



American Philosophical Association

# Good Practices Guide

Draft for Public Comment, Spring 2017

*Developed by the APA Task Force on a Best Practices Guide  
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# Preface

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Times change, and the APA, like most professional organizations, colleges, and universities, has perceived the need for continuing development of codes of professional conduct across a wide range of areas of academic life. Among the areas usually included in such codes of conduct are the following:

- Academic freedom
- Discrimination and diversity
- Sexual harassment and assault
- Faculty-student relations
- Professional meetings
- Accessibility for families and caregivers
- Social events and alcohol
- Fair practices in recruitment, promotion, and funding
- Professional discourse and the use of social media
- Grievances and redress

Such codes of conduct are intended to spell out acceptable and unacceptable forms of behavior, as well as any associated procedures and sanctions in cases where violations may have occurred. Often these codes of conduct connect with law, and contain procedural guarantees and reporting requirements mandated by law (e.g., under Title IX and the Clery Act). Codes of conduct also typically go beyond strictly legal mandates by setting out standards of professional conduct distinctively appropriate for an academic community. The APA recently released a Code of Conduct of its own, developed by a separate task force.

This draft Good Practices Guide, as we understand it, is written against the background of such a code, and is not intended to play the same role in regulating the conduct of academic life. There will inevitably be areas of overlap—some of the guidelines or recommendations contained within will have the same content, if not the same force, as a rule of professional conduct. But a Good Practices Guide—we decided this was more accurate than “Best Practices”—does not attempt to draw lines regarding what is strictly permissible or impermissible. Rather, it is a set of recommendations based upon the accumulated experience of faculty, administrators, and students, intended in part to address some of the underlying conditions that can give rise to the problems with which a Code of Conduct deals. More positively, these recommendations are meant to suggest policies and practices that may help us to realize the sort of academic community we aspire to—a community of mutual respect and fairness, of commitment to scholarship and learning, of open-mindedness and inclusivity, and of concern for nurturing the next generation of philosophers and members of the society at large.

Naturally, members of the APA will differ over the interpretation of these values, their priority, and how to understand the responsibility of individuals, academic units, teaching programs, students, journals, and professional associations in attempting to realize these values. We view this draft Good Practices Guide not as an attempt at a definitive statement, but as a starting point, and as a basis for continuing discussion and

development of good practices. Similarly, this draft guide does not purport to be comprehensive. Rather, it focuses upon a number of areas where special challenges arise in the promotion of mutual respect, fairness, and inclusivity, and where experience and research indicate effective ways of meeting these challenges.

Philosophers are also members of the broader community beyond the academy, and, moreover, most of those we teach will find their lives outside academia. Our recommendations have sought in various ways to take cognizance of these facts, but many issues remain. In particular, we have not attempted to discuss the role or responsibilities of philosophers as potential agents in the public or political sphere, and how these relate to their professional and pedagogical roles and responsibilities. This, in our opinion, is an important discussion to have within the APA, and we hope the continuing evolution of this Good Practices Guide will provide one forum for it.

# List of Topics

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We divide our suggestions into the following categories, though, of course, often the suggestions bear on more than one category.

## 1. Communication and implementation of guidelines for good practices

What should an academic unit do with this set of good practices? How are faculty, staff, and students to be made aware of the recommendations of a Good Practices Guide, and of their meaning and implications?

## 2. Teaching, supervising, and mentoring students

What sorts of practices have been found to promote effective and inclusive teaching? What are some of the goals or concerns in the supervision or mentoring of students? How is one to increase accessibility for students with disabilities without marginalizing or imposing additional burdens upon them? What are the special responsibilities of supervisors and mentors, and how are these related to the structure of graduate and undergraduate programs?

## 3. Professional development and placement for students

Concern for philosophy is also concern for the long-term health of the discipline—a concern that extends to undergraduates and junior faculty as well as graduate students. Recent years have seen tightening budgets and a difficult job market in philosophy, and these developments have had significant effects at all levels. How can faculty provide encouragement and support for students, while promoting expectations that avoid excesses of optimism and pessimism? At the undergraduate level, how can faculty provide guidance and assistance to students with a diverse array of backgrounds as they think about graduate school and apply? At the graduate level, how should faculty contribute to the professional development of students, and how should departments conduct placement services? What are some ways in which programs have learned to inform students about issues of professional development, or to provide encouragement and support for such activities? How might placement procedures be made more transparent and responsive to current student needs?

## 4. Interviews and offers of employment

What are some good practices with respect to the holding and conducting of recruitment interviews—in-person or electronic, at conventions or in other settings such as campus visits? How are questions of dual careers or disabilities to be addressed? When making offers of employment, what are some practices that avoid placing unreasonable pressure on candidates, or that promote greater understanding of the terms of employment?

## 5. Countering implicit bias

A great deal of empirical research suggests that many forms of bias operate implicitly, such that their presence and operation is not visible to the individuals and groups involved. How can individuals and academic units become mindful of the nature and possible operation of implicit bias in the various areas of their academic life? Are there procedures or forms of experience or training that have been found to be effective in countering some of the effects of implicit bias in admissions, hiring, promotion, or funding, and how might these be integrated into the academic life of faculty and students?

## 6. Social events, alcohol, and accessibility

Social events play a large role in academic life, and are often a vital part of the exchange of ideas that colleges and universities exist to promote. It therefore is appropriate that questions of good practices and inclusiveness be raised in connection with such events as well as more official or standard academic activities. Two particularly important areas of concern are alcohol use and accessibility. What are some of the more serious concerns about alcohol use at social events, and how can they be taken into account in the planning and staging of such events—and what ways have individuals or units found for addressing them effectively? How should gatherings such as workshops, public lectures, colloquia, conferences, etc., be planned in order to make them accessible to individuals with disabilities?

## 7. Professional communication

Effective communication plays an important role in discovering and addressing virtually all problems faced by individuals and units. Are there examples of effective practices within departments, programs, or other units to encourage open lines of communication across levels? What are reasonable expectations or norms for open discussions at meetings, colloquia, and other events, if we are to promote the goals in inquiry, fairness, openness, and inclusion?

Further, an increasing amount of the business of academic units and even teaching and supervision is taking place via electronic means. Such arrangements are often efficient, but abundant evidence attests to their perils as well. Are faculty and students aware of the issues about mutual respect, protection of confidentiality, implicit bias, and collegiality associated with the use of electronic communication? Similarly, students and faculty alike are increasingly active on social media, yet norms for such involvement have yet to emerge. What is the best way to foster awareness of problems that can arise from social media, and to encourage the development of reasonable practices by students and faculty?

## 8. Mental and emotional health and safety

How can teachers, supervisors, mentors, and administrators help when students or colleagues appear to be in psychological difficulty or distress? When is it appropriate to raise concerns about mental or emotional health with a student or colleague? What should instructors do when they sense that a student might pose a risk of violence to himself or others? What sorts of conversations about or involving mental health or safety concerns are confidential, or should be communicated to those whose responsibility it is to help students in distress or to manage campus security? How can an environment be created in which questions of mental health are less stigmatized and isolating, and more likely to receive the treatment they need?

This list is obviously not comprehensive. We have attempted to focus on questions that are recurrent in academic life and that can give rise to some of the most difficult problems. We have also discussed most extensively those areas with some overlap with our own areas of research or experience. It is important in sustaining a living Good Practices Guide over time that others enrich, revise, or extend these guidelines. That, too, is a Good Practice.

*Note:* Throughout this document, frequent use is made of the expression “the department” or “departments” when describing good practices. Philosophy programs and teaching may also be situated in other kinds of academic units, and suggestions to departments may in some cases need to be adapted to these varied institutional settings. Those philosophers who are located in non-departmental settings are especially encouraged to contribute their experience to the evolution of this guide.

## Section 1

# Communication and Implementation of Guidelines for Good Practices

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We would encourage departments and other academic units to circulate this guide to faculty and students and hold open discussions of the issues herein. The governing idea of such guides is that it is not enough for a department to affirm values or goals—there must be a continuing commitment to developing and implementing policies and procedures that can give these values or goals reality. Since faculty change, new challenges arise, improved research emerges, and policies and practices must be monitored for their effectiveness, meetings to discuss the issues in this and similar guides should be held on a periodic basis. Department chairs should make it clear that participation in such meetings is as much a responsibility as participation in meetings for hiring, promotion, and graduate review—indeed, good practices for the conduct of such meetings and deliberation are among the central concerns of this guide.

The issues upon which the guide touches are often difficult to broach and awkward to discuss within academic units, and for this reason they are often not discussed in the usual array of departmental meetings. Reviewing a Good Practices Guide with the members of a department—faculty, students, and staff—can thus prompt discussions and decisions that would not otherwise occur. Moreover, meetings of this kind make it possible to raise these issues in a setting independent of any specific incident, grievance, or crisis, and without seeming to attribute any fault. Once such an event has occurred it will be more difficult to achieve open reflection and frank discussion of how existing practices might better address persisting concerns or serve underlying values.

Prior to holding a meeting at which the guide is discussed, departments or other units should circulate copies of this guide or other models, and encourage members to discuss among themselves any concerns, improvements, or suggestions. A good practice is to designate a chair for this meeting other than the existing departmental chair, and this individual can then introduce the meeting by outlining various elements of the guide and proposing a structure for the discussion to help ensure that a full range of issues is considered, that all voices can be heard, and that there is an orderly way of considering potential revisions or amendments. Departments may also benefit from inviting a college or university ombudsperson, legal counsel, or others with extensive experience of the issues faced in developing or implementing good practices to make presentations to the group prior to entering into full deliberation.

Beyond discussions, the guide can be an important resource in an ongoing way. Copies may be made available in departmental offices and provided to new members of the department. The guide can be included in the orientation of new students and faculty, so that all members have information on good practices—before a crisis or controversy arises of the kind such a guide is intended to help prevent. A Good Practices Guide can also help newcomers to gain a reasonable idea of what they should expect from others—colleagues, staff, and students—and what others will expect from them. Becoming aware of the guide can also enable newcomers to contribute more effectively to the ongoing process of developing departmental practices. And should an incident or accusation occur, the guide may be of significant value in providing structure and focus for the discussions that follow.

The APA Good Practices Guide is itself a work in progress, and departmental experience with such guides is an important source of information about how to improve it. The APA therefore seeks to draw upon these experiences in the ongoing development of the guide. Suggestions for future revisions of the guide may be sent to [info@apaonline.org](mailto:info@apaonline.org).

# Section 2

## Teaching, Supervising, and Mentoring Students

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### Teaching

Instructors should strive to achieve in their classrooms sufficient structure to evince clear and high expectations for all students, but also to provide the necessary support for meeting those expectations, to foster the respectful and safe exchange of diverse opinions and perspectives, and to promote the students' autonomy in creating and maintaining their learning community. With these aims in mind, the APA recommends that faculty and graduate instructors reflect critically upon and make deliberate choices about the diverse aspects of teaching, including the following:

- **Curricular design:** Departments should be aware that the design of a curriculum communicates information to teachers and students about what is seen as most important, central, or foundational in the field—and also about the ways in which philosophy is, or is not, connected to other areas of inquiry, to the development of intellectual and critical abilities, and to practical life. In making decisions concerning the curriculum, departments are thus encouraged to take up such questions reflectively on a periodic basis, rather than allowing them to be settled by default.
- **Course content:** Evidence suggests that course content can also communicate to students' information about what is most valued within philosophy, or who is most capable of doing philosophy. This speaks in favor of making efforts whenever possible to incorporate authors of diverse backgrounds into syllabi and throughout the course. This may involve adding non-traditional topics, incorporating secondary literature, or inviting guest lecturers. Care should be taken, however, not to marginalize these topics, authors, or guest lecturers by presenting them in a manner that makes them seem peripheral or less important than other parts of the course.
  - Good resources for diversifying course content include the [Underrepresented Philosophers Database](#) and the [APA's Diversity and Inclusiveness Syllabus Collection](#).

Instructors should also make an effort to remain current in the subject areas in which they are teaching, particularly if those areas are new to them, in order to adequately prepare students for subsequent undergraduate coursework, for any subsequent graduate or professional study, and for life beyond the academy. Instructors are also encouraged to remain current with research on effective teaching and learning, and to bring into the classroom new approaches for the teaching of close reading and writing. Finally, instructors are encouraged to discuss and coordinate the content and methods they teach in their courses with other instructors in their department or interdisciplinary program. Even a well-designed, comprehensive undergraduate or graduate curriculum or program depends for its success in practice upon this sort of mutual discussion and coordination among instructors.

- **Course structure:** While some courses by their nature are flexible and open-ended, it typically is important for instructors to develop clear objectives for their courses and to communicate these

to students at the start of the term. Such objectives should be stated in the syllabus, and students should be able to count on the syllabus as a guide to course content—as well as a reasonable estimation of what can be accomplished in the weeks allotted. When courses require flexibility or adaptiveness, instructors should make the changes clear to students and maintain an accessible up-to-date syllabus.

Assignments and learning tasks should be relevant, varied, and level-appropriate, testing students on material they have been asked to master in the course, and minimizing the extent to which differences in the backgrounds students bring to class will affect their test performance. It can help to overcome differences in initial preparedness for instructors to clarify in course descriptions and at the beginning of term the skills and disciplinary content the course will assume. At the same time, instructors are encouraged to be open to alternative ways in which students might meet course prerequisites or enrich their backgrounds outside of class in order to master course material.

Course assignments (at least in introductory undergraduate and perhaps also first-year graduate courses) should be scaffolded so that students have ample opportunity to practice the skills they will need to succeed on important assessments. In teaching new students how to write philosophy papers, for example, instructors might ask first for thesis paragraphs and outlines, instead of full papers, and later offer one-on-one conferences to discuss initial drafts. They might also refer them to writing centers and support elsewhere in the college or university. More generally, efforts should be made to employ active learning techniques and to make the classroom accessible to students with a variety of learning styles, e.g., through the use of large and small-group discussions, student presentations or debates, role-playing, team-based learning, experiential learning, multimedia course materials and texts, low-stakes/ungraded assignments, creative activities, and participation through attendance at office hours.

Further resources on active learning and good practices in teaching can be found in [Appendix A of this section](#), which contains recommendations from the APA Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy.

[Teach Philosophy 101](#) also hosts a large set of resources, including sections on “Change-of-pace Exercises” and “Non-traditional materials.”

- **Grading and assessment:** Grading should be performed in a timely manner, usually within two weeks of the assignment’s submission, so that students have ample time to incorporate feedback into their next assignment. Grading should be performed under a veil of student anonymity whenever possible (even though, in practice, complete anonymity might well not be possible). Students may be asked to provide detachable cover sheets, use student ID numbers, or submit using online classroom learning platforms. Grading should conform to distinct and clearly specified criteria (e.g., a rubric, especially in introductory courses) which are publicized in advance and explained to students. Instructor feedback should demonstrate high expectations and confidence in students’ ability to succeed through continued effort and practice. Comments should not be intended to forestall grade complaints but to indicate strengths as well as weaknesses and to suggest concrete ways to improve. When working with graduate student instructors, faculty may want to calibrate grading across sections of the class and to discuss ways of providing constructive feedback to students throughout the course.

- **Plagiarism and cheating:** These are issues not only about the integrity of individual students but also about the integrity of the educational and scholarly process and about fairness to all students. Institutions vary in their definitions and procedures for student cheating or plagiarism, and instructors should be sure that they themselves understand current guidelines and that the guidelines are communicated clearly to students. It is a good practice to include in course syllabi links to official policies on academic integrity and to state to students at the outset that all suspected cases of cheating or plagiarism will be treated seriously.
- **Classroom atmosphere and management:** Structured interaction and facilitation are important for enhancing student learning and promoting inclusion in the classroom. When informal expectations and rules of engagement are not made explicit, students from underrepresented and marginalized groups, or students who lack cultural capital, suffer a disadvantage. To address such issues, instructors might adopt and discuss with students policies for encouraging wider participation. Efforts should be taken to monitor whether students feel both that they understand how to participate in classroom discussion and that they have adequate opportunity to do so; whether each student in fact is able to exercise this opportunity; whether negative and positive feedback are distributed equitably; whether instructors' informal questions, greetings, and jokes, as well as thought experiments, hypothetical cases, and examples, resonate with some segments of the student body and not others; whether ignorant or insensitive language and comments are quickly addressed; and whether students feel that they may make use of—without being reduced to—their social identities and backgrounds. Instructors should strive to model philosophical dialogue that is critical but constructive in the service of shared aims of greater understanding—in which people's views are treated as charitably as possible, their contributions are acknowledged, and their ideas (not their ability or character) are under evaluation.

Instructors should take some time at the start of the term to clarify the roles and responsibilities of students (e.g., with respect to attending class, completing assigned reading and homework, respecting fellow students, taking care not to monopolize discussion, and participating in the diagnosis of their learning competencies and needs) and instructors (e.g., with respect to timely and attentive grading, respect for students, availability outside of class, and commitment to academic integrity). Instructors should also be aware of student needs for a physical environment in the classroom which is conducive to participation and learning. The Minorities and Philosophy (MAP) network offers a collection of resources on their website [“Best Practices for the Inclusive Philosophy Classroom.”](#)

See also [Appendix A of Section 8](#) for good practices in discussions at talks.

- **Classroom community building:** For many students, and perhaps particularly those from underrepresented and marginalized groups, gaining a sense that they are members of the academic community is not automatic. Instructors should take the time to, e.g., ensure that they and the students all know each other's names, work with students to generate a list of “ground rules” for classroom discussion which can be revisited and updated periodically, and deliberately arrange group work and other activities in ways that habituate students to working with others outside their default groups. Some instructors have taken up the practice of requesting that students provide their preferred pronouns; this practice can create a more welcoming environment for LGBTQ students, but it can also put undue pressure on students to “out” themselves as transgender,

non-binary, etc. before they are ready. Instructors should think carefully about these dynamics in making decisions about whether to ask students to provide preferred pronouns.

- **Special opportunities for talented students:** Instructors should guide talented students toward co-curricular opportunities that can motivate them to continue in philosophy: journal submissions, independent and summer research projects, conferences, and philosophy summer institutes. Importantly, they must take care to promote these opportunities equally to all promising students, making efforts to correct for latent biases about the presence or lack of philosophical talent.
- **Remediation for struggling students:** The vast majority of students do not study philosophy before they enter college. Many introductory students find themselves underprepared to succeed in their first collegiate philosophy course, and this underpreparation can (but does not always) correlate with social and/or economic disadvantage. Instructors should think reflectively about how they will respond to this issue. At the very least, instructors should monitor and inquire after the well-being of at-risk students, rather than assume that poor performance is due to lack of motivation or interest, and ensure that such students are in contact with the appropriate campus resources. At best, teachers should meet with underperforming students during office hours in order to bring their skills up to speed.
- **Institutional partners:** These include writing centers, librarians, academic support centers, women’s centers and centers dedicated to underrepresented groups, and counseling centers. Instructors should familiarize themselves with the various institutional resources available to students and make appropriate referrals whenever possible, since students too often either do not know about such resources or feel uncomfortable availing themselves of them. When an instructor believes a student may be a danger to themselves or others, the student should be referred to the institution’s counseling staff or, in an emergency, the instructor should alert campus security. When a student is struggling but does not seem to be a danger to themselves or others, attentive instructors alert the student’s advisor that something seems to be preoccupying the student.
- **Accessibility:** It is a good practice to place emphasis in syllabi and announcements on the commitment to the affirmative principle of ensuring that all students have full access to the course and its content, as opposed to just “accommodating students with disabilities.” Instructors should clearly indicate on the syllabus and emphasize in class that there are opportunities for students to meet privately and discuss any concerns they might have about access, assignments, and so on. Most colleges and universities have special offices of services for students with disabilities, and students can be encouraged to make contact with these offices, which can also provide instructors with detailed recommendations about how to provide appropriate accessibility. Instructors have a vital role to play in making all aspects of the course accessible, from ensuring that the room is wheelchair-accessible, to using videos with captions, to writing on the board in large and clear print, to making arrangements for extra time and private rooms for examinations. Instructors should also indicate their willingness to make reasonable arrangements to take into account religious holidays, lactation needs, caretaking responsibilities, student work, and athletic activity, as well as language difficulties students may experience. While none of these constitute reasons for not engaging with course material, instructors should strive to cultivate relationships of trust with their students so that tailored arrangements can be made to ensure that they are able to engage as

fully as other students. They should also be aware that certain requests from students (e.g., to record lectures) may be related to disabilities that students may or may not wish to disclose. (For a more detailed discussion of accessibility, see the “Accessibility and Accommodation Checklist” in [Section 6](#), below.)

- **Professional development:** Teaching is not a skill at which all philosophers naturally excel but, like any subfield of philosophy, can be an area of expertise. Philosophers should actively study the latest developments in pedagogy both in and outside of philosophy in order to continually improve their teaching. Philosophy departments might purchase monographs on the teaching of philosophy and feature them prominently in their department libraries. Further, campus teaching centers can provide resources on the latest innovations and best practices in teaching.

The American Association of Philosophy Teachers (AAPT) organizes professional development sessions at APA meetings and a biennial conference at which philosophers can participate in interactive workshops on philosophy teaching and learning.

Many publications, such as the [“The Teacher’s Workshop”](#) on the Blog of the APA and the [APA Newsletter on Teaching Philosophy](#), provide active forums in which philosophers can reflect upon their own teaching and share their experiences.

Further resources are also available at the [University of Michigan Center for Research on Learning and Teaching](#).

- **Contributions to the scholarship of philosophy teaching and learning:**

Instructors who have spent extra time exploring a particular pedagogy or reading on a particular issue in student learning should consider publishing an academic paper on the subject for the benefit of their peers. Journals that publish such papers include the following:

- [Teaching Philosophy](#)
- [AAPT Studies in Pedagogy](#)
- [Journal of the APA](#)
- [Questions: Philosophy for Young People](#)
- [Teaching Ethics](#)
- [Analytic Teaching and Philosophical Praxis](#)

- **Pedagogical activism:** Teaching requires active support, especially at universities that emphasize research over teaching. Good instructors should support their institution’s efforts to improve faculty teaching and student learning by attending development events, mentoring less experienced teachers, making the discussion of teaching a central part of department culture, rewarding excellent teaching, developing meaningful tenure and promotion standards for good teaching, and advocating for the fair and equal treatment of contingent faculty, who are responsible for the teaching of large, and often vulnerable, student populations.

## Supervising dissertations, undergraduate theses, and independent or directed studies

The APA recommends that faculty strive to maintain principles of transparency, accountability, and respect for their students. Faculty are encouraged to work with students to develop enough structure to establish clear and explicit expectations for their students, but at the same time they should treat their advisees with the same respect they accord to colleagues. Faculty and students are jointly responsible for maintaining the advisor's familiarity with the general state of the advisee's research so that the advisor can represent the student's progress accurately at graduate reviews and discussions of special fellowships. In general, faculty should be partial to the student but impartial to the work. Faculty thus should encourage students in developing original ideas but also rely upon their experience and perspective to guide students toward feasible projects and to help students understand the relation of their projects to the current state of the discipline.

- **Meetings:** Faculty supervisors should discuss in advance with students what might be a mutually acceptable and pedagogically effective schedule of meetings. Meetings should take place no less than once or twice per term if students are in residence, but every two weeks is a common norm, and in some cases meeting as often as once a week may be appropriate. If students are not in residence, some arrangement should be made to coordinate expectations and share information about contact for advising. Both faculty and students should come to an understanding about what level of preparation is expected of both parties before coming to a meeting.
- **Feedback:** Feedback on work should be timely, whenever possible. Insofar as possible, delays should be anticipated and explained to the student. Students should also be encouraged to send reminders if feedback is delayed without expectation, or if an important deadline is approaching.
- **Professional opportunities:** Faculty should recommend and nominate their students for worthwhile opportunities for support, presenting or publishing their work, and engaging in such professional activities as reviewing and networking. When feasible, they should introduce students to their colleagues and visiting speakers. One potential valuable practice is for faculty to invite students to attend conferences with them, review papers, or co-author. Faculty should also make efforts to become aware of special opportunities—whether in philosophy or beyond—available to students from underrepresented groups and encourage their qualified advisees to apply for these opportunities.
- **Sharing resources:** Faculty are encouraged to share with their students such resources as journals, listservs, newsletters, professional societies and organizations, and blogs. Students may not know what they do not know, and so faculty should take the initiative to provide answers to questions that students may not think to ask. At the same time, faculty should apprise students of what sorts of questions or appeals are appropriately directed elsewhere. Faculty thus should become familiar with the resources that are available in their departments, institutions, and discipline.
- **Progress and review:** Departments should establish formal procedures for reviewing the progress of their (graduate and majoring) students. These procedures should be explained in advance to students and followed in a timely and consistent manner.

Faculty are often called upon to write letters of recommendation for their students—including, but not limited to, students whose dissertations and theses they have supervised.

- **Letters of recommendation:** Letters of recommendation should be honest and informed. Faculty should familiarize themselves with current norms in writing letters of recommendation and be aware of some of the ways in which such letters can unintentionally exhibit bias. (See [Section 5](#) on countering implicit bias.) If a faculty member is asked by a student to write a letter of recommendation but feels unable to write a positive letter, it is appropriate for the faculty member to alert the student to that fact. In the placement process, letters of recommendation should be reviewed by placement directors for consistency and accuracy in stating information about the student’s career in the program and the current state of the student’s progress. Questions about consistency or accuracy should be brought to the attention of letter writers, as should any questions about the inclusion of inappropriate material in the letters (e.g., unprofessional comments or utilization of stereotypic language). Responsibility for the content of a letter lies in all cases with the letter writer, though if significant unresolvable issues arise in reviewing a letter these may need to be dealt with through joint consultation with the department chair.
- **Teaching letters:** Evidence of teaching effectiveness is an important part of the dossier, and departments should have in place processes that permit graduate instructors to assemble a varied and well-documented teaching portfolio. Obtaining evidence of effectiveness should not be left to student evaluations alone—departments should arrange multiple faculty observations of teaching over the course of a graduate career and participate actively in improving institutional student evaluation processes. Faculty should also consider nominating especially effective students for teaching awards. Faculty members who write teaching letters for students should be aware of current expectations for such letters and should be mindful of the ways in which student evaluations or faculty reports on teaching can embody unintended bias. Faculty members should write teaching letters only for those students whose teaching they have observed and assessed. (Again, see [Section 5](#).)

## Mentoring graduate students

Graduate programs with sufficient personnel have sometimes found it beneficial to establish a system for offering mentoring to students that is parallel to the formal relations of faculty supervision. In such cases, departments should make an effort to identify mentors (who can be drawn from the graduate community as well as the faculty) with whom students are likely to be comfortable raising questions and with whom students can discuss matters that might be difficult or inappropriate to bring to an academic advisor or chair. Mentors should follow the principles of accountability and respect outlined in the previous section and be aware of reporting obligations under existing legislation (such as Title IX and the Clery Act), but should also be aware of the need for discretion in sharing or reporting information.

## Being a mentor

- Mentors should be clear about what types of support (professional, personal, etc.) they are able to provide. No one mentor should be expected to fulfill all roles, and, ideally, students should develop relations with several mentors over the course of their time in graduate school. However, mentors should remain open and supportive even if they personally are unable to help. Mentors should recommend and make introductions to other potential mentors—other faculty, more advanced

students, or other members of the academic and non-academic community—who might be suitable. Note that while it often is helpful for students to have mentors with backgrounds similar to their own, mentees can still have excellent mentoring experiences with mentors who do not share their backgrounds.

- Mentors should get to know their students (at the very least, intellectually). Mentors and students should seek to establish some common points of background, interests, etc.
- Mentors should remember that they might be taken as professional and personal role models. They should encourage experimentation and making mistakes and tell their own or others' stories of success and overcoming failure. Ideally, the mentoring relationship should be reciprocal, as each learns from the other. However, mentors should be careful to respect boundaries—a rough test sometimes used is if one would hesitate to discuss or share X (something one has heard from a student) with other *students*, then X is potentially an inappropriate thing to share, generally. Faculty should also be mindful that personal relationships with a particular mentee can be a source of inappropriately privileged access to departmental information and resources.
- Mentors should not assume that a given student does not need assistance merely because he or she is not explicitly seeking it. Mentors should actively provide occasions in which students can raise concerns about their professional lives or about how their professional lives intersect with their personal commitments, responsibilities, or well-being. (See also [Section 9](#) on mental and emotional health and safety.)

### **Mentoring structure**

- Whether or not a department decides to institute mentoring relationships as well as other forms of student advising, departments should periodically revisit the question whether the overall structure of supervision and oversight for graduate students is adequate or functioning to meet existing needs. It should be kept in mind that, while considerable attention is devoted to the structure of the curricular aspects of graduate training, supervision of independent work, research assistantships, and dissertation advising are often at least as important in a student's philosophical and professional development, and thus the appropriateness and effectiveness of these relationships merit consideration in their own right.
- In cases (for example, in the first years of graduate study) where supervisors are assigned, departments should pay attention to student needs in making such assignments.
- Students and faculty alike should be aware of the procedures, standards, and expectations associated with finding and changing supervisors and mentors. Ideally, such information should be written, compiled, and made available to all students upon entering the program and also at relevant points in their progress through the program.
- Ideally, students should have multiple lines of support. If students have only one connection with the department, they are in danger of “falling through the cracks” in the event that their sole advisor or mentor goes on leave or fails to maintain sufficient communication.
- Departments should help make faculty aware of programs that the college or university might offer for the development of supervisory or mentoring skills. When these programs are effective, departments should encourage faculty to participate, and should consider participation in such programs a positive factor in evaluating faculty teaching.

- More generally, departments should seek ways of incentivizing good supervising and mentoring by building recognition of faculty contribution in these areas wherever possible into faculty review, award nominations, course reductions, etc. This includes being attentive to whether some faculty are overburdened with advising and mentoring, and finding ways to counteract or offset this.
- In addition to relations of supervision and mentoring, departments should provide regular informal opportunities (e.g., departmental picnics, receptions, weekly tea or coffee) for students to meet and develop relationships with one another and with faculty.
- It is vital that departments ensure that *all* faculty and students are aware of institutional, state, and federal policies on discrimination and sexual harassment. Institutions typically have detailed guidelines concerning faculty-student relationships, and these should be brought to the attention of faculty on a periodic basis. Not only are these policies important for preventing inappropriate faculty-student relationships, but advisors or mentors might be the first person approached when a student has a concern of this kind. If such concerns are to be dealt with appropriately, it is vital that faculty have up-to-date information on legal requirements and institutional norms in these very sensitive areas.
- For more on advising and mentoring, we suggest the resources developed by the National Science Foundation (NSF) ADVANCE program at the University of Michigan, which is charged with increasing the representation and participation of women in STEM careers: [Giving and Getting Career Advice: A Guide for Junior and Senior Faculty](#) and [Creating a Positive Departmental Climate: Principles for Best Practices](#). Further, the University of Michigan Rackham Graduate School has published guides on mentoring for [faculty](#) and [graduate students](#).

## Ombudsperson

Some departments have had good experience with establishing a faculty ombudsperson or ombudspersons to whom students can bring concerns about climate, procedures, interpersonal conflict, and the like. This is a distinct function from advising or mentoring, and the choice of ombudsperson(s) should be made with an eye toward this distinctive role. There can be an advantage in students having multiple paths by which to seek counsel and assistance, especially since the advisory or mentoring relationship can itself become a source of concern, and some possible sources of concern will involve the chair him/herself. Moreover, students may be reluctant to bring a concern to the attention of the department chair without having discussed it with someone who has the experience and familiarity with institutional and professional norms of a faculty member. The existence of an ombudsperson apart from the usual system of advising or administration thus can mean that a concern is voiced that otherwise would go unheard. Students should be made aware of current ombudsperson(s) and how to contact them, even outside of normal office hours.

However, if a department establishes an ombudsperson position, there should be a clear understanding of the scope and responsibilities of this role in relation to other supervisory, mentoring, or administrative roles. It is important for faculty to be aware that issues such as sexual harassment and discrimination are not merely interpersonal or intradepartmental matters and must be reported to the college or university Title IX officer and handled by appropriate official procedures. Partly as a result of the potential for conflicts between the ombudsperson's role and institutional requirements and procedures with respect to harassment and discrimination, some departments that initially experimented with appointing an ombudsperson have since abolished the program, occasionally at the urging of the college or university administration.

# Section 2, Appendix A

## Good Practices in Teaching Philosophy

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*The following additional guidelines for teaching philosophy were drafted by the APA Committee on Teaching Philosophy.*

Good teachers strive to craft engaging lectures. Research has shown that attention tends to wane after 10–20 minutes, so good lecturers often speak in 10-minute segments before pausing to interact with the class, e.g., by asking questions, performing a close reading of a passage, assigning an in-class writing response, introducing a small group activity, giving an immediate mastery quiz, or telling a story.

Instructors should take active steps to facilitate group discussion, e.g., reading two conflicting passages aloud in class, asking students to relate the reading to a personal experience, assigning a problem that requires the reading to solve, exploring a case study, surveying the group for a response, showing a relevant video clip, or developing a role play. They should also strive to generate and moderate open, active, and inclusive critical discussions. Good instructors typically wait for students to gather their thoughts (instead of calling upon the first raised hand), e.g., by asking students to write down responses before anyone speaks aloud, waiting for two or three hands before calling on the first person, and encourage wider participation by, e.g., calling on people in order across the room, drawing names randomly, or inviting people who have not previously spoken to speak. They respond reflectively to each student contribution, e.g., by paraphrasing the main point, asking for clarifications, challenging students to expand upon the initial idea, or offering parallel or meta-comments such as “I was confused about that myself” or “You’ve identified the first step of the argument.” They artfully restrain students who monopolize discussion, reach out to students who rarely speak without putting them on the spot (e.g., by calling on them only after an activity in which the student has had time to think or by citing points the student has made in previous work or conversation), compliment good questions, and find ways to reignite discussion after it stalls. At the end of class discussion, taking a few minutes to summarize and assess the discussion is especially useful for students, particularly those who might have been struggling.

Good teachers employ active learning techniques, which might include the following in-class activities (revised from Tom Drummond’s [Best Practices in College Teaching](#)):

- **In-class writing:** Think-pair-share, focus questions, in-class journals, or lecture/reading summaries.
- **Objection exchange:** Students bring to class a paragraph-long objection to the reading and exchange papers with a partner at the start of class. Each student responds to their partner’s objection. The papers return to their original authors, and the original author responds to the partner’s objection to the original objection. This activity encourages close reading, develops dialectical skills, and prepares students to write philosophy papers.
- **Brainstorm:** Brainstorming generates ideas, encourages creativity, involves the whole group, and demonstrates that people working together can create more than individuals alone.

- **Round:** Each person has a two- or three-minute opportunity to express his or her point of view on a given topic, or passes, while others listen. This activity is used to elicit a range of viewpoints and build a sense of safe participation.
- **Concept models/maps:** The teacher distributes a handout that asks a series of leading questions. Students work in small groups to build a conceptual model. They make their own diagrams and record their own observations.
- **Simulations and games:** Simulations and games, with specific guiding principles, rules, and structured relationships, can last several hours or even days.
- **Learning cells/peer teaching/jigsaw:** Each learner reads different selections and then teaches the material to his or her randomly assigned partner. By explaining conceptual relationships to partners, tutors are forced to develop their own understanding.
- **Team-based learning:** Students are asked to complete on their own a brief activity, which might include ranking reasons, selecting a best interpretation, or filling in a blank. Once divided into teams, each group must discuss the responses, arrive at some consensus, and report its conclusion to the class.

# Section 3

## Professional Development and Placement

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### Professional development in graduate programs

The [APA Handbook on Placement Practices](#) provides a comprehensive discussion of many aspects of the placement process, to which the discussion of good practices, below, should be viewed as a supplement with special focus on questions of diversity.

Increasingly, professional development plays a role in the successful placement of graduate students, and departments should be aware of some successful practices in encouraging such development over the course of a graduate career, and not just in its final stages. Placement directors—and faculty in general—should strive to stay informed and knowledgeable about changing expectations for professional development and be prepared to adapt their practices accordingly. To that end,

- Departments should make sure that their practices with regard to the nomination of candidates and preparation and submission of dossiers conform to the APA’s [Statement on Placement Practices](#).
- Departments should know the APA’s [Statement on Academic Freedom and Questionable Employment Practices](#), and should review the lists of institutions censured by the [APA](#) and [AAUP](#) and inform candidates who might be considering applying to institutions on these lists.

The placement process itself can be difficult, and encouraging an atmosphere of support and engagement in placement by the faculty as a whole can help make the process more bearable and more successful. Part of this is to show respect for the diverse array of potential positions, academic and non-academic, where students may be placed. The following are suggestions for philosophy departments, faculty, and graduate students.

### Preparing students for the job market

- Start early, by inviting all graduate students to meetings concerning placement, teaching portfolios, cover letters, etc. Be transparent with the department’s own hiring practices, e.g., by allowing graduate student representatives to attend and vote in hiring meetings and sit on search committees.
- Host professionalization events that describe concrete strategies and tips for submitting, presenting, and publishing work in conferences and journals. Allow students to generate questions—perhaps in advance and/or through anonymous means. Invite more advanced students to attend and share their own experience and insights.
- Be open to “alt-ac” and non-academic careers, and treat such careers as one of a number of legitimate options, rather than a failure to “make it.” (Alt-ac resources may be available through the wider university or college.)

- Faculty should be aware that bias against graduate students who opt for alternate careers is a serious concern and may take subtle and implicit forms. (See [Section 5](#) on countering implicit bias.) Such bias can also be present within the larger graduate student body itself, and countering this may require that faculty give prominence to the discussion of alternate careers at graduate student orientation and other regular meetings. Some departments have had success in inviting back graduates who have gone on to alternate careers to make presentations to the department or meet with current students.
- For further information, see the APA's guide on non-academic careers, [Beyond Academia: Professional Opportunities for Philosophers](#).
- Model respect and appreciation for all philosophers at all institutions, including and especially non-tenure-track faculty at their own institutions. Ranking programs and students can generate unnecessary anxiety and create a distorted impression of the variety of strong academic institutions across the country and the wider world, though encouraging students to be realistic in their expectations can be an important part of creating an effective dossier and candidacy. Faculty and students should educate themselves about the realities of today's job market and larger trends in higher education and be frank about the vicissitudes of the job market.
- Encourage students to explore and build relationships with faculty and students at neighboring institutions, including institutions of diverse kinds and constituencies. This will, moreover, assist students in preparing job materials for wide and varied job searches.
- Encourage students to take a course in the teaching of philosophy or, if such a course does not exist at your institution, a general course on the teaching of close reading and writing through active learning techniques. Such courses often are offered through an institution's center for teaching or school of education.
- Encourage students to apply for university-wide, national, and dissertation completion fellowships in the year before they go on the job market. The experience of preparing these materials, along with soliciting early letters, will save time and provide a basis for students and faculty to polish and refine their materials on the job market (regardless of the results of the competition). Ideally, the department will have a list of fellowships for which its students typically apply, along with sample materials.
  - The APA maintains a [list of societies and organizations that grant fellowships](#) of interest to philosophers in addition to a list of [APA Grants](#).
- Foster a community of support. Encourage student-to-student mentoring, especially with former students, by establishing, e.g., a database of contact information, sample job materials from former students, funding for students to have coffee or meals together. Keep other faculty in the loop and make sure students know that they are available for advice and support; their various networks, expertise, and knowledge (e.g., diversity of academic institutions, the nature of higher education in other countries) may prove to be valuable resources. For example, a [mentoring program for women job seekers](#) that matches former graduates who have found a position with graduate students currently on the market has been developed by the Society for Women in Philosophy.

## Supporting students on the job market

- Schedule job placement workshops for students in the spring of the year, and encourage all students who are thinking about going onto the market—or simply interested in finding out about the placement process—to attend. The workshops should provide a timeline for preparing job-related materials and for getting their work to faculty for review and discussion in a timely way.
- Where possible, offer financial support for dossier services and travel, even if this is limited. Students should be aware early on of the significant financial burden they can incur on the job market and of the resources and strategies available to them for lessening this burden.
- If they have not already done so, students approaching the time at which they will go onto the market should be encouraged to become members of the APA and to familiarize themselves with the APA’s placement services, statements, and literature. In addition to *PhilJobs: Jobs for Philosophers*, students should be encouraged to consult *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Inside Higher Ed*, and other job-related publications and web resources, including those of other disciplines and in related areas of employment outside the academy. Placement directors and job seekers can help one another in building up a knowledge base of such sources.
- Departments should be familiar with special issues that candidates from underrepresented groups and candidates with disabilities may face. Placement directors should take advantage of college or university resources to gain better understanding of these issues, and of effective ways to address them. Placement directors should take active steps to develop the ability to speak with candidates about these matters in a frank, informed, and supportive way and to help candidates find necessary resources. And all who are involved in the placement process should be aware of protocols for reporting problems in these areas, should they arise.
- Placement directors should meet early and often with students and make clear the extent to which they are available and willing to offer support and guidance. (Ideally, placement directors will be apprised of every step and new development.) They should remember that many of the skills and tasks in demand on the job market are *not* what students have spent their graduate careers training for, and graduate students may need guidance on many things that appear obvious to seasoned faculty. Placement materials (e.g., timelines, tips, strategies, sample dossiers) should be collected or written, compiled together, and made available to all graduate students.
- Provide students on the job market with an opportunity to present a paper to the department in an informal setting, e.g., a “brown bag” lunchtime talk. Similarly, mock interviews should be arranged for job candidates, wherever possible—either in person or electronically (preferably both). Such experiences can be essential for the candidate’s preparation in the final stages of job-seeking.
- Discuss in advance the issues that can arise when candidates receive job offers—the questions they should ask, the negotiation of deadlines, and the challenges of comparing different kinds of positions. Candidates should also be aware that some institutions are unable to negotiate offers. Often there is very little time to think about issues arising from job offers once these have started to go out. Advisors and mentors should be sure to provide candidates with contacts for discussing such issues on short notice and at various times of the day or week.
- Placement directors should be mindful that their greater familiarity with some students can have a biasing effect when it comes time to advise potential candidates in the placement process. Placement directors are officers of the department and graduate program and should strive insofar

as possible to base their advice to candidates on a uniform, known set of professionally relevant criteria. Personal information such as race, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, political conviction, national origin, age, disability, marital status, and actual or perceived medical condition should not play a role.

- Some departments have had success creating a team of placement mentors, each of whom is responsible for several of the students on the market, and who can work with the placement director to review student dossier materials and letters of recommendation; inform students about available resources in the college, university, or profession; and provide informal advice.
- Departments should acquire, and make available to students, resources and equipment that enable candidates (and their own hiring committees) to have effective, professional electronic interviews—this may include a quality camera and microphone, use of departmental spaces with high-speed internet connections, and so on.
  - See also [Appendix A of Section 4](#) for more on remote interviews.

### **Stresses of the job market**

Candidates and their families may come under special psychological pressures during the placement process, and departments should make information available about resources in the college or university, or in the wider community, for counseling and support. Moreover, even when students have been successful in their job search, they may be under considerable stress as they complete and defend their theses, prepare for teaching, and move themselves (and their families) in time for a September—or, in some cases, January—starting date. Advisors and graduate programs are encouraged to maintain active contact with students during this period, and departments are encouraged to find ways to facilitate these potentially challenging transitions.

### **Tracking and publishing placement data**

Providing students with guidance in placement also involves maintaining and making publicly available accurate and complete data on past placement, including placements within as well as beyond the academy. Such records should include information on all students who enter the program, indicating the percentage who complete the PhD and following the employment histories of students beyond the first year post-degree. Individual student identities should not be included in these records, though employing institutions typically should be indicated.

See also Section 4, in general, for discussion of good practices in interviews and in offers of employment.

### **Professional development in undergraduate programs**

Professional development should also be seen as incorporating undergraduate programs. Philosophy can serve in many ways to enhance the skills and even quality of life of individuals who do not go on to graduate study in philosophy. Undergraduate programs should make accessible to undergraduates up-to-date information about ways in which coursework or concentration in philosophy has contributed to the development of students who have gone on to careers across a broad range of fields. (See the APA's guide on non-academic careers, [Beyond Academia: Professional Opportunities for Philosophers](#), as well as the [Who Studies Philosophy?](#) Page on the APA website.)

Keep in mind that contemporary undergraduates are experiencing unusually high levels of anxiety about their futures. Holding accessible, open discussions based upon realistic information may help students to contend with such anxiety and to gain a more realistic picture of what study in philosophy can contribute to their intellectual and professional development. A way of encouraging such realistic discussion is to invite back to campus former philosophy students who have gone on to interesting careers and who can talk from personal experience about what philosophy has meant for them. Many departments also maintain active communication with former students, through regular newsletters or by working through the college alumni office. Loyalty to philosophy is often strong, including among those who have gone on to non-academic careers, and a strong alumni base can contribute vitally to the support for a department.

While only a fraction of undergraduates who take courses in philosophy will go on to do graduate work in philosophy, still, this is the lifeblood for the next generations of academic philosophers. Undergraduate teaching and advising can play a critical role in this process by providing encouragement and guidance to college-level students for whom graduate study and perhaps an eventual career in philosophy might make sense. While individual faculty and faculty advisors play the primary role in preparing such students to be successful in graduate admission and study, there is much that departments in general can do to prepare students in other ways. For example, they can help students to become better informed about what it is like to be a graduate student in philosophy. By offering a frank picture of graduate program acceptance rates and the job market, they can also assist students with managing their own expectations, both with regard to the likelihood of getting into graduate school and for obtaining a position in philosophy after receiving a graduate degree. Departments can also support “pre-professional” development opportunities for their majors by encouraging and supporting undergraduate philosophy clubs, publications, and conferences, and by bringing publishing and conference opportunities to the attention of students. Here are a few more detailed recommendations emerging from past departmental experience:

- While information about graduate schools can be found in abundance on the internet, it is good practice to assume that undergraduate students might not be familiar with the basics. For example, they might not know how graduate support and instruction are structured, or what kind of written work they would be expected to produce before and during the dissertation-writing process. They also may not be informed as to how graduate programs, in their admissions decisions, tend to weigh grades, writing samples, GRE scores, and letters of recommendation. Departments should consider creating structured opportunities for students to become more knowledgeable about these matters. There are many options: a lunch for juniors or seniors, a meeting of the philosophy club, a class meeting of a junior or senior seminar, etc.
- Such settings also present good opportunities for students to learn about graduate program acceptance rates, the average time for degree completion, and (for PhD programs) the percentage of job applicants who are able to secure a tenure-track position in the course of any particular hiring season.
- Students should understand that being accepted into a graduate program—even a top graduate program—is not a guarantee of a position in philosophy once they receive their PhD. At the same time, these settings can also be used for discussing the satisfactions of graduate study in philosophy, including the opportunity to participate in and contribute to a scholarly community and to have autonomy in the selection of one’s own research questions, which is not possible in all disciplines.

- In addition to hearing from departmental faculty, it is good for undergraduates to hear the views and personal experiences of graduates currently in or who have recently completed master's or PhD programs. Sample questions to which current or recent graduates might respond include the following: How did graduate school differ/turn out to be the same from what you expected it to be? What aspects of life as a graduate student are the most and least rewarding? How do you balance teaching classes or being a TA with making progress on your thesis or dissertation? What work/life balance issues have you encountered, and how have you been able to deal with them? Skype can be a vehicle for these conversations, as can on-campus events featuring a panel of graduates. In inviting alumni or others to participate in conversations about graduate school, departments should be attentive to diversity, including diversity of philosophical approaches and traditions.
- As mentioned above, the primary responsibility in supporting students interested in studying philosophy at the graduate level falls to the faculty advisor. In addition to writing letters of recommendation, such support would normally include providing constructive criticism of their writing samples and assisting them in identifying programs whose strengths would be a good fit given their own qualifications.
- Some students thinking about pursuing a graduate degree might also have an interest in publishing in undergraduate journals and/or presenting at undergraduate conferences, both as a way of strengthening their applications and testing their ideas within communities of their peers. Departments are encouraged to support this interest by developing a webpage "resources" section where information about undergraduate journals and upcoming conferences can easily be found, along with links to summer programs in philosophy (see the APA's page on [diversity institutes](#) for links to several such programs). Departments housed in institutions where funding is available for undergraduate students to present papers at conferences should also provide links to the relevant campus offices.
- In addition, departments can also request samples of successful graduate school application material, including cover letters, research statements, and writing samples, making these available to current students in a manner that preserves confidentiality and privacy.
- Departments can also identify alumni or others who are willing to serve as contacts for current undergraduates to help advise students in preparing for application to graduate study, professional school, or other forms of post-graduate career. A department choosing to do this should, however, be mindful that such consultation is only one source of potential guidance and encourage their students to seek multiple forms of advice. Some colleges and universities are establishing "hubs" for bringing together sources of information about life after graduation for students in the humanities or other non-professional areas, and departments are encouraged to take an active role in improving the quality of information available at such hubs and in making sure that students are aware of such resources.
- In recent years, the public availability of information about individual admissions to graduate programs in philosophy through social media or websites such as the Philosopher's Café can add to the anxiety that applicants might naturally experience during the time that graduate programs begin notifying applicants of their decisions and inviting those admitted for a fly-out. Faculty should be aware of when this notification period begins so they can be particularly attentive for signs of student distress.

## Professional development of tenure-track faculty<sup>1</sup>

The challenge of developing the next generation of philosophers extends to the faculty level as well. It promotes the interests of junior faculty, departments, institutions, and the profession when junior faculty receive effective support for their teaching and research and are able to get informed advice about their profession and their new institution and its practices and resources. Good practices in mentoring junior faculty include both formal and informal processes.

### Formal mentoring

On the formal side, it is the responsibility of the department and chair to help junior faculty to realize their full potential and to meet the standards of review to which they will be subjected. This includes providing junior faculty with periodic review—ideally, once per year—of their teaching, research, and service, and progress toward meeting the criteria for promotion. Such reviews should be constructive but should also attempt to provide a realistic appraisal of the junior faculty member’s progress, identifying weaknesses as well as strengths, and including a discussion of what steps might be taken to increase strengths and overcome weaknesses. They should not include predictions about the outcome of the tenure process, but they should create a written record, shared with the candidate, that can then be referred to at the time of promotion. It is much too late if concerns about the faculty member’s research, teaching, or service are raised for the first time in the tenure process itself.

The periodic review is also an occasion to raise questions about whether a junior faculty member is being asked to bear an inappropriate teaching or service burden, or is aware of possible sources of support for research or of programs on campus that can help faculty become more effective teachers, or is being allowed to teach a range of courses in order to develop his or her teaching portfolio or to teach in areas of his or her greatest interest, and so on. Responsibility for communicating the results of periodic reviews lies with the chair, who should also be the person who provides junior faculty with information on critical matters relating to terms of employment and university procedures and norms.

### Informal mentoring

On the less formal side, many other questions arise for junior faculty in the course of starting a career and coming to terms with a new institution. For such questions, a junior faculty member might need advice from someone knowledgeable about his or her particular area of research or might be more comfortable approaching a colleague than the chair. Chairs, moreover, are often under fairly stringent restrictions in terms of the information and advice they can give to junior faculty. Thus, many departments have instituted a regular practice of informal mentoring in which each junior faculty member is assigned an individual senior colleague to help with his or her professional development and acclimation to the new institution.

Core questions for individual mentors concern substantive advice about teaching and research, such as providing junior faculty members feedback on their work or teaching (or helping them to obtain such feedback from others), helping junior faculty members obtain the information and advice needed to make good decisions about where to submit papers and conference proposals, suggesting ways of developing professional contacts, and assisting junior faculty members in navigating college or university

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<sup>1</sup> This section reflects material drawn from the descriptions of mentoring programs at a number of universities, which is collected together in Rachel Thomas, [“Exemplary Junior Faculty Mentoring Programs.”](#) written for the Women’s Faculty Forum at Yale University. This is also a good source for detailed ideas about ways in which junior faculty mentoring can be implemented, including questions that go beyond departmental policy.

bureaucracies or in settling into their new town. Individual mentors can also serve as advocates for a junior faculty member's interests within the department, college, university, or profession.

It is important, however, not to think of the individual mentor as a substitute for a well-developed plan of formal mentoring and review or as a "back channel" for confidential information about departmental reviews.

Choice of an informal mentor should be made with an eye to identifying a senior colleague who could be expected to work well and conscientiously with the junior faculty member, and whose areas of research are sufficiently close to those of the junior faculty member that the mentor could be expected to be a source of informed feedback and useful professional advice. Junior faculty should be able to have input into the choice, and the choice should occasionally be informally reviewed by consulting the junior faculty member and the current mentor. Obviously, choice of an individual mentor will, at any time, be somewhat limited by available senior candidates, and some departments have taken the step of seeking to recruit external senior faculty with relevant expertise to serve as outside mentors (see below).

### **Beyond mentoring**

While junior faculty should be protected from especially burdensome administrative assignments insofar as possible, they should also be afforded equal opportunities to participate in department life, e.g., in choosing and inviting colloquium speakers.

In addition to mentoring programs, junior faculty at many universities and colleges will need financial support in order to begin to develop their research programs. This support can take many forms, including start-up funding, travel funds for presenting at professional conferences, and funds to hire students to provide research assistance. The need to have financial support in order to help faculty meet research expectations is not restricted, of course, to junior faculty alone. As the APA [Statement on Research](#) shows, the APA recognizes the importance of providing meaningful support to faculty so they can actively engage in philosophical inquiry.

### **Some special considerations**

As increased funding flows into interdisciplinary initiatives, more faculty positions will involve appointment in multiple departments. In such cases it is especially important to have coordinated plans for the formal as well as informal mentoring of joint faculty. It is a good practice in such cases for the different units to work together at the time of the appointment to design a coordinated periodic review process—junior faculty contemplating a joint position should have an idea of what to expect and what will be expected of them. This includes developing a formal understanding of what role each department will play in the tenure process and what criteria will be used. As before, it is much too late for such questions to come up at the time of the tenure process itself.

Departments and chairs should be aware that junior faculty belonging to underrepresented groups in the field or department, or whose area of research is not well represented in the department, can face an array of special challenges. Arrangements for supplementing internal formal and informal mentoring with external informal mentoring might be appropriate in such cases. Plans of this kind should be developed in consultation with the junior faculty member himself or herself, and it is a good practice if colleges and universities make available funding to support such arrangements (travel, honoraria, etc.).

A number of departments have had good success in holding a workshop on the junior faculty's research in the candidate's third or fourth year. To this workshop are invited several faculty from other institutions, who are asked to read some of the candidate's work and then participate in a roundtable discussion held at the candidate's home department. This enables the candidate to receive external feedback from established scholars in his or her field in a manner that anticipates some aspects of a tenure review but that leads instead to constructive recommendations of how the work can be further developed in readiness for the promotion process. In this case, too, it is a good practice if colleges and universities make available funding to support such arrangements (travel, honoraria, etc.).

### **Professional development for non-tenure-track faculty**

A large number of faculty nationwide are not on a traditional tenure track. While optimally "institutions should minimize reliance on non-tenure track faculty" (as per the APA [Statement on Non-Tenure Track Faculty](#)), it is a fact that non-tenure-track faculty are often an important component in a department's teaching and graduate training, and an increasing amount of the research in philosophy is being done by faculty not on tenure tracks. Concern over the discipline's future should therefore extend to the professional development of non-tenure-track faculty as well. Indeed, given the heavy teaching loads non-tenure-track faculty often carry, longer-term concern for their development as teachers and scholars, and recognition of them as valued colleagues, is especially important.

When non-tenure-track faculty are on renewable appointments, it is a good practice to develop a review and promotion process similar to the processes used for tenure-track faculty, to enable such faculty to receive feedback on their teaching and research, and to make progress in their careers. This review and promotion process is best associated with a set of position titles (e.g., "non-tenure-track assistant professor," "associate professor of teaching," "associate professor of practice") parallel to those used for tenure-track faculty. When the appointments are non-renewable, it is of considerable value if some member of the department comes to know the faculty and his or her work and teaching well enough to be able to serve as a recommender for future applications for employment. Normally this will be the department chair, but, for reasons essentially similar to those discussed above, it can be a good practice for faculty other than the chair to be involved in an informal mentoring process as well.

# Section 4

## Good Practices for Interviewing<sup>2</sup>

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The search and recruitment process for hiring new faculty and staff plays a critical role in shaping not only departments but the profession as whole. This process is central to increasing diversity in philosophy, both in its teachers and in its students.

It is beyond the scope of the current document to develop guidelines for the search and recruitment process as a whole, though we should mention that there is a wealth of information about good practices for fairness and effectiveness in advertising a position, creating a candidate pool, drawing up a short list, interviewing and deliberating about candidates, and making and negotiating offers. Among these guides are the following:

- The APA [Handbook on Placement Practices](#), which includes guidelines for best practices of placing and hiring departments
- [Best Practices in Hiring Faculty and Staff](#), prepared by the National Association of College and University Attorneys
- [Best Practices for Conducting Faculty Searches](#), prepared by the Harvard University office for Faculty Development and Diversity
- The [ADVANCE project](#), a website hosted by the University of Michigan, which contains research and guidelines for good practices in enhancing fairness and diversity

The following discussion of good practices in interviewing is intended to outline documented techniques or practices that tend to result in better outcomes in recruitment than other practices. Some institutions may have developed their own set of recommended practices that better fit their situation and that are based on the same considerations of fairness that ground these recommendations. The recommendations may be reasonably modified to fit local circumstances. Departments should ensure that all participants in any stage of the search and recruitment process are aware from the outset of the APA's [Statement on Non-Discrimination](#) and of any applicable college or university policies or reporting requirements. Some institutions require faculty participating in search and recruitment to attend training sessions, and departments should be aware of such requirements in advance of forming search committees and should notify relevant faculty.

### The process

The process standardly consists of two rounds of interviews. In the past, the first-round interviews usually took place at a professional meeting, generally the Eastern Division meeting of the APA in late December (now early January). However, this seems to be rapidly changing. Now many departments opt to use internet-based technology in conducting first-round interviews (see [Appendix A of this section](#)). Such

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<sup>2</sup> This section was primarily drafted by the Subcommittee on Interviewing Best Practices, chaired by Julia Driver, with additional information, including the entirety of Appendices C and D, provided by the Best Practices Task Force.

interviews pose less of a financial burden to the candidate. There is also some concern regarding poor treatment of candidates, particularly female candidates, in convention interview venues.

After the first-round interviews, departments will select a smaller “short list” of candidates. These candidates receive second-round interviews on campus. At the second stage, a smaller number of candidates is selected from the interview pool to visit the interviewing campus.

Some departments opt to eliminate the first round. Many researchers have expressed skepticism regarding the usefulness of unstructured interviews in hiring as well as concerns regarding bias impacts, and this has led some departments to skip the standard first stage and invite a smaller group of candidates directly to the campus interview (see [Appendix B of this section](#)).

The following chart outlines some pros and cons for three types of interviews.

| <b>APA In-Person Interview</b>   |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Pros</b>  | <b>Cons</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People feel more confident making judgments about a person—especially their collegiality and their classroom presence—in an in-person interview.</li> <li>• Departments find it convenient to bundle all interviews at one location.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This higher confidence can also make the in-person meeting too salient in assessing the qualities of the candidates—to the detriment of other, more predictive criteria.</li> <li>• Such interviews can impose a considerable financial burden on interviewees. At least half of all interviews are now done by video conference. Thus, candidates who get an interview at the APA are often making an expensive trip (\$1,000–\$1,500) for just one or two interviews. Travel can also impose larger burdens on candidates with children.</li> </ul> |

| <b>Video Conference (e.g., Skype)</b>  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Pros</b>  | <b>Cons</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cheaper and more convenient for most candidates—especially those in the UK/Europe/Antipodes, and anyone else far from where the APA Eastern Division Meeting is held.</li> <li>• Cheaper and more convenient for interviewing departments.</li> <li>• For first-round interviews, video conferencing may make possible fuller faculty participation, lessen applicant anxiety, and mitigate some of the interpersonal effects that can lead to bias in in-person interviews.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prone to technical glitches and poor audio/video connections, which can be distracting.</li> <li>• It can be harder for interviewers to get a good sense of the person, and the interview may feel “canned” to them.</li> <li>• Video-conferencing can also favor some candidates who have access to superior technical facilities or who, for whatever reason, come across more effectively in a video format. Interviewers should be aware of these effects and consider whether such differential performance is job-related and relevant.</li> </ul> |

| Phone Interview   |   |
|---|---|
| Pros  | Cons  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free and easy to arrange and set up.</li> <li>• Less subject to technical difficulties.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviewees often find it difficult to distinguish between the voices of different interviewers.</li> <li>• Interviewees are less comfortable talking to people without visual non-verbal cues that allow them to see how interviewers are reacting.</li> </ul> |

## The first stage

The charge to the committee developing these guidelines was to consider interviewing practices rather than overall hiring practices. However, it should be noted that, prior to the first stage interviews, the hiring department has a responsibility to properly advertise a position (regarding advertisement of positions, see the APA [Statement on the Job Market Calendar](#)) and to fairly and thoroughly read application files, applying criteria consistently. These same considerations of fairness and consistency carry through to the interview process itself.

If a hiring department has decided that it will be conducting interviews at a professional meeting, that department should make sure in scheduling interviews with candidates that enough time is provided for candidates to arrange for transportation and accommodation. Interviews must be accessible for candidates with disabilities, e.g., departments must make efforts to ensure that the interview location is accessible. The interviews themselves must not be conducted in a hotel room used for sleeping. See the [APA Statement on Hotel Room Interviews](#). Interviews must conform to other APA policies such as this one.

Members of the hiring committee should be well prepared for the interviews. Each member of the department's hiring committee should have a packet on each candidate containing the same information. This information may include, among other things, the candidate's CV, writing sample, and perhaps a sheet listing highlights from the candidate's dossier.

How much time a department schedules for interviews will depend upon various considerations, particularly how many candidates the department has decided to interview. In fairness to the candidates being interviewed, departments should be as sensitive as possible to limiting the number of interviews to what can reasonably be accomplished.

Most departments schedule 60 to 90 minutes per interview, which allows the department to talk to the candidate for at least 45 minutes, and allows for the members of the department to have enough time to both briefly discuss the interview once the candidate has left and to prepare for the next candidate. There should also be time allocated for the interviewee to ask questions.

Members of the hiring committee should confine themselves to asking only questions that are pertinent to the candidate's qualifications for the job. Indeed, it is strongly recommended that interviewing committees discuss in advance what questions will be asked of candidates and in what order. Insofar as possible, the interviewing committee should then attempt to adhere to this list, and to ensure that all candidates will be given the same opportunity to respond to these questions. Research supports the idea that following a *structured* format in interviewing can be instrumental in providing equal treatment and overcoming various kinds of bias in assessing candidates. (See also [Section 5](#) on countering implicit bias.) Structured

interviews do not require that all the questions be identical, since in the normal interview there will certainly be questions that need to be tailored to the specifics of a candidate’s research interests, past teaching experience, and so forth. But structuring the interview to the extent that is reasonable has the advantages of making the interview experience for the candidates as fair and consistent as possible, providing the committee with a uniform range of information about candidates, and helping preclude the possibility that some questions will be overlooked or that inappropriate questions will be asked. Members of interviewing and hiring committees should familiarize themselves with guidelines concerning acceptable questions to candidates (see [Appendix C of this section](#)) and should be aware that some questions that may be appropriate *after* an offer has been made (e.g., inquiring about possible family responsibilities that may affect the potential hiree’s ability to accept an offer) are *not* appropriate beforehand.

Individual departments will have their own objectives in mind in conducting an interview. Some may focus more on research, others more on teaching. One example of how to conduct an interview is the following: (1) the interviewing department opens the interview with a description of how the interview will proceed; (2) someone on the committee summarizes the candidate’s writing sample and asks an opening question about the candidate’s research, then opens the interview up for discussion of research; (3) a committee member then asks how the candidate will contribute to the teaching needs of the department, as indicated in the advertisement for the job; (4) a committee member then asks if the candidate has any questions about the job; and (5) the candidate is given information about a contact person who is available for follow-up questions, and who will be in contact with the candidate about the job.

Interviewing practices should be discussed in advance, in awareness of relevant guidelines. The APA’s [Statement on Non-Discrimination](#), for example, states the following:

*The American Philosophical Association rejects as unethical all forms of discrimination based on race, color, religion, political convictions, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identification or age, whether in graduate admissions, appointments, retention, promotion and tenure, manuscript evaluation, salary determination, or other professional activities in which APA members characteristically participate.*

Throughout the initial interview process, members of the hiring committee are to maintain the highest standards of professionalism and refrain from behavior that may distract or intimidate the candidate. There have been reports of deeply disturbing behavior negatively impacting job candidates at the APA Eastern Division meeting, behavior that is unprofessional, particularly during the receptions (sometimes colloquially known as “smokers”).

Interviewers and other members of the department are strongly discouraged from conducting pre- or post-interview “interviews” before or at the convention. Good practices for mitigating bias in interviewing include treating interviewees alike, as much as possible, and informal interviews by their nature introduce disparities among applicants. Furthermore, the physical environment of various gathering places or receptions at the convention can create barriers for members of the community with disabilities—for example, not everyone can negotiate a reception ballroom with the same ease, or speak or hear over the noise, etc.

## The campus visit

After the first round of interviews, the department hiring committee generally decides to invite a short list of candidates to campus for visits to continue the interviewing process. Each candidate should receive information on arranging for transportation and accommodation. Ideally, hiring departments should pay the travel expenses for candidates' campus visit and should attempt to arrange the purchase of tickets and accommodation in such a way that the candidates will not have to bear the cost of travel temporarily, while awaiting reimbursement. When a hiring department does not have funds to pay for candidate travel for campus visits, they should make this clear in advance and assist candidates in whatever other ways they can with travel and lodging. It is a good practice for hiring departments to inform invitees in advance of how many candidates they expect to invite, and what the likely timetable is for interviews and decision-making.

**Itinerary:** A detailed itinerary and contact information should be provided to candidates in advance of campus visits, and planning should incorporate breaks to allow the candidate ample time to meet personal needs and prepare for each stage of the interview. Interviewing departments should ensure that all visit-related events are fully accessible to individuals with mobility impairments, and departments should be prepared to provide large-print materials or recordings of printed materials for candidates with vision impairments.

**Informational packet:** It is strongly recommended to provide candidates with a packet of materials containing information about the department and the college or university, especially information about tenure or rehiring timelines and review processes, leave for research or for family or medical needs, health-care and retirement benefits, housing, and dual-career hiring policies and resources. Candidates may be, or feel they are, at a disadvantage if they must request such information themselves.

**Job talk and teaching demonstration:** Two of the central features of most on-campus interviews are the teaching demonstration and the "job talk."

If a teaching demonstration is to be required, candidates should be informed of this as early as possible, and given a description of the nature of the class—e.g., the level and format of the course (introduction, intermediate, or advanced; lecture, seminar, or discussion), a syllabus (if the demonstration is part of an ongoing course), and information about the likely audience for the demonstration. Candidates should be consulted in advance about any technical needs they might have in teaching the demonstration class.

Since the form of the candidate's research presentation or "job talk" tends to vary depending on the institution and its practices, candidates should be informed as early as possible about departmental practices in connection with such talks (e.g., whether a copy of the talk is expected in advance, what the audience for the talk is likely to be, how time is typically divided between presentation and discussion, what norms there may be about handling questions and answers, and so on). And again, inviting departments should be sure to check with candidates in advance about what technical support they might need.

**Similar treatment:** While other components of the campus visit may vary according to the nature of the position or the interests of the candidates, in general departments should attempt to treat each candidate for a position in approximately the same manner. This applies to the initial communications with

candidates, inviting them to visit, and also to the opportunities afforded candidates while they are on campus, e.g., in meeting with faculty, students, or administrators. Prior to campus visits, department faculty, students, and staff should be reminded of the importance of treating candidates for a given position in comparable ways. Just as similarity in *structure* is important for helping to ensure consistency in information-gathering by the department and the candidate during initial candidate interviews, it continues to be important through the campus visit. For example, faculty members who meet with one candidate should be encouraged to meet with the other candidates as well.

**Dual-career families:** Dual-career families are becoming increasingly common in academia, and questions about dual careers are likely to arise during a campus visit. Norms regarding dual careers are evolving. However, it is clear at present that any initiative in providing information to departments about potential dual-careers issues lies with the candidate—departments may not ask candidates any questions about dual careers or other forms of family responsibility or needs for accessibility until *after* an official offer has been made. Departments *can* provide candidates with information about campus resources for accommodating dual careers, family responsibilities, or accessibility, but they must provide all candidates with the same information. Chairs should be sure that they are in a position to answer questions about such policies or resources with up-to-date information. For example, a candidate who anticipates that he or she would find it difficult to accept an offer without some arrangement for a spouse or partner may consider making this information known early enough in the recruitment process to provide the department with time to seek to make relevant arrangements, but this is a delicate issue and candidates should seek advice before doing so.

For further discussion of dual careers, along with model guidelines for institutions, see the Clayman Institute's [Dual-Career Research Report](#).

### After the campus visit

Before a campus visit is over, the candidate should be informed of how the departmental search and deliberation will proceed from that point forward and whom to contact in the event of further questions or developments. Candidates should also have a clear idea of who will be contacting them with information about the status of the search. Ideally, one person—normally, the department chair—should be responsible for all official communication with the candidate.

Insofar as possible, contact with candidates should follow the broad guideline of seeking to be consistent across candidates. It is understood that candidates may wish to contact individual members of the department in order to follow up on research suggestions or to ask questions that that given faculty member may be best suited to answer. Faculty should be aware of the “ground rules” for such contact and should be aware of the questions it is inappropriate to ask of a candidate prior to making a job offer (see [Appendix C of this section](#)). Faculty who might wish to initiate post-interview contact with a candidate should normally discuss the advisability of initiating such contact with the official contact person. Regardless of who initiates post-interview contact, information gained during these post-interview conversations should be considered private and should not be introduced into the hiring process without the express consent of the candidate and clearance with the official contact person.

Departments should keep candidates apprised of the progress of a search and should inform candidates promptly if they have been eliminated from the search. Once the department has made an offer and the offer has been accepted, all candidates should be informed that the search is over.

## Offers of employment

(The following is adapted from the APA [Statement on Offers of Employment](#). See also the APA [Statement on the Job Market Calendar](#).)

**Deadlines for responses to offers:** The circumstances under which offers are made are so varied that no rule will cover all cases, but norms of professional courtesy suggest some helpful advice. Employer and prospective employee should be respectful of one another's legitimate concerns. Employers are properly concerned about planning for the contingency of making another offer in a timely fashion if one is turned down. Prospective employees are properly concerned to make important career decisions in the light of fairly complete information about which offers they are actually going to receive. In some cases, such concerns may set employer and prospective employee at cross-purposes unless professional courtesy is exercised by both parties.

Ideally, at the time an offer is made, employer and prospective employee should discuss their concerns with the aim of arriving at a mutually agreeable deadline for response. In normal circumstances a prospective employee should have at least two weeks for consideration of a written offer from a properly authorized administrative officer, and responses to offers of positions whose duties begin in the following fall should not be required before February 1.

When an employer is unable to honor these conditions, the prospective employee should be given an explanation of the special circumstances that warrant insistence on an earlier decision. By the same token, a prospective employee should not delay unnecessarily in responding to an offer once it has been made. When a prospective employee requests more time to consider an offer than the employer is inclined to give, a candid statement of the reasons for the request is in order.

**Oral offers and acceptances:** There are at least two distinct types of situation that cause difficulties with oral offers and acceptances. The ideals of professional courtesy suggest advice for dealing with them. One is the case in which a prospective employee received what appears to be an oral job offer and on that account forgoes other opportunities only to learn later that the prospective employer has no job to offer because, for instance, a position does not receive final administrative approval. In order to prevent misunderstandings on this score, the prospective employer should make it very clear to the prospective employee whether a formal offer is being extended or not. If a prospective employer is only in a position to say that a formal offer will be forthcoming provided a departmental recommendation received administrative approval and to predict such approval, the prospective employee should be told explicitly that this is the situation.

Another kind of difficulty arises when a formal offer is orally made and accepted and the prospective employee later receives and accepts another offer. Such cases can present both legal and moral problems. It is worth bearing in mind that **there are circumstances in which oral contracts are legally binding**. In addition, oral acceptance of a formal offer, like making a serious promise, generates a strong *prima facie* obligation to take the job thus accepted, and weighty reasons are needed to justify not doing so.

# Section 4, Appendix A

## Guidelines for Interviews via Internet Meeting Software and Telephone

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The costs associated with in-person convention interviews has led some departments to conduct first-round interviews using video conferencing services such as Skype, GoToMeeting, and InterCall, or via telephone. The following are guidelines for conducting such interviews.

Departments, colleges, and universities should avoid using these technologies to treat some candidates differently relative to other candidates. Such interviews should be scheduled in a way that treats all candidates for the job fairly and consistently. Of course, some departments may need to schedule internet-based interviews only after it becomes clear that their first round of in-person interviews has been unsuccessful. However, departments should keep in mind how the evaluation of a candidate's interview performance may be negatively affected by technical problems with the software and internet connection. This should be of special concern when some candidates are interviewed in-person, and others using internet-based technology or the telephone.

One recommendation to mitigate potential unfairness in the process is for the interviewing department to either give candidates the option of how they want to interview, or to commit to interviewing all candidates in the same manner.

Internet-based and telephone interviews should adhere to the guidelines for in-person interviews where practicable. This includes taking measures to ensure accessibility for candidates with disabilities. In the case of internet-based and phone interviews, this may involve making use of specialized equipment.

### Interviewing institutions and individual interviewers

- Arrange internet-based and phone interviews in the same formal manner you would arrange an in-person interview.
  - Allow enough time between your invitation and the actual interview for the candidate to arrange appropriate facilities and technological assistance.
  - Arrange for technological assistance at your institution. Interviews should be conducted in a professional manner with as few difficulties as possible. Remember that the candidate may be nervous. Inadequate connectivity or lack of technological assistance should something go wrong heightens their anxiety.
  - Tell the candidate approximately how long the interview will last.
- Provide the candidate with your contact information in case a problem with the connection arises.
- Arrange an appropriate location and technological assistance for the interview.
  - Universities often have a room designated for internet-based interviews. The location should be free of distractions and have a secure, wired connection.

- Test the space and the connection.
- Make sure a back-up telephone is available in case there is a problem with the connection.
- Make sure all interviewers are adequately informed about the limitations of the technology. If use of the equipment is not clear, tell them how they ought to speak and direct their voices, where they ought to look, etc. Also let the interviewers know what the candidate can see, what the candidate can hear, and any other information that may be appropriate.
- If the space for the interview is a classroom, additional microphones might be needed.
- Allow ample time immediately before and after the scheduled interview.
  - Time before the interview allows you to check that the technology is working appropriately.
  - The APA recommends that interviewers arrive to the interview location at least thirty minutes before the scheduled interview.
  - At the end of the interview, ensure that all connections to the candidate have been cut before discussing any impressions.
- Ask questions with the same animation as an in-person interview but perhaps more slowly. Keep in mind that there may be a lag depending on the technology being used.
  - Speak clearly and loudly. You will need to project your voice. This is especially true if there are multiple people using the same connection.
  - In telephone interviews with multiple interviewers, identify yourself each time you ask a question. This may also be necessary with internet-based interviews, depending on the video arrangement.
  - Allow for pauses.

## Job candidate

- Plan to take the internet connection or phone call in a room designated by your university for this purpose. Contact Career Services, Graduate Placement, or the IT department for assistance.
  - Ask the interviewers how long you should expect the conversation to last so that you may schedule the appropriate facilities.
  - If no room is designated for interviews, ask for one. An office that is quiet and nicely decorated would be ideal. If you do not have access to an appropriate space on campus, arrange such a space at your home or the home of a colleague.
  - The space should be free of distraction. Think especially about the material that forms the backdrop of your internet interview. Avoid overly busy or cluttered spaces. Think also about what artwork or posters might reveal about you as a job candidate.
  - For an internet-based interview, make sure the connection is secure and strong. Use a wired connection if possible; wireless internet connections are less reliable. Check the webcam and microphone well in advance of the interview as well.

- For telephone interviews, try to use a landline that has better sound quality and is more reliable than a cell phone. If you must use a cell phone, make sure it has ample battery life and the reception is excellent.
- Prepare for an internet-based or phone interview in the same manner you would prepare for an in-person interview.
  - Prepare for the interview.
  - Know the college or university as well as the department that will be interviewing you.
  - Anticipate what sorts of questions they might ask.
  - Compile a list of possible questions that you could ask them if time permits; have these questions in mind for the actual interview. Try to avoid having a written list of questions, however.
  - Be able to describe your current and future research in a succinct manner for a generalist audience.
  - Have your application materials and supplementary materials ready-at-hand in a neat file (just to the side of the screen for internet interviews). Ideally, you should be well enough prepared that you will not need to refer to these materials during the interview, but in the event a question arises about the content of the application file, it might be a good idea to have those materials on hand. Avoid clutter surrounding the computer.
  - Dress appropriately as for an in-person interview. This is helpful for telephone interviews as well as it puts you in a professional mindset. Keep in mind that bright colors are often skewed in computer imaging. Solid colors and dark colors tend to display more consistently.
- Practice for an internet or phone interview.
  - Ask your placement officer or graduate director to arrange a mock interview.
  - It can be disconcerting for interviewers if the candidate appears to not be looking at them during the interview. However, it is also an advantage for the candidate to be able to see the interviewers during the interview so as to better gauge reactions. To these ends, the candidate can reduce the size of the Skype, or other software, screen in which the interviewers are visible and move that as close to the camera location as possible. In that way the candidate can see the interviewers while looking at the camera.
  - Experiment with angles of your screen that will allow you to look most natural and to see the interviewers most clearly without looking down.
  - Check connection, webcam, and microphone at the location and with the equipment you will be using during your actual interview.
  - Note that, in some cases, a headset may be useful.
- Perform to the best of your ability with confidence.
  - Make sure any cell phone not used in the interview is turned completely off. Do not distract yourself with the buzz of a text message.

- It is a good idea to have a back-up phone available in case there is a problem with the connection. Make sure you have relevant contact information for the interviewer.
- For internet-based interviews, close all other programs on your computer, especially email and email pop-ups.
- Remember to look at the camera. This is where practice really helps.
- Avoid any distractions.
- Be expressive.
- Keep responses succinct. internet-based interviews and telephone interviews, even more than in-person interviews, invite distraction from all parties. You can help alleviate that if you answer the questions clearly and succinctly.

### **Placement officers and graduate programs**

- Advocate for the students on the market with your university. If there is currently no designated space or support service for internet-based and telephone interviews, ask for it.
- Assist candidates with making arrangements for internet-based and telephone interviews.
  - Much of this could be done prior to the job market season. Provide information including these guidelines from the APA.
  - Coordinate mock interviews using the appropriate technology.
- Assess interview facilities and technology. Make improvements as appropriate.

# Section 4, Appendix B

## Research on Interviewing

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Many departments no longer conduct first-round interviews in person at APA meetings. A great number of departments now begin with internet-based interviews, while some do not conduct first-round interviews at all, preferring instead to bring candidates directly to campus for on-campus visits.

Reasons for avoiding the divisional meetings in favor of internet-based interviews largely center on the costs of performing first-round interviews at the meetings. Institutions must cover the costs of faculty traveling to conduct the interviews, and interviewees—many of whom are graduate students—must cover the costs of their own travel to the meetings. It is especially problematic for graduate students when the job market is precarious, since many will end up spending a great deal of money for one or two interviews.

However, some departments feel that there is value in face-to-face interviews. They believe that they are better able to ascertain the teaching effectiveness of a candidate through an evaluation of in-person communication skills. Some also view the first round, face-to-face interview as an opportunity to “sell” their department more effectively to prospective colleagues. However, given the growing trend by more departments to rely on internet-based first-round interviews, departments should seriously weigh any benefits they believe they are achieving by using in-person interviews against the significant costs those interviews present to candidates.

Some departments have chosen to avoid first-round interviews altogether. Cost may be a factor, but, additionally, work in social psychology has cast doubt on the usefulness of first-round interviews. The “interview illusion” refers to the view that one can glean a great deal of useful information about a job candidate from a brief, unstructured, interview:

*...the one-hour personal interview has virtually no validity for predicting job performance, yet people often feel convinced after such interviews that they have a good idea of the candidate's attributes and how well the candidate would perform on the job. Indeed, such an inflated belief in the certainty of knowledge obtained in the interview may cause people to overturn completely (and wrongly) preconceptions of the candidate based on job recommendations that probably do have some validity. (Nisbett and Ross 1980, 72)*

Their diagnosis is that the vividness of interview data swamps the dull, but more reliable data provided in the candidate's dossier (Nisbett and Ross 1980, 290). One source of error is the tendency to place great weight on the behavior of others while discounting one's own similar behavior:

*Interviewers often feel confident relying on interviewee's behavior in order to infer more stable internal states—such as passion, mental stability, or drive. In making such inferences, interviewers pay attention not only to interviewee's carefully composed replies but also to their implicit or uncontrolled responses, such as nonverbal gestures, off-the-cuff remarks, or unintended slips of the tongue. The very unintentional and unmonitored responses that people view as meaningless in their own case, people often view as meaningful in the case of others. (Pronin 2009, 17-18)*

Evidence is compelling that impressions from *unstructured* interviews are very poor predictors of successful performance. There is evidence that not only are unstructured interviews ineffective, they may actually harm the interviewer’s judgment (Dana et al. 2013). Much of this evidence, however, is gathered from interview settings not specific to academia.

Though unstructured interviews are fairly consistently viewed as providing poor evidence of job success, some researchers regard the *structured* interview as potentially useful (Macan 2009). What is meant by “structured” is not always clear, but the most common understanding involves making the interview procedure as uniform for candidates as possible.<sup>3</sup> Candidates should be asked the same questions in the same order, for example.<sup>4</sup> It is also possible the wording of the questions matters as well, and care should be taken to make sure that the questions are formatted the same way for all the candidates. There should be a consistent rating scale used in evaluating responses (Macan 2009, 206). There seems to be some evidence that highly structured interviews “can minimize or eliminate potential bias with respect to demographic similarity between applicants and interviewers” (McCarthy et al. 2010, 351). In the case of academic interviews, it may be difficult to be perfectly consistent between candidates, since research projects and teaching techniques will vary and require different follow-up questions between candidates. There are also interview formats that fall between the two extremes—in semi-structured interviews, the interview experience is kept as consistent as possible between candidates, but some allowance is made for questions that permit “probing” or following up on a given response.

There is also concern over the role implicit bias plays in the evaluation of candidates. In a famous study involving 238 psychologists, the psychologists—118 were male, 120 were female—were asked to evaluate curricula vitae that had been randomly given either a male or female name. The male name received a better evaluation than the female name, though the CVs were otherwise identical (Steinpreis et al. 1999). In another study, applicants with “White-sounding” names received 50 percent more call-backs after a resume review than applicants with “African-American-sounding” names (Bertrand and Mullainathan 2004). To minimize the role implicit bias plays in reviewing job files, some recommend that files be anonymized prior to review. This may involve, for example, using a multi-step screening process: first review CVs, writing samples, teaching, and research statements that have been anonymized by personnel who are not involved in the evaluation process. Then, after the pool has been narrowed, letters of recommendation are read. The letters would come at the end of the process, since they tend to contain identifying information that would be extremely difficult to redact. The advantages are that gender and sometimes race will not be obvious from the names if the names are absent during the initial review process. One worry about first-round face-to-face interviews is that implicit bias would be allowed to enter into the hiring process again, after the initial review of files. Of course, this would be true as well at the on-campus interview stage, but there may still be value in eliminating as much as possible implicit bias in earlier stages. There is some evidence that biases can, to some extent, be mitigated by the passage of time. Ziva Kunda and Steven J. Spencer report that initially activated stereotypes can fade in as little as 15 minutes of exposure: “As time unfolds, one’s attention shifts from the person’s category membership to individuating information or to the demands of the task at hand” (Kunda and Spencer 2003, 528). Thus, there may be some value to the structured in-person interview if it is long enough for implicit bias to be mitigated, and most interviews are over 15 minutes long. However, they also report that stereotypes can

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<sup>3</sup> Macan’s review article goes over some of the different ways “structured” is understood in the research literature.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, [Structured Interviews: A Practical Guide](#), U.S. Office of Personnel Management, September 2008.

reassert themselves throughout an interaction. For example, in an interaction in which one needs “to determine one’s partner’s attributes or likely behavior,” a stereotype may be activated. They cite a set of studies in which the study participants engaged in structured interviews with a White or an Asian confederate. The interview consisted in “stereotype-irrelevant” questions:

*Following 10–15 min of such interaction, half of the participants were given the goal of forming an impression of their interaction partner’s personality and likely career choice. Controls were given, instead, the goal of elaborating on the contents of their discussion. As may be expected from the finding that stereotype activation can dissipate by the end of such a lengthy encounter (Kunda et al., 2002), controls interacting with an Asian confederate showed no activation of the Asian stereotype. In contrast, participants given the task of forming an impression of their Asian partner did activate the Asian stereotype. Most likely, they recruited the stereotype so as to inform their impressions of this person. (Kunda and Spencer 2003, 529)*

This evidence indicates that care should be taken with interviews, and even with longer, on-campus, interviews, to ensure that stereotypes do not reenter the interview process.<sup>5</sup>

There are several worries about eliminating first-round interviews. The first worry is that without this extra exposure to a job candidate, problematic individuals will not be detected early enough in the hiring process to avoid the wasteful expenditure of resources involved in bringing to campus for an extended interview someone who is not a viable candidate. This would be especially problematic for departments with small recruiting budgets. Another worry is that job candidates will not get valuable information about how well they are faring on the job market. The number of first-round interviews can provide candidates with some information about how well their files are being perceived, even if the candidate does not get a job during that particular hiring cycle. One way departments could address this problem is by having a policy of informing candidates when they have made the long list. For example, the department might explicitly state that when they long-list candidates they will request additional materials (e.g., an additional writing sample). If this is known to be the procedure in lieu of interviews, a department could still convey the valuable information to the candidates.

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### Other resources

The Implicit Bias & Philosophy Project website has several useful reading lists.

<http://www.biasproject.org/>

# Section 4, Appendix C

## Acceptable Interview Questions

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It is essential for all members of a search committee to be aware of these guidelines and follow them in both spirit and letter. Avoid any direct or indirect questions that touch on material that may not be asked. This information about an applicant should never be discussed with regard to his or her candidacy for a position. Note that if one candidate is asked a question about criminal record, existence of conflicting responsibilities, or needs for accessibility, etc., the same question must be asked of all. Note also that this list of acceptable questions is generic and addressed to public institutions and institutions receiving government grants (it is drawn, with modifications, from the [Harvard Faculty Development and Diversity guidelines](#)). Exceptions exist in special cases—e.g., regarding whether religious institutions may ask questions about religious affiliation—though guidelines related to race, ethnicity, gender, disability, national origin, and age still apply (see the [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission statement](#)).

| Subject                | What may be asked  | What may NOT be asked  |
|------------------------|--|--|
| Name                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What a candidate’s name is, and whether there are nicknames or initials needed to check the candidate’s work and educational record.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maiden name of a married woman.</li> <li>Inquiries about the name that would seek to elicit information about the candidate’s ancestry or descent.</li> </ul> |
| Age                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>If hired, can you offer proof that you are at least 18 years of age?</i></li> <li>Questions about the applicant’s career stage.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>How old are you?</i></li> <li><i>What is your birthdate?</i></li> </ul>  |
| Sex or Gender          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No questions.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Are you male or female?</i></li> </ul>   |
| Sexual Orientation     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No questions.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>What is your sexual orientation? Are you gay?</i></li> </ul>   |
| Religion               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No questions. (You may inquire about availability for weekend work.)</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>What is your religion?</i></li> <li><i>Which church do you attend?</i></li> <li><i>What are your religious holidays?</i></li> </ul>                        |
| Birthplace             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No questions.</li> </ul>  |  |
| Relatives              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No questions.</li> </ul>  |  |
| National Origin / Race | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No questions.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>What is your race?</i></li> </ul>  |
| Citizenship            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Can you show proof of your eligibility to work in the US?</i></li> <li><i>Are you fluent in any languages other than English? You may ask this question only as it relates to the job being sought.</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Are you a U.S. citizen?</i></li> <li><i>Where were you born?</i></li> </ul>  |

|                         |   |  |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| Language                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What languages do you read fluently? Write fluently? Speak fluently?</i></li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inquiries into how the applicant acquired the ability to read, write, or speak a foreign language.</li> </ul>   |
| Education               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inquiries into the academic, vocational, or professional education of an applicant for employment.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions about education designed to determine how old the applicant is.</li> </ul>  |
| Disability              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job with or without reasonable accessibility measures?</i><br/>Show the applicant the position description so that he or she can give an informed answer.</li> </ul>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Are you disabled?</i></li> <li>• <i>What is the nature or severity of your disability?</i></li> <li>• <i>Have you ever received workers' compensation?</i></li> <li>• <i>Do you have AIDS?</i></li> <li>• <i>Have you ever been treated for drug abuse or alcoholism?</i></li> </ul> |
| Marital / Family Status | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Do you have any responsibilities that conflict with the job attendance or travel requirements?</i></li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Are you married?</i></li> <li>• <i>What is your spouse's name?</i></li> <li>• <i>What is your maiden name?</i></li> <li>• <i>Do you have any children?</i></li> <li>• <i>Are you pregnant?</i></li> <li>• <i>What are your childcare arrangements?</i></li> </ul>                    |
| Residence               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What is your address?</i></li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Do you own or rent your home?</i></li> <li>• <i>Who resides with you?</i></li> </ul>   |
| Military                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant's work experience, including names, addresses of previous employers, dates of employment, reasons for leaving.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inquiry into an applicant's type of discharge.</li> </ul>   |
| Criminal record         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Have you ever been convicted of a crime?</i> You must state that a conviction will be considered only as it relates to fitness to perform the job being sought.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Have you ever been arrested?</i></li> </ul>  |
| Memberships             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Are you a member of any professional societies or organizations?</i> Exclude inquiries into specific organizations the name or character of which indicates the race, creed, color, or national origin of its members.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inquiry into applicant's membership in nonprofessional organizations (e.g., clubs, lodges).</li> </ul>  |

# Section 4, Appendix D

## Sample Candidate Evaluation Sheet

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*This evaluation sheet is offered as a general template; search committees should feel free to modify this for their own purposes. These questions are designed for Assistant/Associate Professor faculty searches; committees may want to modify some of the language used for non-ladder and tenured faculty searches.*

Candidate's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate which of the following are true for you (check all that apply):

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read candidate's CV          | <input type="checkbox"/> Read candidate's letters of recommendation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read candidate's scholarship | <input type="checkbox"/> Attended candidate's job talk              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Met with candidate           | <input type="checkbox"/> Attended meal with candidate               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (explain): _____       |   |

Please comment on the candidate's scholarship (noting the basis of your assessment):

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Please comment on the candidate's teaching ability (noting the basis of your assessment):

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Please rate the candidate on each of the following:

|  | Excellent | Good | Neutral | Fair | Poor | Unable to judge |
|--|-----------|------|---------|------|------|-----------------|
| Potential for (evidence of) scholarly impact                                       |           |      |         |      |      |                 |
| Potential for (evidence of) research productivity                                  |           |      |         |      |      |                 |
| Potential for (evidence of) research funding                                       |           |      |         |      |      |                 |
| Potential for (evidence of) collaboration  |           |      |         |      |      |                 |
| Relationship to the department's priorities  |           |      |         |      |      |                 |
| Ability to make a positive contribution to department's climate                    |           |      |         |      |      |                 |
| Potential (demonstrated ability) to attract and supervise graduate students        |           |      |         |      |      |                 |
| Potential (demonstrated ability) to teach and supervise undergraduates             |           |      |         |      |      |                 |
| Potential (demonstrated ability) to attract, work with, and teach diverse students |           |      |         |      |      |                 |
| Potential (demonstrated ability) to be a conscientious department/community member |           |      |         |      |      |                 |

# Section 5

## Countering Implicit Bias

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### Implicit attitudes and structural relations: Coming to terms with contemporary forms of discrimination

As philosophers, we are professionally involved in unearthing assumptions and values underlying ordinary thought and practice, and subjecting them to critical examination. We also live in a society that has been, and continues to be, divided in many ways along “racial,” ethnic, religious, gender, and socio-economic lines—with profound effects upon the outcomes individuals experience in life. The phenomenon of “implicit bias” has its roots in this fact about our social lives, yet it lies below the surface of ordinary self-awareness. It thus affords us an opportunity for just the sort of critical unearthing of assumptions and values that has been central to philosophy since its inception—but only if we seize the opportunity constructively, and doing so will mean making ourselves the first targets of this critical inquiry. Because implicit bias can figure in virtually any aspect of academic life, it seems appropriate to include here some general discussion of the phenomenon as currently understood. In other sections, specific recommendations will be made that have shown some signs of helping to reduce the effects of implicit bias.

“Implicit bias” is an instance of a more general phenomenon, implicit social cognition, which involves the attribution of traits and formation of explanations (Uleman et al. 2008). Implicit social cognition is essential to our capacity to function effectively in the social world since the amount of information needed for social interactions far exceeds the capacity of explicit, controlled cognition. Moreover, explicit, controlled cognition cannot get underway unless provided with categories and expectations as starting points. Our conscious mental lives thus depend pervasively on processes and attitudes that shape how we see the world and act upon it, but which have not been the product of prior deliberation and choice, and typically are not open to direct introspection. We are not, then, typically in a good position to say what our implicit social attitudes are, yet they will nonetheless influence what we attend to, perceive, think, remember, feel, want, and do. In particular, implicit trait attributions or essentialist explanations will influence our thought, feeling, and behavior even in ways we would not consciously endorse. Implicit social cognition therefore poses a special problem in our efforts to live up to ideals of impartiality, fairness, open-mindedness, evidence-sensitivity, and rigor in judgment.

The term “implicit bias” is typically used for dimensions of implicit social cognition that involve racial, ethnic, gender, or status *stereotyping*—attributions to groups of generic traits that mask individual variation. Most theorists of social cognition hold that implicit bias is largely *acquired*—it emerges developmentally, typically becoming noticeable by age 6 and highly developed by age 14 (Baron and Benaji 2006). Implicit bias thus is distinct from a putative in-born prejudice in favor of one’s own group. Rather, it tends to reflect specific social contexts and hierarchies, and to be associated with more or less specific characteristics or abilities. Thus members of dominant and disfavored groups may share many of the same implicit stereotypes, and these stereotypes may mix positive and negative traits for each group (see Fiske et al. 2002; Dasgupta 2012; Dunham et al. 2014). For example, in the US, individuals of all ages tend to show a stronger implicit association between positive words and youth, and young women who, in fact, outperform their male peers in mathematics may nonetheless tend to have a negative implicit association

between femaleness and mathematical ability and a positive implicit association between maleness and such ability (Nosek et al. 2003).

Implicit bias appears to depend upon quite general tacit learning processes by which individuals adapt their assumptions, expectations, and behavior to prevalent social circumstances, norms, and evaluative attitudes, often in fairly subtle ways. Children who observe greater anxiety or lack of ease when adults from diverse racial groups interact, even when the surface interactions are positive, will tend to extract from such experiences the idea that it is risky to engage with the other racial group (Castelli et al. 2008). At the same time, the lack of alignment between implicit and express attitudes can work the other way. Individuals who are self-consciously racist can exhibit a lower level of implicit bias if they've had extensive experience of working together with individual members of other racial groups, while individuals from privileged backgrounds who reject racist principles, but who have had little personal experience with members stigmatized groups, may have more strongly biased implicit attitudes.

Implicit attitudes thus are complex in character and subject to change with changing social context. This is a critical point for us as educators, scholars, and participants in academic deliberation and decision-making. For it suggests that we can make progress in dealing with implicit biases in ourselves and others if we can make the academic setting one in which members of diverse groups come together to work on shared projects. Because implicit social cognition is grounded in learning mechanisms, implicit bias can be unlearned as well as learned, but this requires actual engagement—by ourselves and our students—across the many divides in our society (Waldo and Kemp 1997). Adoption of abstract principles and policies is not enough, and mere *exposure* to members of other groups, without genuine interaction, can actually enhance implicit bias by encouraging the triggering of stereotypes (for discussion, see Rae et al. 2015). Thus, the *structure* and *dynamics* of social relations within our classrooms, departments, programs, and institutions are as important as the existence of diversity within the institution.

Social fault lines tend to be self-reinforcing, since they discourage such genuine engagement with, and learning about, others as individuals. This can be as true inside universities as in the wider society. Thus, faculty and administrators need to take affirmative steps if the greater diversity in our faculty or student body is to translate into real learning on all sides that provides the evidence implicit attitudes need if they are to change. We in the academy are in the privileged position of having very great freedom to develop new ways for individuals to work together in pursuit of shared intellectual goals—and these are the sorts of activities and experiences that are known to have some effect in reducing implicit bias.

Raising awareness of implicit bias is an important step in itself. For example, bringing such awareness to the discussion of evaluative information can help increase accuracy in judgment. Thus, to make accurate use of student evaluations of teaching performance in internal reviews or assessing job candidates, faculty and administrators should have some awareness of the typical patterns of variation in student comments for male versus female instructors, or for instructors perceived as heterosexual versus gay, which can involve a mixture of attitudes rather than unidimensional discrimination (Ewing et al. 2003).

A key to increased awareness is self-assessment. Since implicit bias cannot ordinarily be detected by introspection alone, self-scrutiny should include some attempt to find more objective measures. One such measure is afforded by various self-administered tests for implicit bias. The most extensively studied self-testing exercises can be found at [Project Implicit](#).

It is reasonable to encourage all teaching and administrative staff to take such tests, and to ask students to take these Implicit Association Tests (IATs) as part of relevant course work. The tests rely upon the idea that implicit associations affect response-times—slowing counter-stereotypical responses while speeding stereotype-consonant responses. The results of such tests have been found to have predictive value for biased behavior in a range of contexts—a value that is independent of, and sometimes greater than, measures of explicit bias. Since the tests are online and confidential, they provide an opportunity for ourselves and our students to examine our implicit attitudes in a non-threatening, private setting. This experience can then help create a climate for more productive discussions in departments and classrooms of how to contend with implicit bias. At the same time, we should be aware that any testing instrument has limitations—for example, existing tests cover only a certain range of discrimination and rely on a restricted set of indicators. The tests are evidently being taken by individuals who know what is being tested *for*, and this limits their objectivity. And test results always need interpretation. The point of these tests is not to enhance guilt, or, for that matter, to provide a “proof” that one’s own implicit mind is clear of bias should one not score highly on any given test. Rather, they serve as an important counterweight to mere introspection by giving some evidence of the existence of implicit attitudes that will tend to affect one’s thought and behavior in ways one would not endorse.

For this reason, encouraging such interventions is quite consistent with commitment to impartial pedagogy and inquiry. They do, however, require initiative on the part of teachers, colleagues, and administrators. The problem of bias does not seem to be going away—there is some evidence that, even as the US is becoming a more diverse society, the implicit and explicit attitudes of majority-group students are becoming less tolerant in several dimensions (Craig and Richeson 2014). For a discussion of some other effective—and ineffective—interventions, as well as a review of recent literature, see the [Kirwan Institute’s Implicit Bias Review](#), especially pp. 65–66.

Interventions faculty can take to reduce the role of implicit attitudes in shaping decision-making include the following:

- Taking the [implicit attitude test \(IAT\)](#) and encouraging other faculty to do so as well
- Inviting research faculty with expertise in implicit bias to make a presentation at a department meeting and encouraging “literacy” about implicit bias (see, for example, the [WISELI Breaking the Bias Workshop](#))
- Requiring those on hiring, promotion, and admission committees to attend university workshops on reducing explicit and implicit bias (see Jackson, Hilliard, and Schneider 2014)
- Taking active steps to diversify the pool of candidates at every level (van Ommeren et al. 2005)
- Developing and using explicit criteria of selection or evaluation for deliberations about hiring, promotion, graduate admissions, fellowships, recognitions, etc.—seek to use a uniform procedure when discussing candidates so that each receives similar scrutiny and similar information is brought to bear in each case (Bauer and Baltes 2002; Uhlmann and Cohen 2005)
- In such deliberations, having available and reviewing full applications, rather than relying heavily upon letters of recommendation (Schmader et al. 2007)
- Asking for explicit justifications for rejecting candidates (Foschi 1996)

- Instituting a review process for letters of recommendation for placement, and encouraging greater awareness in faculty of some of ways letters of recommendation can reflect, or encourage, implicit bias (Morgan et al. 2013)

To be sure, the Implicit Association Test and the implicit attitude research program in general are based upon empirical findings, and these always carry with them an element of uncertainty. (For some recent discussions of the test, its implications, constructs, and validity, see Nosek et al. 2005; Karpinski and Ross 2006; Amodio and Devine 2006; Greenwald et al. 2002, 2009, 2015; Oswald et al. 2015.)

Just as the tests and associated hypotheses afford a teaching opportunity, so do questions of the validity of the tests and hypotheses. Such questions can be integrated into classroom or collegial discussions, providing an important methodological perspective and helping students and colleagues to see that the question of implicit bias is not over culpability—it is a set of empirical claims that give us a chance for critical self-examination, and the possibility of finding ways to better live up to our ideals, individually and collectively.

For more discussion of relevant research, and of methods which can be effective in countering implicit bias, see also these university-maintained websites: the Harvard University website of [resources for Faculty Development and Diversity](#) and the University of Michigan [ADVANCE project](#).

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# Section 6

## Social Events, Alcohol, and Accessibility

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### Alcohol and social events

It is often suggested that the traditional culture of professional philosophy in the English-speaking world is a “drinking culture.” Whether or not this is the case, it is certainly true that many departments sponsor multiple kinds of events in the course of the academic year involving faculty and students where alcohol is served. And in any environment whatsoever where alcohol is served, drinking can lead to behavior that is problematic in a wide range of ways, ranging from offensive or harassing conduct to behavior that is aggressive, dangerous, or illegal. Events involving philosophers are no exception.

Good practices in the area of social events and alcohol are called for not only to mitigate the possibility of unprofessional or dangerous behavior, but also for reasons related to inclusiveness. There are many reasons why some philosophy faculty and students choose not to drink or to drink very little—for some it might be a personal matter, for others it might be connected with a serious health concern or with their religious convictions; for others it will be an important question of prudence (for example, if they plan to drive from the event). Making an effort to prevent such individuals from being marginalized by the choice of venue or character of an event is important for creating an open, diverse departmental culture. Those new to the department or lacking in seniority can be under special pressure to drink more than they would like to in order to fit in, while others can come to feel that not participating in drinking activities could limit their access to those with whom they would like to have conversations. At the most extreme, such considerations could give rise to the worry that philosophy as a professional pursuit is not for them.

Recognizing the important role that departments can play in shaping their own culture, the following guidelines are suggested as good practices for social events where alcohol is available to be consumed. In this context, the phrase “social events” refers to events that officially fall under departmental auspices. This would include departmental receptions for new or retiring faculty and guest speakers as well as departmentally sponsored picnics, parties, dinners, or other kinds of social gatherings. These guidelines are not meant to cover non-departmentally funded parties at the home of a member of the department, nor the informal socializing over alcohol that occurs when a group of students on campus become involved in philosophical conversation and decide to continue the conversation at a nearby bar. Informal socializing among faculty and students at a bar following an evening seminar or a class presents a special case; here too good practices can be identified.

- Departments planning on holding social events at which alcohol will be served should thoroughly familiarize themselves with relevant institutional policies and adhere to these policies in organizing and holding the event.
- Departments should take steps, as best they can, to ensure that for social events involving alcohol, drinking itself does not appear to be the focal point of the event. (An example of an event that would appear to “feature” alcohol would be an announcement of a departmental event that will

take place at a bar, or a departmental picnic at which a truck from a local brewpub would be present.)

- Non-alcoholic beverages should be available at all social events involving alcohol; they should be set up in such a way that they are just as easy to get as beverages containing alcohol.
- No one should be made to feel conspicuous or out of place if they choose not to drink at a social event involving alcohol.
- Departments should discuss the value of promoting drinking in moderation at departmental social events. Steps that could be taken include limiting the number of drinks per person through the distribution of drink tickets; limiting the length of the event; and limiting the amount of alcohol served.
- Some institutions have taken the step of requiring that, at events where alcohol is served, a member of the department with training in good practices with regard to alcohol must be present. Such individuals can also be designated as persons to whom any concerns about alcohol-related behavior at the event could be communicated.
- In situations where faculty (including graduate teaching assistants) and students decide to adjourn to an informal location following a class or seminar, faculty should be aware that the choice of a bar as the locale is one of several options. At a minimum, before a bar is chosen, faculty should ensure that all students are above drinking age. But if bars are habitually chosen, faculty should be aware that this will have a discouraging and marginalizing effect on students who feel uncomfortable about going to bars or who for any reason prefer, or need, not to drink alcohol. Such informal interactions are an important part of the educational experience, and it is important that students not feel excluded. Varying the venue for such post-class socializing, e.g., by going to a coffee shop or café, can enhance inclusivity.

### **Accessibility of social events, conferences, and other meetings**

Philosophy departments today, and their members, host a large range of different events: public lectures, conferences, colloquia, workshops, forums, and club meetings, among others. It is important to ask whether there have been adequate measures taken in the planning of such events to make them accessible to those who might have limited mobility or other disabilities.

Clearly, it will be a matter of judgment which concerns about accessibility should be taken into account for a given kind of event. To help members and departments think about the spectrum of issues and instrumentalities in providing accommodation, we are reproducing here, with minor alterations, an accessibility and accommodation checklist, assembled by Kelsey Borrowman, in her role as editorial assistant for *Hypatia*, in conjunction with the *Hypatia*/APA Committee on the Status of Women conference at Villanova University in 2015.

### **Accessibility and Accommodation Checklist**

The following checklist is tailored to larger conferences with open submission of abstracts but can be adapted to thematic conferences, smaller workshops, etc., as appropriate:

- Consult the APA Committee on Inclusiveness in the Profession, which includes a disability representative familiar with and working on disability issues.

- Consider inviting disabled philosophers to contribute a paper or panel.
- Explicitly include among the areas in which submissions are invited topics touching on disability.
- Put in the conference announcement information about the accommodations you will be able to provide, the accessibility of parking and the locale, and whom to contact for questions of access. The contact person should have sufficient authority to coordinate disability services for the meeting.
- In choosing a venue for the conference, determine the facility's ability to accommodate accessibility issues. This includes restrooms, meeting areas, coffee and lounge facilities, dining areas, etc. Accessibility should be convenient and, if access is difficult, conference staff should be available to assist. (See below for some more specific questions to ask and recommendations.)
- On the conference pre-registration form, ask what accommodations the participant will require—these might include the following: conference materials in alternative formats, such as large print, Braille, or on tape or disk; sign language interpreters; ramps for getting on and off platforms; designated “handicapped” parking; and so on. If a requested service cannot be provided, it is important to contact the registrant with the disability *as soon as possible* to explain the situation and attempt to work out some alternative accommodation.
- Collect as early as possible information about any relevant dietary restrictions of conference participants (vegetarian, vegan, lactose or gluten-intolerant, kosher, halal, etc.).
- Before the conference or meeting, arrange for your staff and volunteers to have an orientation session that deals with how they can best help individuals with disabilities—this is, indeed, a general learning opportunity made concrete. You can have staff from the Office of Disability Student Services, or individuals with the disabilities, help you conduct these orientations. Be sure that you cover all groups of disabled persons—those with visual or hearing impairments, individuals with mobility impairments, individuals needing various types of physical assistance, and those with hidden disabilities such as the learning disabled and those with hidden physical disabilities. Be sure that you go over the activities of the meeting and how all these activities can be made accessible to everyone. Address the relevant aspects of providing meeting access, and always make this orientation part of your conference planning.
- At conference registration, try to be sure that someone is available who can address questions about accommodations and provide relevant information, and provide the name of someone who will be at the conference to be contacted should further questions or needs arise. Also, ensure that a registration table is available at a height appropriate for a mobility aid user (34” is recommended).
- If food is served during the conference, try to ensure that a range of foods will be available whenever food is served, and label such food accordingly. For food served by a wait staff, be sure the staff is aware of any dietary restrictions and informed about the contents of the food.
- If, during or after the meeting, you are planning a reception, or if meals are in buffet style, ask participants with disabilities if they will need assistance, and assign staff to help at breaks or meals.

### Some general planning considerations

- When budgeting for meetings or conferences, include accommodating people with disabilities as a budget item. If you need to get an idea of costs, speak to the Coordinator of Disabled Student

Services or others on your campus who have already planned events where people with disabilities were accommodated.

- Consider offering a free or reduced companion rate on the basis that the companion will assist the person with the disability.
- When staffing, find individuals on campus who would be willing to volunteer as readers, guides, and personal assistants and do other functions related to accommodating individuals with disabilities. Be sure that these volunteers are included in any staff orientation and make sure that they have training as to how to work with people with disabilities.
- Consider putting together a group of volunteers as a Digital Access Facilitation Team ([such as the one for the Society for Disability Studies conference](#)), who will be responsible for consistently and comprehensively live-tweeting the entire conference as a way of collaboratively increasing the accessibility of the meeting or conference.
  - Consider offering these volunteers a free or reduced rate in recognition of the labor necessary to produce such access.  
*Please note that there is an ongoing conversation surrounding the use of tweeting and other forms of compulsory recording as potentially undermining a safe space for discussing sensitive and often difficult experiences that can arise within contexts engaging topics like race/racialization, sexuality, gender, etc. Consider informing participants at the outset that you will be recording/transcribing (even tweeting). They can then use their own discretion about what to say or withhold. This solution keeps disability access as the baseline.)*
- Arrange for good internet connection when needed, e.g. for participants presenting via videoconference.
- Sometimes you might use the internet to provide alternative formats of materials during the presentation, for example, allowing people using screen readers or other assistive technologies to follow along with an online version of your displayed material. For remote real-time captioning (often referred to as remote CART, for Communication Access Realtime Translation), you will need a connection that is reliable and has sufficient bandwidth for transferring audio.
- Have a designated quiet room, *especially if* the participants are not staying in the same location as the conference or meeting (but, notably, there should be a closer location for participants to access). This is helpful for a range of disabilities and impairments including but not limited to sensory processing disorder and chronic fatigue, and any participant who needs access to a safe and private space for medication or injection. This space could also be used as a nursing/pumping room. Make sure it has comfortable chairs and conveniently located electrical plugs.
- Make sure you have a list of both adaptive and public transportation, including cabs, accessible vans, and city buses, if any, or those who might volunteer to give people rides to hotels, etc.
- Consider an [accessibility guide](#) that includes contacts, information for the conference or meeting itself, and a list of accessible local eateries, etc. If you do not put together a physical accessibility guide, make sure that your contact person has this information available.

### Planning for possible emergencies

- In the event of an emergency, are there both auditory and visual alarms?

- Do you have an evacuation plan that addresses the evacuation of persons with disabilities?
- Have you trained your staff in these evacuation procedures?

### More specific recommendations

#### Venue

- Is the path to the building accessible?
- Is there a specific entry that is accessible?
- If the main entrance has steps, does it also have a railing?
- If there is not an automatic door opener, can the door be easily opened with one hand?
- Is there an accessible washroom in the building? Where is it located?
- Is the room, theater, etc. accessible? Are the doors wide enough for someone in a wheelchair to get through?
- Are there seats or spaces allotted for individuals in wheelchairs or those who need to sit close to the front to lip read, hear, or see?
- Where would someone with a guide dog sit?
- Is there someone assigned to guide an individual to the correct accessible location?
- If there are additional events, such as an outside event or social hour, is there seating available for people who cannot stand for long periods of time?
- How easy is the terrain to negotiate? Can a person in a power wheelchair or with crutches easily navigate it?
- Are there any physical dangers to a person with a visual impairment?
- Work together with a campus disability office, such as the Coordinator of Disabled Student Services (DSS), who will know how to evaluate the facilities in question. Also, keep a record of various facilities and their accessibility (this could be kept with the DSS Coordinator or in that office where meetings and conference are planned). When in doubt, walk through the facility with an individual knowledgeable about access issues.

#### Signage

- Are large, clear letters and plain language used on signs directing people to specific areas? Are they free from glare?
- Are event personnel aware of stair-free pathways to the event?
- Are the areas of travel and the display areas adequately lit?
- Is there enough room for persons in wheelchairs to safely pass one another? (72" is recommended)
- If the main entrance isn't accessible, are there signs directing people to the accessible entrance?

#### Washrooms

- Are the floors slip resistant and glare free?

- Are changes in floor level (i.e., stairs, ramps, escalators) marked with a textured edge and color contrasting?
- Is there an accessible washroom? (If not, an accessible portable toilet should be made available in an appropriate location.)
- Is there a gender-neutral or “family” washroom that in which a person with a disability and a personal care assistant can use together? (This kind of washroom can also make the event more welcoming to trans\* and gender non-conforming attendees.)
- Are large, clear letters, understandable pictures/symbols, and Braille used on the signs identifying the accessible washroom(s)?
- Do event personnel know where the accessible washrooms are located?
- Do the doors to the washroom and the stall have clearances that allow a wheelchair to pass through and allow for closer of the stall door? (37.5” is recommended)
- Can the stall door be closed and locked with one hand?
- Are grab bars in place on the wall closest to the toilet?
- Can the toilet paper dispenser be easily reached?
- Is there adequate leg clearance under the lavatory counter for persons in wheelchairs to wash their hands?
- Can paper towel dispensers or hand dryers be reached or is assistance available?
- Are there shelves or other projections that could be hazards for persons with a visual disability?
- Do urinals have grab bars installed on each side?

### Communications

- Have you arranged for an amplified audio system complete with microphones and stands? Are the stands adjustable?
- Are handouts or other printed materials available in alternate formats such as large print, Braille, or in electronic form if requested?
- Have you ensured that all parts of the venue are smoke free and free of strong scents, e.g., fresh paint or floor varnish?
- Have you scheduled a sufficient number of breaks during the day?
- Are podium heights adjustable to meet the needs of different speakers?
- Can microphones be adjusted?
- If there is an elevated stage, can those using mobility aids access it?

### Access for individuals who are deaf or hearing impaired

- In the Americans with Disabilities Act, all meetings and conferences must be accessible to individuals with hearing impairments. Therefore, you must take provisions for people who are both hard of hearing and totally deaf.

- Make sure that you can obtain the use of some type of assistive listening device that can be used by an individual who uses a hearing aid or who needs listening amplification. Usually, the Office of Disabled Student Services (DSS) has access to such equipment. It is good to know how to obtain this equipment if needed. You should also learn how to hook up the equipment or obtain the services of someone who can do this and who can be on call if the equipment is not functioning during the day(s) of the meeting.
- If requested, the host campus must provide for a sign language or other interpreter for the hearing impaired or deaf individual. Make budgetary provisions in case such a service is requested. Again, the DSS Office can provide you with names of qualified interpreters should they be required.
- You may also be requested to provide note-takers for these individuals. This is a legitimate request and can be provided from the DSS Office or by using volunteers from meeting sessions or staff members who have this assignment.

### Services for individuals with visual impairments

- In planning your conference or meeting, make provisions to put all information used by participants into large print, on tape, in electronic format, or in Braille. Again, ask for this information on your registration form and make budgetary provisions for such accommodations. Documents should be prepared in advance in the format that is the registrant's preferred mode of communication.
- Train one or more individuals to serve as guides and/or readers for visually impaired attendees. The guides will probably be asked to take an individual to a specific workshop, the restroom, or lounges and dining areas. Guides may be asked to leave the participant, stay with the participant, or to return for the participant after the workshop or activity has been completed. The guide may also be asked to orient the participant to the meeting facilities so that the participant can travel about independently. Readers may be asked to read from the printed meeting program or other print materials, or to help with session evaluations. This may even occur when an individual wants program information in another format because, often, these alternative materials are not available in time to provide them to the attendee(s) prior to the conference.
- Someone at the registration desk should be prepared to read items for an individual or to fill out evaluations and other forms. If you have more than one workshop, be sure that the workshop coordinator is prepared to help the person with a visual impairment fill out the workshop evaluation form at the end of the session.
- Make an area available to a person with a service animal so that the animal can relieve itself during the day.

### Access for individuals with learning and other hidden disabilities

- Individuals with learning disabilities may also request readers, note-takers or guides. These requests are legitimate and should be honored.
- If possible, have an area set aside so that the individuals with disabilities such as diabetes, heart conditions, asthma, and arthritis can have a place to rest once on a while. This "rest area" may serve multiple purposes such as giving a learning disabled individual a quiet place to read information or

fill out evaluations or just be away from meeting confusion. (This may be the same or different from the “quiet room” discussed earlier.)

- You are not responsible for giving an individual medication, but you should know how to get in touch with medical personnel if necessary. Keep in mind that all medical information about individuals must be kept confidential.
- Make sure you have a list of both adaptive and public transportation including cabs, accessible vans, and city buses, if any, or those who might volunteer to give people rides to hotels, etc.

### **Additional resources**

- [APA’s Resources on Diversity and Inclusiveness](#)
- [Digital Access Facilitation Team, Society for Disability Studies](#)
- [Statement from APA Members with Disabilities on Accessibility](#)
- [Recommendations for Making Presentations Accessible](#)
- [How to Make Presentations Accessible to All](#)
- [Accessible Presentations in an Interdisciplinary Space](#)
- [Composing Access](#) – contains links to resources for making a presentation accessible and conference organizing aimed at access
- [The Quiet Room by Susan Naomi Bernstein](#) – on the importance of having a quiet rest space
- [Sample Accessibility Guide](#)
- Consider browsing the informative and ongoing [#AcademicAbleism](#) hashtag on Twitter
- [PhdDisabled – What It’s Like Doing Academia with Disability & Chronic Illness](#)

Note: This list is a work in progress, a beginning to what must entail collaborative contribution. The recommendations are not in any particular order, and some are intentionally repeated. We have also depended on the wording from and information provided by the listed sources. If you have recommendations (such as for more inclusive language or other possibilities for accommodations), additional sources, or would like to suggest adjustments to the document, please contact [info@apaonline.org](mailto:info@apaonline.org).

# Section 7

## Professional Communication

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### Electronic communications

For most of those who work as faculty members, post-docs, and graduate students in college and university philosophy departments, the use of electronic and social media for professional purposes is a routine, everyday practice. By enriching student learning, scholarship, and philosophical community, and allowing powerful opportunities for philosophers to communicate with the general public, the use of these media can bring remarkable benefits. Members of a department rely more and more on email not only to communicate with each other, but to make collective decisions. Social media can promote inclusivity; for instance, some students who might feel uncomfortable about speaking up in class might be avid participants in an online discussion forum.

At the same time, the ease with which information can be conveyed and amplified electronically can have unintended consequences. When, for instance, an email message intended for a single recipient is posted by that recipient on her Twitter account, a message designed to be seen by one person comes to the attention of the public at large. If this message contains language that is unprofessional (if, for example, it devalues the recipient's work in harsh and dismissive terms, or makes fun of the recipient's philosophical interests), the broad attention the message receives may result in not only embarrassment for the sender but also possible institutional or legal sanctions. Along similar lines, if a faculty member sends a message to another faculty member commenting rudely or disparagingly about that member or her professional work or philosophical interests, and copies others in the department on this message, that action not only negatively impacts the recipient individually but can also contribute to a chilly climate within a department for electronic communications that can spill over into offline communications as well.

The very seamlessness with which electronic and social media has become integrated into the lives of their users also has its pitfalls. In using email, one has to balance the importance of ready connectedness with the importance of avoiding the sorts of pitfalls that come with email communication. Institutional email accounts do not differentiate between a faculty member's friends and colleagues. Many faculty members use their university or college email account to send messages to friends, just as they join Facebook groups out of common professional interests using the same Facebook account on which they post personal news and opinions. In addition, many faculty members may be unaware of their institutional policies regarding the use of electronic and social media, which come into play when faculty communications are routed through institutional servers. For these reasons, even knowledgeable users trying to act responsibly can sometimes be caught off guard.

In the interest of assisting philosophy faculty in minimizing confusion as well as acting professionally and responsibly when using electronic and social media, the following good practices are recommended.

### Email

A good department will attempt to cultivate an environment in which all interactions between members of the department—whether personal or professional, whether face-to-face or by electronic media—are conducted with the utmost civility and professionalism. Email communication has serious limitations that

can breed misunderstanding and conflict. Furthermore, nothing can substitute for positive face-to-face interactions among colleagues and students. Good practices for email use include the following:

- Departments should not use email as a substitute for talking in person, and should take steps to facilitate face-to-face conversations, both formal and informal. It is a good idea for people to meet in person, instead of conducting important business through email.
- Many communications require discretion and must respect privacy. Individuals can be significantly harmed if confidential information finds its way to inappropriate recipients. Email is a treacherous medium for any communications that must remain confidential, especially since messages are often automatically threaded in such a way that participants in a discussion are unaware of what information they are sending when they send a message. In-person exchange or, when this is not possible, telephone conversations are often the only suitable means for discussing matters where confidentiality is required.
- Departments therefore should establish clear guidelines for what are and are not appropriate subjects for email, and should make faculty and students aware of these guidelines. Moreover, violations of these guidelines should be called to the attention of those initiating and/or receiving the email correspondence. Colleges and universities often have very strict rules about what can or cannot be transmitted through email, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) provides guarantees of privacy of which students, faculty, and staff should be aware. Emails should be respectful about colleagues and students.
- Departments should avoid debating contentious matters of department policy and personal or political opinion via email.
- Those in positions of leadership should be very vigilant to shut down email threads that appear to be spiraling out of control, especially disrespectful or offensive posts. It is very easy for emails to be misunderstood, especially with regard to tone.
- Some departments may want to restrict the access to addresses that send messages to the faculty or department as a whole. Discouraging blanket emails can help disputes from escalating and discourage inappropriate sharing of confidential information.
- All members of a department should be educated about the extent to which the privacy of their institutional email accounts is and is not protected; most institutions reserve the legal right to access and read messages in all email accounts. Faculty and staff should follow the “*New York Times* rule”: do not put anything in an email message one would not be prepared to see on the front page of the *Times*.
- Members of the department may also be required to use university email accounts for transacting university business, instead of using private email accounts, for both technical and legal reasons.
- Keep in mind that many faculty members already receive crushing quantities of email each day, and simply processing all these messages makes it difficult to get on to the more important business of teaching philosophy, thinking, and writing. It’s better to limit group emails to announcements that cannot be conveyed through any other means, and which do not require a reply from recipients. And if no reply is required, this should be indicated explicitly in the message.

- Have the department administrator, secretary, or chair send out a weekly electronic newsletter to announce talks, events, and to make announcements, including news worthy of congratulations.
- Be judicious in the use of “reply-all” in replying to emails.

## Social media

Faculty and students alike employ various methods to communicate news about themselves, and maintain professional connections within the department and without, including Facebook, Twitter, and other social media. Such media can provide an important means for getting to know people outside the classroom, building relationships and networks, and sharing ideas. But they can also result in messages that were intended only for close friends, or meant to be kept in confidence, or written in haste being shared with a much broader audience, including the rest of the department, field, and community. Such comments can easily be taken out of context, causing hurt and damage to reputations. Students and faculty who enjoy the benefits of social media should also be aware of these risks and should be especially vigilant in maintaining high standards of professional conduct and in fostering good relations within the department and between the department and the broader community. (See also the discussion in [Section 7.](#))

In particular, students and faculty should be aware of the following pitfalls of using social media indiscriminately in academic settings, all stemming from the fact that most forms of social media make it possible to mix the professional and personal in ways that can blur the lines between them. First, faculty who “friend” students run the risk of sending the message that pursuing close personal relationships with them is required for a graduate student’s long-term success in the program and in the profession. That can be problematic for female graduate students in some departments where the faculty members are predominantly male. Second, this behavior may pressure graduate students into sharing personal information that the students wouldn’t normally be comfortable sharing with faculty members. Third, they run the risk of drawing in-group/out-group lines that are corrosive to the morale of students, and allowing for an appearance of favoritism. All of these problems can be avoided by a careful and thoughtful use of the media.

Good practices for the use of social media include the following:

- Faculty members may wish to consider making a policy of not adding current graduate and undergraduate students in their program to their social networks. Departments may wish to adopt an informal policy along these lines, to provide cover for faculty who wish to decline connection requests from students by appealing to a general policy. However, social media can be a useful way of developing professional relationships with students, and so social media relationships can be useful and productive as long as the following guidelines are followed:
  - Get to know the privacy settings for social media such as Facebook. Make use of distinctions between Facebook friends who are personal friends, and those who are professional acquaintances and colleagues. Make informed and ample use of privacy settings to restrict access to posts that share information best left out of a professional setting. For example, some forms of personal information—including marital status, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, etc.—are protected information which employers or graduate admissions committees are not supposed to take into account, and which one may not want them to know about.
  - Be careful to respect students’ FERPA/privacy rights.

- Faculty members and students alike should keep posts that will be viewed by colleagues and students professional and respectful. Know your audience.
- Departments may want to consider adopting rules or guidelines for faculty or students in supervisory roles, such as discouraging social media relations between faculty and graduate students who are still doing classwork, or between undergraduates and their instructors (including graduate students and faculty).

Twitter and similar forms of microblogging social media (such as Yik Yak) make it possible to share news and information, to broadcast opinions and requests, and to build a professional community of individuals interested in similar academic or professional issues on a very broad scale, but they come with minimal control over who sees one's posts. Twitter can be used in the classroom to live-blog events, build a sense of community, serve for backchannel communication, or even to provide a study guide via tweets with hashtags. Again, as with Facebook, Twitter has its pitfalls, which include the ability to mix personal opinion and professional activity, and the fact that one may use it to broadcast one's opinions to a large audience, without nuance, finesse, argument, or evidence.

Good practices for the use of microblogging sites—and, in fact, all social media—include the following:

- Keep posts professional.
- Be safe.
- Do not share confidential information, including student information protected by FERPA.
- Respect your university's civility guidelines. Use of Twitter or Yik Yak in order to broadcast denigrating or humiliating remarks about others is never appropriate.

### Developing ESM guidelines

Departments are encouraged to develop guidelines for responsible use of electronic and social media for faculty, post-doctoral fellows, and graduate students. The following is a sample outline of points that might be covered in these guidelines concerning electronic and social media (ESM). There are many ways such guidelines could be structured, and the list of topics that could be covered in these guidelines does not pretend to be exhaustive.

- **Introduction/background:** This section of the ESM guidelines could explain the reasons for having such a policy; indicate its scope—namely, that it applies to the use of institutional computing resources, including computer equipment, networks, and systems; and provide definitions of various terms and concepts, e.g., electronic and social media, the distinction between academic freedom and freedom of expression, the difference between privacy and confidentiality.
- **Institutional computer-related policies:** Does the institution have a general policy on appropriate computer usage? Some institutions have restrictions on what can be said and done using institutional email accounts and webpages. For example, it may be prohibited to use them as vehicles for marketing products from one's own business to one's colleagues or for political campaigning. If so, the guidelines should link to this broader policy. In addition, department members have responsibilities to abide by all broader legal policies directly related to electronic and social media usage to which their institution is subject. Links to these policies, such as the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA), could be included in this section as well.

- **Other relevant institutional policies:** Other policies, including Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and institutional non-discrimination and anti-harassment policies, can be violated through the use of institutional computing resources. Links to these policies could be included in a separate section, accompanied by a reminder that department members have responsibilities to abide by all institution-wide policies.

Faculty should also be made aware that at most private and public institutions, employers have the right to access electronic communications made on computers connected to institutional servers, even if these computers were purchased with private funds.

Moreover, at public institutions, or in activities involving federal funding, electronic communications may be subject to Freedom of Information requests. The nature and scope of Freedom of Information rights depend upon state and federal law; for general information, see [the Freedom of Information Act website](#) or consult your state government’s websites.

- **APA Code of Conduct:** A separate section of ESM guidelines could link to the [APA Code of Conduct](#). The code grounds professional conduct in a code of ethics, which stresses the value of academic freedom to professional work in philosophy as well as other professional conduct values such as fairness, equity, and dignity. ESM guidelines could emphasize that these values are to be adhered to not only in “real world” professional interactions but in all forms of electronic and social media communications.

Additionally, the Code of Conduct contains a [Statement on Electronic Communications](#). ESM guidelines could also include this statement or a link to it.

- **Privacy:** Given that respect for privacy is critical for establishing trust in online environments, it is important for ESM guidelines to stress that information shared electronically with a faculty member, post-doc, or graduate student should generally not be forwarded or shared with others without the sender’s consent. To put it succinctly, privacy should be taken as the default mode for treating the communications of others. This extends, for example, to making student papers available to other students via email or posting them on one’s own faculty website. It would also include taking a photograph of student work and posting that on Instagram, Facebook, etc.
- **Confidentiality:** FERPA requires confidentiality as the default mode for relating to student records. ESM guidelines should mention, though, the importance of confidentiality in general with regard to electronic and social media. If the sender of an email message requests confidentiality, it should not be forwarded to others. In addition, students and others should not be tagged on the photos one posts on Facebook without first receiving their consent.
- **Other considerations:** While acknowledging the difficulty of drawing a sharp line between professional and personal email, ESM guidelines could also mention the value of reserving an institutional account for work-related email, and using other email accounts for one’s personal communications. They could also mention the possibility of creating social media accounts for classroom use, separate from personal accounts, and deleting them when the course has come to an end. At the same time, it could also be noted that no matter what account a faculty member uses to send a message or to post on social media, a recipient could, as mentioned above, broadcast the content to many others via email and social media. For this reason, it is a good practice to keep a professional tone in all employment-related online communications. In other words, it is

recommended to use respectful and collegial language in all professional communications, independently of whether the communications are addressed to one's actual colleagues.

Departments choosing to develop ESM guidelines are encouraged to make the policy available on departmental websites, explicitly bring it to the attention of new faculty and post-doc hires, and make it a part of graduate student orientation.

## Syllabi

Departments are encouraged to ask faculty, post-docs, and graduate students to state explicitly on course syllabi how they will use electronic and social media communications in a responsible manner. An electronic device section of a syllabus could take the form of referring to departmental guidelines and a commitment to abide by them. Faculty preferences for student use of social media in class could also be spelled out in such a section. Just as faculty members might indicate on a syllabus that, apart from a student who has an accommodation to make a recording of the class, no other recording of the class be made without their consent, they could, in an electronic device section of a syllabus, express a preference that classroom discussion not be posted on social media, e.g., tweeted, while it is unfolding. Such transparency and clarity would contribute to making the classroom environment a trustful one.

## Department websites

Many departmental websites have pages designed to recruit undergraduate majors and/or graduate students, along with informative pages on what philosophy is about. Philosopher Sarah-Jane Leslie and colleagues (2015) have published a study showing a strong inverse correlation between the belief that success in fields such as philosophy required raw "brilliance" and the percentage of women as well as African-Americans in these disciplines. The study recommended that "Academics who wish to diversify their fields might wish to downplay talk of innate intellectual giftedness and instead highlight the importance of sustained effort for top-level success in their field." With this advice in mind, departments should review their websites, particularly those pages mentioned here, and make changes as appropriate.

See also the discussion of email and other forms of electronic posting, communication, deliberation, and decision-making in [Section 8](#), below.

## Communication across levels

Effective communication plays an important role in maintaining a healthy departmental climate and in identifying problems and contending with them when they arise. The following are examples of effective practices within departments, programs, or other units to encourage open lines of communication across levels.

Departments should try to cultivate transparency, shared expectations, and a climate of inclusiveness, all of which depend on having good communications among the different members of a department. Transparency and openness are important because they help develop cooperation, trust, and a sense of fairness among members of a group. Members of a department—students and faculty alike—are more likely to be willing to cooperate if they understand the department's (and the university's or college's) rules and are confident that they will be followed. Since many decisions seriously affect the lives of students and faculty, the existence of standard procedures and clear criteria, as well as appropriate procedures for grievances of the appeal of decisions, is vital to maintaining trust. And if some are perceived as having

received special treatment or unequal access to departmental resources without any procedural explanation, this will tend to break down the sense of fairness generally.

Transparency and openness also help all members to be aware of what is expected of them and what they can expect of one another. Shared expectations allow students, faculty, and staff to hold themselves and each other accountable for their actions and behavior.

Inclusiveness, too, is an important goal for departments—both as a matter of fairness and as a way of encouraging the most effective development of the capacities of all members. This, in turn, can have a positive effect on rates of retention and satisfaction with the program, both for faculty and for students, and make a program better able to grapple with the problems and crises that inevitably will arise.

Some forms of effective communication are top-down, some are bottom-up, and others are neither or both.

The top-down forms of communication come from advisors, supervisors, directors of undergraduate and graduate studies, and the chair and executive committee (i.e., those in positions of responsibility or supervisory roles), who are responsible for in communicating accurately and clearly departmental expectations of its faculty, staff, and students. Some policies can be made most accessible if posted on the website, though posting should be accompanied by communications at appropriate times to remind faculty, staff, and graduate students of rules and regulations they are expected to follow. This is inextricably tied with holding people accountable for their actions. Good practices for effective top-down communication include the following:

- Communicating expectations for promotion to tenure-track and associate faculty.
- Communicating to faculty members expectations for annual merit reviews in teaching, service, and research.
- Communicating expectations for graduate students concerning the meeting of MA or PhD program requirements; for advancement to candidacy, including the passing of qualifying exams or submission of qualifying papers; and for the creation and approval of a prospectus. Students should be provided with a clear timeline that will enable them to assess whether they are making expected progress.
- Communicating, typically in consultation with the departmental administrator, expectations for office staff members.
- Communicating clearly to faculty, staff, and student representatives which deliberations and decisions should be kept confidential and why this is important.
- Encouraging the keeping of minutes for meetings of the department and its committees, and ensuring that committee chairs or student representatives report on deliberations and decisions as appropriate—for example, student representatives should be aware of their responsibility to keep the entire student body informed, and chairs should provide assistance in making this possible.

The bottom-up forms of communication come from all members of the department in reporting to those who are responsible any problems and issues that need attention in the department. Of particular concern to a department's climate is the question of whether department and college rules and regulations are being followed by the more powerful in their relations to the less powerful. Familiar examples of this are sexual harassment and gender-based and other forms of discrimination. In a department with a poor

climate, members of the department report these kinds of problems without getting much “uptake” or action on the part of those responsible in the department, or they are too intimidated to report them at all. But other forms can include violations of basic principles of collegiality and mutual respect.

Good practices include the following:

- Communicating to faculty and those in reporting roles the rules for reporting and the mechanisms for protecting those who act as “whistle-blowers” or who bring forward complaints.
- Communicating to faculty and students their rights as members of the academic community.
- Creating ombuds roles in the department or identifying those on campus who have been assigned as ombudspersons or whose advisory roles make them exempt from mandatory rules for reporting, and communicating to everyone in the department who they are.
- Maintaining a climate page on the department website with information about where students can go for help and assistance.

### Communication in discussions

Another area of communication of great concern is, of course, the quality of communication among members of a department. Here, students and faculty alike have the right to conduct their business in an environment where their work is taken seriously and where discourse is civil, respectful, and professional. In addition to civility and mutual respect, the collegiality expected of each faculty member includes common courtesies, personal accountability, and willingness to contribute a fair share to the effective functioning of the academic unit. Faculty should defend the free inquiry of associates; show due respect for the opinions of others in departmental deliberations and in the exchange of criticism and ideas; acknowledge academic debt; strive to be objective in professional judgment of students, candidates, colleagues, and staff members; not discriminate against or harass colleagues or staff members; and respect the privacy of colleagues and staff members. Good practices include the following:

- Faculty should use professional discourse toward each other and to students, and demonstrate a high level of respect toward each other—not just politeness but respect and appreciation.
- Students and faculty should be open-minded and cultivate a wide interest in philosophical work. They should investigate and not disparage areas of philosophy other than their own or disciplines in which they do not work or with which they are not familiar.
- Criticism is an important source of progress in philosophy, but it is generally better when criticism is constructive and focused upon particular arguments and theories, rather than whole areas of the discipline or approaches to philosophy. Criticisms that could reasonably be construed as personal attacks are to be discouraged—especially when the context is public.
- Finally, a department with a good climate will also cultivate norms of respectful, constructive, and inclusive discussion in classrooms and seminars. The seminar room can be a hostile environment, and colleagues and teachers in their zeal to “do philosophy” can often be perceived to be highly judgmental. In such an environment, those who lack confidence will sometimes stop participating, to their own detriment and the detriment of the climate and productivity of the department.
- Moreover, students and faculty alike should be aware that hostile and aggressive behavior has been explicitly or implicitly seen as stereotypically male and heterosexual, with the result that such an

atmosphere may engender stereotype threat or a sense of alienation among women, those not belonging to dominant groups, and those who differ in their sexual orientation (see Antony 2009, 238–40, and Beebee 2013, §2).<sup>6</sup>

Departmental colloquia and public talks pose special challenges to the pursuit of constructive, inclusive exchange. Among good practices for chairing talks are the following:

- Take a short (3–5 minute) break between the talk and the questions. This allows those who aren't confident about their question to think it through and discuss it with colleagues, and permits speakers a moment to rest and reflect.
- Designate a chair to organize the Q&A session. The chair can keep track of those seeking to raise questions, and then attempt to allocate time and to order the sequence of questioners in such a way as to permit fully inclusive discussion. For example, the discussion chair can prioritize questions from graduate or undergraduate students at the outset of the Q&A period, or call upon those who speak up less frequently.
- Adopt (and enforce) the hand/finger distinction. A hand represents a new question, and the discussion chair can keep a list of questioners based upon the showing of a hand at any point in the Q&A. A finger may also be used at any point in the discussion, and represents a request to pose a follow-up question or to ask for clarification on a point that is highly relevant to the exchange that has just taken place. This can give people who tend not to speak the opportunity to ask smaller, "safer" questions. However, this distinction also is open to abuse, and the chair should feel empowered to decide whether some questioners are using the finger convention to monopolize discussion, and so cut short a long series of follow-ups in order to permit others to pose new questions. The chair should also not hesitate to intrude if bullying occurs, either from the podium or from the floor.
- Follow the "one question per questioner" rule. Sometimes what is presented as "a question" will in fact be an extended statement or a series of distinct questions. This, too, can lead to a monopolization of discussion by a few most vocal or influential members of the audience. A discussion chair should be able to decide when it is appropriate to move on to other questioners in order to make the discussion more open to all.
- For similar reasons, one should not automatically grant questioners a follow-up question. It should be clear that granting a follow-up is at the chair's discretion, and chairs should make an effort to be equitable in the use of this discretion, regardless of the questioner's rank or status.

For more discussion of general norms for discussions, see [Appendix A](#) to this section.

## References

Antony, L. "Different Voices or Perfect Storm: Why Are There So Few Women in Philosophy?" *Journal of Social Philosophy* 43 (2009): 227–55.

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<sup>6</sup> The text in this section is adapted from the BPA/SWIP UK Good Practice Scheme section on "Seminar chairing policy suggestions."

Beebee, H. "Women and Deviance in Philosophy." In *Women in Philosophy: What Needs to Change?*, edited by K. Hutchison and F. Jenkins. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

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# Section 7, Appendix A

## Some general norms for discussion

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Because of the distinctive importance of discussion in the development of philosophical ideas and in the training of our students, it might be helpful to have a list of some general norms that can facilitate these goals. Such a list, or a modified form of it, might be shared with students and faculty and form the basis for meetings to consider the climate for discussion in the department, its talks, and its classes and seminars. Placing the question of adopting such a set of norms on the agenda might encourage taking the question of the climate for discussion seriously.

The norms below are excerpted from a [list compiled by David Chalmers](#).

### Norms of respect

- Be nice.
- Don't interrupt.
- Don't present objections as flat dismissals (leave open the possibility that there's a response).
- Don't be incredulous.
- Don't roll your eyes, make faces, laugh at a participant, etc., especially to others on the side.
- Don't start side conversations parallel to the main discussion.
- Acknowledge your interlocutor's insights.
- Object to theses, don't object to people.

### Norms of constructiveness

- Objections are fine, but it's also always OK to be constructive, building on a speaker's project or strengthening their position. Even objections can often be cast in a constructive way.
- Even when an objection is destructive with respect to a position, it often helps to find a positive insight suggested by the objection.
- If you find yourself thinking that the project is worthless and there is nothing to be learned from it, think twice before asking your question.
- It's OK to question the presuppositions of a project or an area, but discussions in which these questions dominate can be unhelpful.
- You don't need to keep pressing the same objection (individually or collectively) until the speaker "cries uncle."
- Remember that philosophy isn't a zero-sum game. (Related version: philosophy isn't Fight Club.)

### Norms of inclusiveness

- Don't attempt to dominate the discussion (partial exception for the speaker here!).
- Raise one question per question (further questions go to the back of the queue).

- Try not to let your question (or your answer) run on forever.
- Acknowledge points made by previous questioners.
- It's OK to ask a question that you think may be obtuse or uninformed.
- Don't use unnecessarily offensive examples.

# Section 8

## Mental and Emotional Health and Safety

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### Student mental and emotional health and safety

Students at all levels are today under exceptionally high levels of stress, and incidence of anxiety, depression, and other disorders is on the rise. Such problems of mental and emotional health are often the cause of academic failure, even in highly talented students. More seriously still, suicide is now the second leading cause of death for students at college or university, and the number of incidents is increasing. The chief cause of suicide in this age group is *untreated* depression. That should be a special concern for us as educators, especially since colleges and universities often have very good facilities for the treatment of psychological distress and disorder. Twenty percent of college students say their depression level is higher than it should be, but only six percent say that they would seek help, and still fewer actually do seek help. Even students who are not depressed can find the stress and isolation encountered at colleges or universities difficult to bear, leading to behavior that can be dangerous to others as well as themselves.

One obstacle to seeking assistance, for faculty and students alike, is absence of awareness of what forms of consultation and treatment are available at the college or university, and of which services will be covered by student or faculty health plans. Providing instructors and staff with up-to-date information of this kind at the beginning of academic terms, and posting such information in a conspicuous place, not only helps students and faculty to find their way to help, but makes it clear that the institution and department are positively engaged on behalf of mental health, and this can lessen the sense of stigma or isolation.

Stigma and isolation are, however, not easily overcome. This places faculty, graduate student teaching assistants, and departmental staff in an important position, for they are often the first members of the college or university community to see signs of student distress or of unmanageable behavior, or to be approached by students seeking advice or help. Many faculty, graduate instructors, and staff are concerned that they will be violating student privacy if, when they see signs that a student is in distress or disruptive, they raise with the student the question of counseling. But the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is *not* a barrier to taking steps to provide necessary support for individual students in crisis, or to protecting the health and safety of others in the campus community.

Should a student seem to you to be in distress, or at risk of behavior dangerous to others, you are not violating privacy rights to seek to raise the issue with the student. You can encourage the student to discuss his or her situation, feelings, and concerns, and suggest college or university resources available to the student. While you should use discretion with any information the student might communicate to you, *you should not promise confidentiality*—when students discuss suicide, threaten the safety of others, or if they give you information that suggests that they or other students might be involved in sexual misconduct covered under Title IX or might pose a threat to safety inside or outside the classroom, you are under a professional (and perhaps legal) obligation to report this information to the relevant campus offices. You should therefore make clear to the student that certain actions, threats, or threatening behavior must be reported, though you should also indicate that you will share this information only with appropriate

campus offices. If the situation is not one of emergent risk, you should maintain as fully as possible privacy about whatever information the student shares.

Other good practices in such situations include the following:

- Try to help the student focus on specific aspects of the problem.
- Avoid over-easy reassurance such as, “I’m sure you’ll be all right.”
- Be accepting and respectful of what is said, allowing the student to state his or her concerns without yourself becoming defensive or combative. Respect for the student’s experience and value system does not require you to validate these, but to take them seriously.
- *Always keep in mind that your advice is not a substitute for professional counseling, and you should make this clear to the student and encourage him or her to seek additional help as needed.* To that end, help the student identify available sources of professional help.
- Work with the student to recall constructive methods he or she has used in the past to cope.
- Additionally, attempt to get the student to agree to take manageable, concrete steps to help overcome whatever academic difficulties might have arisen from his or her distress—uncompleted work, inability to study, failure to attend classes or exams, and so on—and to agree to keep you informed as these steps are taken.
- Trust your insight and reactions, but try not to rely entirely upon your own judgment. Within the limits of confidentiality, seek the opinion of those at your college or university who are in positions of responsibility for student well-being.
- Recall that part of your responsibility is the safety of students, and be sure to familiarize yourself with recommended procedures when issues of safety arise. Your college or university may have specific guidelines for conduct in such cases and for reporting, which normally can be found on the website of campus security services. You can also find a general discussion, and an example of the guidelines developed at the University of North Carolina, at the following links:
  - [Campus Security Guidelines](#)
  - [Questions and Answers about Campus Safety](#)

One important sign of psychological distress is that a student drops out of contact with a class or an advisor. When this happens, it is not a violation of student privacy to attempt to contact the student and initiate a discussion of what might explain the loss of contact. Most colleges and universities have offices of student academic affairs (such as a Dean of Students) and counseling offices able to help students who have lost contact, and it is appropriate for you to inform such offices of a student in academic difficulty or who has missed a number of classes without explanation.

Be aware that the sources of student distress are varied and often arise from concerns outside the classroom. Most colleges and universities also have offices that provide counseling and help for students who are victims of assault or harassment, or who are struggling with substance abuse, or whose family life is in crisis or disarray. Once again, the faculty, graduate instructor, or staff member might be the one individual who is able to detect signs of such problems, or to whom the student feels able to come to with his or her problem. Faculty should receive a full packet of materials on mental health resources available to

students as well as university or college guidelines on public safety and reporting. Departments are encouraged to schedule a session with relevant mental health professionals and legal staff at the college or university to provide guidance in dealing with student difficulties.

Here are some guidelines for dealing with some of the most frequent issues about student mental or emotional health:

- [Assisting the Emotionally Distressed Student \(CSU Long Beach\)](#)
- [Responding to Distressed Students \(UC Santa Cruz\)](#)

## **Faculty and staff mental and emotional health and safety**

Problems with mental health and substance abuse are by no means confined to students. However, while many of the same good practices discussed above apply when one encounters potential mental health problems among colleagues or staff, special considerations arise from the fact that faculty and staff are employees of the college or university and hold positions within an academic hierarchy in which they will be subject to performance reviews. Personal advice that would be acceptable in an informal setting, between peers, can be inappropriate if combined with a variety of institutional relationships. It therefore is often appropriate, when approached by a colleague or staff member in psychological distress or with a substance abuse problem, to encourage the individual to contact the college or university counseling services, rather than provide further advice or guidance on one's own. Most colleges and universities maintain service providers specifically trained in meeting staff needs, who will maintain confidentiality and share information only in accord with strict guidelines. Such services often provide a contact that is available even in off-hours. As before, however, if a colleague or staff member expresses imminent suicidal tendencies, or appears to pose a danger to others, or discusses behavior that constitutes sexual harassment or other forms of unlawful behavior, it is your professional responsibility to determine which authorities should receive this information and to share it with them—and to be clear with the colleague that you will be doing so. Be aware that not all mental health crises take the form of dangerous behavior toward the self or others (for a discussion of the incidence of mental health crises, and how to contend with them, see the [guide prepared by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#)).

Obviously, the present guidelines are not meant to exclude attempting to provide advice and support for colleagues or staff in distress, and discretion must be used in deciding whether the seriousness of the distress warrants taking any further action.

All faculty and staff should receive full and current information about the following:

- the services available to them, including confidential ways of contacting counseling services
- what their employment insurance will support by way of counseling or treatment for themselves or their families
- what are considered good practices and professional responsibilities in contending with a colleague or staff member who is, or appears to be, in psychological distress or a threat to others

Faculty and staff should also be aware of how to find such information on the college or university website. A generic presentation of information about available services for faculty and staff, and of some relevant guidelines, should be posted in the department. This increases the chance that faculty or staff will have

recent awareness of the services available, and manifest the commitment of the university, college, and department to providing the support needed for maintaining mental health.

Merely providing information and making services available is still not an adequate approach to the question of mental health for faculty and staff. In federal law, the Mental Health Parity Act of 1996, the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008, and the Affordable Care Act of 2010 all mandate some form of equity in the treatment of mental and physical health. But social stigma and fear that seeking mental health treatment will harm employment prospects or social standing still inhibit many from seeking the mental health care they need, or requesting medical leave for reasons of mental health. If this situation is to change, it is necessary that open discussion of mental health issues take place within departments. Inviting a college or university health professional to make a presentation at a regular departmental or staff meeting, discussing questions that might arise about physical and mental health and available services, will enhance awareness and also help communicate that the department is concerned with the mental as well as physical health of its members and does not consider such questions “unmentionable.” Similarly, making faculty and staff aware of workshops for stress management and other daily mental health challenges will help promote use of these workshops and also help make it evident that such challenges can occur in anyone’s life.

Above all, faculty and staff should be provided a robust environment of available support and protection so that they do not feel they must face psychological difficulties alone, or that it will be destructive to their career to approach a colleague, the department chair, or university counseling services about mental health or substance abuse problems.

### **Traumatic events on campus**

Sadly, incidents of violence and hate speech continue to occur on college and university campuses. For example, while it is difficult to assemble reliable statistics, various indicators suggest that there has been “an epidemic of racist incidents at campuses across the country” in recent years (Jaschik 2016). While the causes of this increase are not clear, it is clear that such incidents can be harmful to individual students, to groups, and to the climate for inclusiveness and mutual trust and respect. Similarly, acts of campus violence can leave a long wake of student distress behind them.

Typically, it will fall to larger units—the college, the university, the faculty senate, the governing board—to take the lead publicly in responding as an institution to these incidents. However, contending with them should not be left entirely to these entities. Such incidents directly affect our students and our colleagues and alter the educational environment inside as well as outside the classroom. They create special challenges, and perhaps also responsibilities, for us as philosophers who teach—philosophy should equip us to help our students in thinking about such episodes. If so, what kinds of constructive contribution can we make?

The experience most of us have had as students and teachers seldom provides us with direct experience in contending with episodes of this kind, and the body of relevant research is still fairly small. However, as instructors we are often the face of the college or university that students encounter most regularly, and we have the privilege of doing so in a context centered on knowledge and learning. And as philosophers in particular we are trained to explore controversial questions with students in a manner that promotes analytic clarity, appreciation of other viewpoints, and the investigation of fundamental normative dimensions. We do not step out of our professional or pedagogical roles if we *acknowledge* the occurrence

of such episodes, and research conducted in the aftermath of various kinds of traumatic public events, such as September 11, campus violence, and Hurricane Katrina, suggests that simple acknowledgement by instructors of these events can be helpful for students and create an opening for further discussion or for students to approach faculty outside class with their concerns (Huston and DiPietro 2007).

Classroom discussion of these traumatic matters, like classroom discussion in philosophy generally, is likely to be more constructive if the instructor provides structures and conceptual resources to keep the dialogue in focus and help it move ahead intellectually. It is important for instructors to prepare for such discussions by informing themselves about relevant issues and facts, and getting some idea of the concerns students are likely to have, but it is not the point of these discussions to decide “what actually happened” or “who was responsible.” Rather, discussions should help students achieve deeper understanding of the many dimensions of such incidents—epistemic, expressive, cognitive, social, and moral. Providing such opportunities for thinking together in a structured setting may also help counter student distress—for example, a study of post-September 11 anxiety in college students found that mental disengagement and emotional venting alike led to reduced ability to cope (Liverant et al. 2004).

- For further discussion of guidelines for discussing incidents involving hate speech or bias, see [Responding to Bias \(University of Michigan\)](#)
- For discussion of faculty responses to traumatic events on campus or beyond, see [Eye of the Storm \(Seattle University\)](#)

## Resources

Huston, T. A., and M. DiPietro. “In the Eye of the Storm: Students’ Perceptions of Helpful Faculty Actions Following a Collective Tragedy.” *To Improve the Academy* 25 (2007): 207–24.

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