justice in our profession and adhering to applicable professional codes when observing, interacting with, and evaluating graduate students' professional behavior.
 - 4.1.1.3. Modeling critical thinking and humility, educating, and training all graduate students to develop the capacity for critical thinking and to apply this capacity in multiple contexts.
 - 4.1.1.4. Expanding equitable and affirming practices and policies to create inclusive spaces for individuals of diverse backgrounds and identities within the academic community.

4.1 Cultural Competence and Humility

- **Cultural Humility:** “The ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented (or open to the other) in relation to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the” other person (Hook et al., 2013, p. 154)
 - Interpersonal: Being other-oriented, curious, perspective-taking, lack of sense of superiority
 - Intrapersonal: An accurate view of oneself, particularly one's limitations

We need to both *model* and *teach* this

- 4.1.2. Expecting interpersonal interactions to be informed by sociocultural awareness, cultural humility, and shared accountability to engage in self-reflection.
 - 4.1.2.1. Deliberately and intentionally engaging in their own axiological analysis and modeling this behavior to graduate students they teach, mentor, and/or supervise.
 - 4.1.2.2. Demonstrating, educating, and training all graduate students in the process of reconciling conflicting values from a position of respect.

4.2 Cultural Context and Embeddedness

4.2 Cultural Context and Embeddedness

Graduate programs may consider enacting values of equity and respect by:

- 4.2.1. Emphasizing the importance of sociocultural and ecological contexts, as articulated publicly and demonstrated through action.
 - 4.2.1.1. Making clear that programs' public value statements are consistent with the APA Multicultural Guidelines (2017). Featuring and making value statements available to the public, the program, and/or the university.
 - 4.2.1.2. Creating a culture of understanding and accountability for personal participation in, and responsibility to, address systems of oppression in all professional endeavors.
 - 4.2.1.3. Demonstrating and providing opportunities for engagement in social and professional advocacy as psychologists.

- Which is to say, embeddedness in *systems of oppression*
- Incumbent upon faculty to foster their own knowledge and awareness in this area, understand students through systems-level lens, and help students develop this understanding themselves
- Model and provide opportunities for engagement in advocacy
 - Individual-level advocacy
 - Institutional-level advocacy
 - Systems-level advocacy
 - Structural-level advocacy

4.2 Cultural Context and Embeddedness

- 4.2.2. Fostering a program-level understanding that personal and professional identities, structures, and endeavors are culturally informed and positioned.

- 4.2.2.1. Incorporating into curriculum a multidisciplinary historical, cultural, philosophical, and political critical analysis of the ways in which science is constructed and used.
- 4.2.2.2. Recognizing that professional endeavors of both faculty and students are informed by the sociocultural embeddedness of the person, with regard to their intersecting privileged and marginalized identities.
- 4.2.2.3. Continuously evaluating program practices and policies, recognizing that they carry and reflect cultural values.

- Work to foster program-level understanding of systems of oppression and individuals' embeddedness in them
 - E.g., the role of racism and white supremacy in shaping scientific endeavors and even the very definition of what counts as "scientific" (APA, 2021)
 - Challenge problematic notions of "professionalism"
 - Evaluate and critique program-level practices and policies that, even while well-meaning, may perpetuate bias and oppression

4.3 Foster Critical Consciousness

- **Critical Consciousness:** Reflection on and analysis of systems of oppression and how they might be transformed and transcended (Freire, 2000). Three primary aspects:
 - Critical Reflection (awareness)
 - Critical Motivation (commitment)
 - Critical Action (transformative action; Diemer et al., 2021)
- Incumbent upon faculty to engage in critical consciousness development *and* to examine own program through this lens
- Need to foster trainees' critical consciousness as well

4.3 Fostering Critical Consciousness

Graduate programs may consider enacting values of equity and respect by:

- 4.3.1. Exploring and addressing in all aspects of graduate education (e.g., curriculum, program processes and procedures, program culture) the systematic ways that dominant powers (whiteness, patriarchy, affluence, and other factors) impact identity, and underpin daily psychological practice, training, research, and education.
- 4.3.2. Including in program curricula relevant science and literature from across disciplines for a complex understanding of the personal and professional self within the sociopolitical context.
- 4.3.3. Fostering through education and training an understanding of the inextricable relationship between personal and professional values.
- 4.3.4. Actively working to make graduate study in psychology more accessible in diversifying the pathway to psychology graduate programs.

Note About a Common Thread

- Throughout 4.1 through 4.3, facilitating trainees' ability to enter into and progress through professional psychology education pathways has been nodded to or outright stated
- Substantial research makes clear that graduate students increasingly struggle to meet their basic needs, *even amidst* extraordinary student borrowing (see Lantz [Wilcox] & Davis, 2017; Wilcox et al., 2021, 2022)
- Worse for:
 - Students of color
 - Lower SES students
 - Health Service Psychology students
 - Psy.D. students



Tuition or Dinner? Nearly Half of College Students Surveyed in a New Report Are Going Hungry

Many routinely skip meals and take 'poverty naps' because they cannot afford groceries. Campus food pantries are helping, but are they enough?

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/02/nyregion/hunger-college-food-insecurity.html>

Economic Constraints in Higher Education



**BASIC
NEEDS**



DIRECT COSTS
(I.E. "STICKER
PRICE";
(GOLDRICK-RAB,
2016)



**INDIRECT
COSTS**



**COLLEGE
KNOWLEDGE**



**SOCIAL
SUPPORT**



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Costs of Psychological Training

**Academic
conferences
(fees, travel)**

Professional clothing
(*internal and external
expectations of social
class "passing")

**Professional
Organization
Fees**

**Research
Costs**

**Travel to Practica
and/or for
Research**

**Practicum,
Internship
Costs**

**EPPP
Preparation**

**Licensing
Fees**

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Note About a Common Thread



- Need to advocate for:
 - Better funding
 - Salary and salary coverage (i.e. closure of gaps)
 - Tuition remission
 - Professional development funds
 - Inclusive, affordable health insurance and coverage
 - ^ Unionization!
 - Stronger and more accessible student loan repayment programs
 - Reinstatement of subsidized student loans for graduate students
 - Support for international students

4.4 Responsiveness to Sociopolitical Events

- Students are as affected by the difficult things going on around us as anyone else is
 - *And* they are often tasked with supporting others
- By being both proactive (e.g., values statements; action plans) and reactive (e.g., responding to current events), we have the opportunity to both *support* and *model*

4.4 Responsiveness to Sociopolitical Events

Graduate programs may consider enacting values of equity and respect by:

4.4.1. Being thoughtful and timely in responding to sociopolitical issues and events.

4.4.1.1. Making clear value statements and articulating action plans, when appropriate, in response to such events. When needed, programs should consider consulting with multicultural and diversity experts about developing value statements and action plans.

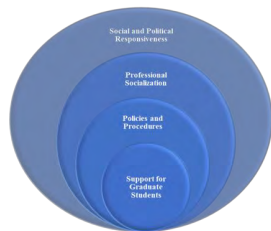
4.4 Responsiveness to Sociopolitical Events

- This, of course, requires that faculty
 - Stay up on current events themselves
 - Familiarize themselves with resources that can be integrated into the curriculum proactively re: psychology's role in challenging and responding to oppressive systems (e.g., the recent plethora of APA Council Resolutions)
 - Familiarize themselves with resources and/or seek consult re: resources that can be shared with students in response to current events

4.4.1.2. Supporting students in meeting educational expectations and exercising flexibility during crises or sociopolitical events that may cause distress to students, staff, and faculty.

4.4.1.3. Supplementing existing curricula with literature and resources, reflecting diverse worldviews, relevant to psychology's role in addressing such sociopolitical event(s).

4.4.1.4. Incorporating materials into curricula that emphasize psychology's role in challenging oppressive systems and theories that reflect the dominant discourse and underpin the daily practice of psychology.



4. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL RESPONSIVENESS

4.1 Cultural Competence and Humility

4.2 Cultural Context and Embeddedness

4.3 Fostering Critical Consciousness port

4.4 Responsiveness to Sociopolitical Events



The work of Guideline 4 may not be easy, but it is crucial—and entirely in line with the stated commitments and recent work of the American Psychological Association

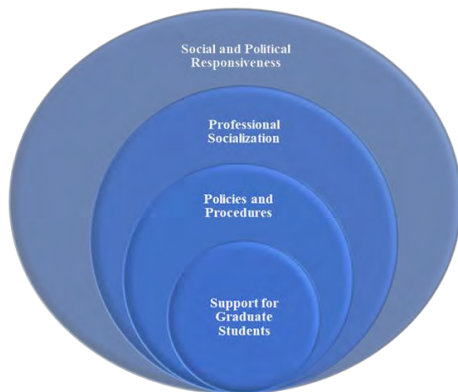


To support the students of today and prepare the psychology workforce of tomorrow, we must put in the work to be prepared



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?*



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