



American Philosophical Association

Good Practices Guide

American Philosophical Association Good Practices Guide

Developed by the Task Force on a Best Practices Guide
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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Acknowledgments | 3 |
| Preface | 4 |
| List of Topics | 6 |
| Section 1: Communication and implementation of guidelines for good practices | 10 |
| Section 2: Contemporary forms of bias and discrimination | 12 |
| Forms of bias and discrimination | 12 |
| Explicit bias | 13 |
| Implicit bias..... | 14 |
| Contextual bias | 16 |
| Structural bias and discrimination..... | 17 |
| Contending with bias and discrimination | 18 |
| References | 19 |
| Section 3: Teaching, supervising, supporting, and mentoring students | 23 |
| Classroom teaching..... | 23 |
| Supervising dissertations, undergraduate theses, and independent or directed studies | 28 |
| Mentoring and supporting graduate students..... | 30 |
| Section 3, Appendix A: Some suggested practices in teaching philosophy | 34 |
| Section 4: Professional development of students and faculty | 37 |
| Professional development in graduate programs..... | 37 |
| Professional development in undergraduate programs | 41 |
| Formal and informal programs for professional development and mentoring of tenure-track faculty | 44 |
| Some special considerations | 45 |
| Supporting non-tenure-track (NTT) faculty..... | 46 |
| Other resources | 48 |
| Section 5: Interviewing and hiring | 49 |
| Preliminaries | 49 |
| The first-round screening interview | 50 |
| The campus visit | 52 |
| After the campus visit..... | 54 |
| Offers of employment | 54 |
| Section 5, Appendix A: Some recommended practices for phone and internet interviews | 56 |
| Interviewing institutions and individual interviewers..... | 56 |
| Placement advice for candidates..... | 58 |
| Placement officers and graduate programs..... | 59 |
| Section 5, Appendix B: Research on interviewing | 60 |
| Other resources..... | 62 |
| Sources..... | 62 |
| Section 5, Appendix C: Guidelines for interview questions | 64 |
| Section 5, Appendix D: Sample candidate evaluation sheet | 67 |
| Section 6: Social events and activities | 68 |
| Social activities and inclusivity..... | 68 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Social events and alcohol..... | 68 |
| Accessibility of social events, conferences, and other meetings..... | 69 |
| Additional resources..... | 75 |
| Section 7: Communication..... | 76 |
| Communication across levels..... | 76 |
| Communication in discussions..... | 78 |
| Electronic communication..... | 80 |
| Section 7, Appendix A: Some general norms for discussions..... | 86 |
| Norms of respect..... | 86 |
| Norms of constructiveness..... | 86 |
| Norms of inclusiveness..... | 86 |
| Section 8: Mental and emotional health and safety..... | 88 |
| Student mental and emotional health and safety..... | 88 |
| Faculty and staff mental and emotional health and safety..... | 90 |
| Responding to traumatic events on campus..... | 92 |
| Resources..... | 93 |

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Preface

Times change, and the American Philosophical Association, 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. The following are among the areas usually included in such codes of conduct:

- 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 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. In 2016, the APA board of officers adopted the [APA Code of Conduct](#).

This 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 relation to the conduct of academic life. There will inevitably be areas of overlap—some of the guidelines or recommendations within this document 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 a more accurate representation of what we might hope to achieve 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, and to suggest structures and practices that can, if in place, help promote constructive and equitable responses to these problems. 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 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.¹ Similarly, this 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 some of these challenges.

Philosophers are also members of the broader community beyond the academy, and 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.

¹ Members are encouraged to send comments and suggestions on this guide, or on related matters, to the APA at info@apaonline.org, where an archive of such suggestions will be kept.

List of Topics

We divide our suggestions into the following categories, though, of course, the suggestions often bear on more than one category, resulting inevitably in some duplication. As noted above, this list is not meant to be exhaustive, and we encourage members to make recommendations as to how this list might be supplemented.

Section 1: Communication and implementation of guidelines for good practices

What role might this guide play in stimulating discussion of significant concerns within departments, committees, or other academic units? How might such discussions enable all perspectives to be expressed? What is it for an academic unit to adopt, ratify, or adapt a set of good practices? On a continuing basis, how are faculty, staff, and students to be made aware of the recommendations of this Good Practices Guide, and of their meaning and implications?

Section 2: Contemporary forms of bias and discrimination

Central to many of the concerns and recommendations of this guide is the challenge of promoting a diverse and inclusive philosophical community characterized by mutual respect and a commitment to fairness. Bias, discrimination, and unfairness can enter into virtually any area of academic life and can take a variety of forms: explicit, implicit, contextual, and structural. Bias and discrimination are complex phenomena, and awareness of their diverse forms is important in contending with them. Recent research in psychology, sociology, and philosophy has led to the development of theoretical frameworks for thinking about bias and discrimination, frameworks that may enhance our understanding and contribute to the development of more effective practices. Each of the individual sections of this document draws to some extent upon elements of this research, but just as it is important to make use of our best-developed theories to date, it is also important to keep in mind the limitations of these theories and the controversies about their well-foundedness. In particular, recent years have seen a very active debate over experimental methodologies and reproducibility in science generally, and social psychology has been a special focus of concern. How might we as philosophers take into account both the content and the controversies of empirical research?

- **Forms of bias and discrimination**
- **Explicit bias**
- **Implicit bias**
- **Contextual bias**
- **Structural bias and discrimination**
- **Contending with bias and discrimination**

Section 3: Teaching, supervising, supporting, 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?

- **Classroom teaching**
 - Curricular design; Course content; Course structure; Grading and assessment
 - Plagiarism and cheating; Classroom atmosphere and management; Classroom community building; Institutional partners and students in difficulty; Accessibility; Events for students; Special opportunities for talented students
- **Supervising dissertations, undergraduate theses, and independent or directed studies**
 - Meetings; Feedback; Professional opportunities; Sharing resources; Progress and review; Letters of recommendation; Teaching letters
- **Mentoring and supporting graduate students**

This section also includes an appendix with further information.

- **Section 3, Appendix A: Some suggested practices in teaching philosophy**
 - Active learning; Lectures; Discussions; Professional development; Contributions to the scholarship of philosophy teaching and learning; Pedagogical activism

Section 4: Professional development of students and faculty

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 for academic positions 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, and apply to, graduate school? At the graduate level, how should faculty contribute to the professional development of students—including the possibility of “alternative academic” and non-academic careers—and how should departments conduct placement services? How might placement procedures be made more transparent and responsive to current student needs? 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?

- **Professional development in graduate programs**
- **Professional development in undergraduate programs**
- **Formal and informal programs for professional development and mentoring of tenure-track faculty**
- **Some special considerations**
- **Supporting non-tenure-track (NTT) faculty**

Section 5: Interviewing and hiring

What are some good practices with respect to the holding and conducting of recruitment interviews—*in-person or electronic, whether at conventions or in other settings?* How are questions of dual careers or disabilities to be addressed? What are some techniques that have been found to help counter bias and elicit fairer assessment of candidates? 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?

- **Preliminaries**
- **The first-round screening interview**
- **The campus visit**
- **After the campus visit**

This section also includes several appendices with further information.

- **Section 5, Appendix A: Some recommended practices for phone and internet interviews**
 - Interviewing institutions and individual interviewers
 - Candidates
 - Placement officers and graduate programs
- **Section 5, Appendix B: Research on interviewing**
- **Section 5, Appendix C: Guide to acceptable interview questions**
- **Section 5, Appendix D: Sample candidate evaluation sheet**

Section 6: Social events and activities

Social events and informal department-centered activities 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. They can also play an outsized role in shaping perceptions of belongingness or exclusion. It therefore is appropriate that questions of good practices and inclusiveness be raised in connection with such events and activities as well as those that are more official. Several particularly important areas of concern are socially gendered activities, alcohol use, accessibility, and potential for bullying or sexual harassment. What issues should be kept in mind, and what are some effective ways for individuals, groups, or academic units to reduce the risks associated with alcohol, or to avoid various forms of social or economic marginalization or exclusion, or to help ensure that events and activities are accessible to individuals with disabilities and free of bullying or harassment?

- **Social activities and inclusivity**
- **Social events and alcohol**
- **Accessibility of social events, conferences, and other meetings**
- **Accessibility and accommodation checklist**
 - Some general planning considerations
 - Planning for possible emergencies
 - More specific recommendations

Section 7: 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?

- **Communication in discussions**
- **Electronic communication**
- **Email**
- **Social media**
- **Communication on department websites**

This section also includes an appendix with more information.

- **Section 7, Appendix A: Some general norms for discussions**
 - Norms of respect; Norms of constructiveness; Norms of inclusiveness

Section 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 self or others? What sorts of conversations about or involving mental health or safety concerns should be treated as confidential, or, alternatively, should be communicated to those whose responsibility 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 individuals are more likely to receive the treatment they need?

- **Student mental and emotional health and safety**
- **Faculty and staff mental and emotional health and safety**
- **Responding to traumatic events and experiences**

This list of topics 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. Similarly, the phrase “colleges and universities” is typically meant to include community colleges as well as four-year colleges.

Section 1: Communication and implementation of guidelines for good practices

We encourage departments and other academic units to make this guide accessible to faculty and students and to hold open discussions of the issues discussed herein. Some departments have already found it useful to discuss sections of previous drafts of this guide during departmental meetings, using this as an occasion to share ideas and information about issues discussed in the guide. Such discussions can be more than informational, however. The governing idea of guides of this kind is that it is not enough simply to affirm certain values or goals—there must be a continuing commitment to developing and implementing policies and procedures that can enhance their realization. Since faculty, student population, and staff change over time, and since new challenges arise and improved research emerges, periodic revisiting of the issues discussed in this guide is recommended, as is the monitoring of policies and practices for effectiveness. Departmental and committee chairs can contribute to the effectiveness of such meetings by making 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 hiring, promotion, and graduate review are among the central concerns of these guidelines. Thought should also be given to the representation of various groups—faculty, staff, students, etc.—who might not normally be present at department or committee meetings, but who would be affected by such practices and whose perspectives and participation are important for the development, implementation, and success of the practices. Discussion of the guide and subsequent decision-making can model the central values of inclusion, transparency, and mutual respect, as well as manifesting recognition of the importance of process.

The issues with which the guide is concerned are often difficult to broach and awkward to discuss, and for this reason they may fail to be discussed in the usual array of departmental or committee meetings. Thus, posing the question of explicitly reviewing existing practices in light of the recommendations of guides such as this as can afford an opportunity for discussions and decision-making that otherwise would not have occurred. Moreover, planned discussions of this kind make it possible to raise difficult issues in a setting independent of any specific incident, grievance, or crisis, and without attributing any fault. Once such an incident has occurred or a crisis is underway, 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. Moreover, it should not fall upon those who are most concerned with these issues, or most likely to be adversely affected by them, to raise such questions—the departmental or committee chair can do so as part of the regular course of events.

As this guide will discuss below, structure is important for effective and inclusive processes and discussions. If there is to be a departmental or committee meeting, or several such meetings, at which a review of practices is to occur, it is recommended that copies of this guide or other such guides be circulated in advance, along with links to existing departmental, college, or university policies or standard practices. One recommended practice is to have the various sections of this guide reviewed and discussed first in the relevant departmental committees or in ad hoc representative groups, which then can bring recommendations to the department as a whole. This may permit a more thorough examination of issues as

well as better adaptation of recommendations to specific unit circumstances and resources. Department and committee chairs can encourage attendance at meetings, and make available agendas in advance that help insure that there will be space both for structured and open discussion, that there will be a chance for those with minority views to make themselves heard, and that action items can be introduced. It is also considered a good practice that, where possible, significant policy changes are not be adopted at the first meeting at which they are discussed, so that there can be time for reflection and wider discussion. Another recommended practice is to designate a chair or facilitator for such meetings other than the existing departmental or committee chair (see **SECTION 7: COMMUNICATION** for further suggestions about how to structure discussions to promote full and open participation). Departments and committees may also benefit from inviting a college or university ombudsperson, legal counsel, or others with relevant expertise or experience to make presentations to the group, prior to or during deliberation.

If a vote is taken on affirming, revising, or adopting guidelines, this should be recorded in the meeting's minutes, and a copy of the guidelines voted upon should be kept along with the minutes and archived by the department, whether the vote is favorable or not. Being able to refer back to such discussions and guidelines can play an important role in subsequent deliberations and in contending with incidents as they occur.

If adopted, guidelines should be made readily available to all members of the department, and newly arriving members should be given copies. Orientation of new students and faculty is an important occasion for making sure that all members are aware of unit guidelines—again, before a crisis or controversy arises of the kind such a guide is intended to help prevent. For example, a departmental Good Practices Guide can 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.

Should an incident or accusation occur, all parties should be reminded of the existence of unit guidelines and given access to them. In such cases, guidelines may be of significant value in providing structure and focus for the discussions that follow.

This Good Practices Guide is itself a work in progress, and experience is an important source of information about how to improve it. The APA has therefore sought ways of drawing upon this experience in the ongoing development of the guide through a series of public consultations via the [APA Blog](#) and discussion sessions at APA meetings. The task force hopes that the APA will continue to create opportunities and forums for members to convey relevant comments and suggestions to the APA (along with a durable record of comments and suggestions received).²

² Members are encouraged to send comments and suggestions on this guide, or on related matters, to the APA at info@apaonline.org, where an archive of such suggestions will be kept for future review.

Section 2: Contemporary forms of bias and discrimination

Since a central concern of this guide is to explore ways in which philosophy can promote equity, inclusion, and diversity within the profession, some orientation with respect to existing scholarship on questions of bias and discrimination seems appropriate as a background to the more specific discussions of particular areas of concern, addressed in subsequent sections of this guide. Any such orientation will necessarily be selective, and the current state of research will itself always be subject to change and disagreement among reasonable people. Therefore this orientation is meant simply to introduce some frameworks for thinking about bias and discrimination, and to indicate how they might relate to some of the challenges our profession faces. The APA itself has no position on these empirical issues, and instead encourages all philosophers to seek, and critically assess, a wide range of information.

As philosophers, we are professionally involved in encouraging self-understanding and the critical examination of concepts, assumptions, reasoning, and values that figure in ordinary thought and practice. We also live in a society that has been, and continues to be, divided in many ways along lines of “race,”³ ethnicity, religion, political affiliation, socioeconomic status, and gender or sexual identity—with profound effects upon the outcomes individuals experience in life. Colleges and universities have the capacity to bring together diverse groups of students and faculty, and to make a distinctive contribution to overcoming various forms of bias, discrimination, or unfairness that might be found in the larger society. But it would be a mistake to confuse this potential with reality—colleges and universities will be able to play this role only through the active efforts of those involved, and those efforts are likely to be more successful if informed by our developing empirical and philosophical understanding of these phenomena.

Forms of bias and discrimination

At the individual level, “bias” as such is a general phenomenon of cognition and affect—a matter of prior beliefs, preferences, feelings, or expectations that individuals bring to situations, and that shape how they interpret and respond to those situations. Thought and learning could hardly occur without some prior attitudes, and, in humans, such attitudes often take the form of category schemes that impute traits with causal or explanatory potential (Gelman 2009). This kind of categorization can be found across a wide array of natural and social domains, and can be implicit (in the sense of not involving self-conscious cognition or feeling) as well as explicit (Uleman et al. 2008). Categorization of this kind can be linked to stereotyping, in which some category-associated traits or behaviors are attributed to all members, ignoring individual differences within the category and actual comparative frequencies of traits or behaviors across categories. Categories and stereotypes need not have any positive or negative valence, although evaluative attitudes often are associated with them (Eagly & Chaiken 2007). Categorization, stereotyping, and evaluation can also be fine-grained, cross-cutting, and contextually-influenced, not simply tied to predominant social groupings as such (Fiske et al. 2002, Livingston & Brewer 2002). In the social domain, tendencies to categorize appear to emerge in the first year of life, and have the important feature that individuals tend to

³ Throughout this section, the term “race” is being used to designate the self-ascribed social categories typically used in public records and in social psychology research. Similarly for “Black” and “White.” For recent philosophical discussions concerning “race” and related categories or concepts, see James (2016) and Yancy (2017).

place *themselves* as well as others in categories, and begin to show preferences toward those identified as belonging to their own group (Lieberman et al. 2017).

Own-group preferences are a robust psychological phenomenon, but are not as such equivalent to *social prejudice* as this is normally understood, since own-group preferences need not involve negative stereotypes of other groups. Moreover, own-group preferences can be quite labile, shifting in focus and scope with changing contexts, and can operate without reference to, or across, other categories of social division. For example, if a discussion section is arbitrarily divided into two groups for an informal debate, members of one's own side can become objects of own-group preference even though the division is known to be arbitrary, and brings together individuals belonging to disparate social groups (cf. Billig & Tajfel 1973). Own-group preference thus can work against, or in favor of, individuals who are members of one's own social category, and the pervasiveness of own-group preference does not mean that social prejudice as we know it is inborn or unchangeable.

Moreover, social prejudice can involve unfavorable attitudes toward, or negative stereotypes about, one's own group, and various kinds of preference for socially valorized groups (see Fiske et al. 2002; Uhlmann et al. 2002; Dunham et al. 2014; though see Olson et al. 2009). For example, in the US, individuals of all ages tend to show a stronger implicit association between positive words and youth, and girls who, in fact, outperform their male peers in mathematics nonetheless tend to have a negative association between femaleness and mathematical ability and a positive association between maleness and such ability (Nosek et al. 2002). Contending with social prejudice thus is not a matter of eliminating own-group preference, but of working to encourage the development of greater and more accurate self-understanding and understanding of others—and it therefore is fully compatible with the educational and research mission of colleges and universities.

Although, as discussed above, “bias” as a term of psychological theory is not equivalent to prejudice, commonsense usage of “bias” as a matter of negative beliefs and attitudes toward particular social groups is sufficiently entrenched that we will generally follow that usage in this guide. Entrenched, too, is a sense that “bias” involves some form or degree of epistemic defect—for example, holding positive or negative stereotypes on the basis of limited or unrepresentative experience, or failure to be open to certain kinds of evidence, or partiality in the weighing evidence. The subsections that follow discuss some forms that bias can take.

Explicit bias

Explicit social bias is a matter of self-conscious positive or negative attitudes about the capacities or behaviors of social groups. While expression of explicit bias has become less common on the whole (Dovidio et al. 2017), it continues to be present to some degree in contemporary social and academic life (Craig & Richeson 2014). Prevalent social norms against bias have the effect that explicit bias, even though self-conscious, is infrequently publicly *expressed* as such, despite the fact that a significant number of individuals may be motivated to express such bias, and will do so privately or in contexts where they feel the usual social norms are not dominant (Forscher et al. 2015). While reliable statistics are hard to assemble, a number of campuses have recently experienced increased incidents of explicit expressions of biased attitudes in which the favored or disfavored groups or individuals are identified in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or immigration status (Bauer-Wolf 2017).

Confusion exists, however, over whether or when expressions of explicit bias are a form of protected speech. Colleges and universities have come under attack for failing to protect free expression of a full range of political opinions, in part because they are thought to treat expressions of explicit bias as forbidden, whatever the context. However, some ways of expressing explicit bias are indeed protected forms of speech, and treating them as such is important if colleges and universities are to maintain an open climate of discussion on campus, and to avoid the exclusion or marginalization of certain social or political points of view. Yet when such expressions take the form of verbal harassment, abuse, or threat, they lose this protection (for some criteria, see the next paragraph). In the present climate, it therefore is important for colleges and universities to affirm their commitments both to free expression and to the creation of a climate free of harassment, abuse, or threats.

Academic units are encouraged to have open discussions of the distinction between protected speech and harassment, abuse, or threat, and to develop and publicize guidelines to help members of the academic community to make these distinctions. It is not a simple matter to make these distinctions, especially given the pervasive use of online media, but open discussion of such issues can help an academic community develop appropriate norms for encouraging tolerance of speech, teaching, or scholarship involving unpopular views while at the same time providing an environment where staff, students, and faculty of all backgrounds can participate fully in the core activities of institutions of higher learning. Having had such discussions even in the absence of an on-going controversy may help individuals and the academic community as a whole to avoid the chilling effect of vague notions about permissibility, while also creating clear spaces for legitimate forms of protest and contestation. Among the criteria relevant to distinguishing protected expression from harassment include: where and in what circumstances the expressive acts take place; whether the expressive acts espouse a general viewpoint publicly or target an individual or individuals; whether the individual or individuals are targeted *as* members of a protected category (e.g., religious, racial, ethnic, gender, disability, etc.); whether the expressive acts are intensive in manner, repeated, or involve threats to retaliate if the unwelcome behavior is reported; and whether the acts create a hostile environment or undermine the possibility of equal educational access or opportunity for the individual or group targeted (see Sokolow et al. 2011). Those at public institutions should be aware that they are under stricter constitutional constraints regarding free expression than public institutions. The following are two relevant statements that indicate the challenge and importance of making the distinction between harassment and protected speech:

- [American Civil Liberties Union statement on campus speech](#)
- [APA statement on bullying and harassment](#)

Implicit bias

Recent decades have seen increased attention to implicit cognition and affect, elements of an individual's beliefs, attitudes, or preferences of which the individual is often (though not always) unaware, but which can operate in shaping thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in ways that require no conscious recognition, endorsement, or effort. While researchers vary in how they understand the notion of "implicit" thought or feeling, and how accessible "implicit" attitudes might be (for discussion, see Brannon & Gawronski 2017), it is widely agreed elements of cognition and affect not readily accessible to introspection play an important role in perception, language, choice, motor control, and social interaction—complex activities where the amount of information that must be taken in and used to adjust one's responses exceeds the capacity for self-conscious, controlled thought and decision-making. 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 products of prior deliberation and choice, and often are not open to direct introspection. Implicit affective processes, too, such as non-conscious preferences (Jost et al. 2002) or implicit empathic simulations of the mental states of others (Gutsell & Inzlicht 2010), also appear to be part of the equipment that enables us to lead the complex social lives we do. Since such implicit processes and attitudes influence what we attend to, perceive, think, remember, feel, want, and do, sometimes despite our stated intentions and avowed beliefs or principles, they pose a special problem in our efforts to live up to ideals of impartiality, fairness, open-mindedness, evidence-sensitivity, and rigor in judgment.

One heavily studied form of implicit cognition and affect has come to be known as “implicit bias”—the existence of implicit stereotypes of, and evaluative attitudes toward, socially identified groups such as races, ethnicities, gender or sexual orientations, social classes, and so on. As with other forms of implicit cognition and affect, the individual is often unaware, or only partially aware, of these attitudes, and they may be at odds with the individual’s self-consciously endorsed beliefs and values. Despite the existence of widely used measures of implicit bias, the extent to which implicit bias as measured in these ways predicts actual behavior is a matter of controversy (Nosek et al. 2005; Karpinski & Ross 2006; Greenwald et al. 2002, 2009, 2015; Oswald et al. 2013; Lai et al. 2014; Forscher et al. 2016). It is important, therefore, to distinguish between, on the one hand, a psychological “probe” intended to indicate the existence of underlying associations, such as the well-known [Implicit Association Test \(IAT\)](#), and, on the other hand, measures of actual individual behaviors in context, which typically are the result of a multiplicity of factors. While some evidence exists that individual scores on the IAT, for example, have predictive power for particular kinds of behavior in a range of settings (see below) or with respect to behavior at the aggregate level (Greenwald et al. 2015), individual scores tend to vary significantly from one test context to another. However, such a pattern of test-retest variation in the face of a significant effect-size is typical of most probes of implicit mental processes, including the well-established Stroop test and Erikson flanker task (Hedge et al. 2017; see also Ableson 1985 on the limitations of variation-based arguments), and does not in itself indicate that there is no robust underlying cognitive or affective phenomenon at work. But it does argue against using particular IAT test scores as a basis for inferring whether individuals will exhibit greater or lesser prejudice in their behavior.

A potentially valuable use of tests like the IAT is in providing individuals with a first-personal experience that encourages them to think seriously about whether they might have underlying cognitive or affective attitudes at odds with their avowed beliefs, principles, or values, and that might have an influence in their thought and action that they would hope to avoid. Studies of interventions to counter discriminatory effects have found that explicit instructions to “avoid stereotyping” or “avoid prejudice” have little effect, and may even activate stereotypical thinking (Kunda & Spencer 2003), but some interventions for which we have evidence of effectiveness use administration of the IAT as an initial step, accompanied by making the results available to the individual and providing the individual with a discussion of what such results do or do not mean (Forscher et al. 2017). Because the IAT and various other measures of implicit associations are confidentially accessible online, it is possible for individuals to take, and retake, these tests privately as part of their reflection on the challenges of overcoming bias, though they should be cautioned against using the test score diagnostically. Moreover, it is as yet unclear which aspects of taking the IAT or thinking about possibility of discrepancy between one’s avowed beliefs and one’s spontaneous or unacknowledged cognitive and affective reactions, combined with which level of motivation to avoid prejudice, contribute to the value of the IAT in encouraging effective reflection upon one’s possible biases (Hahn & Gawronski 2018).

For us as philosophers and educators, the ongoing discussions within psychology and philosophy about the reality, nature, measure, and significance of implicit bias themselves afford an important opportunity for developing critical thinking, self-reflection, and an appreciation of the methodological challenges of understanding a phenomenon as complex as bias or a mind as complex as our own (Acup et al. 2015; Brownstein et al., ms.; Brownstein & Saul 2016; Machery 2017).

Contextual bias

Studies of explicit and implicit bias often find that *context* plays an important role in mediating the relationship of measurements of potential bias to actual behavior. Some theories of discrimination therefore seek to incorporate context directly into understanding the intrapersonal and interpersonal dynamics of bias. For example, the theory of “aversive racism” grew out of earlier attempts to account for how individual attitudes and behaviors involving race have evolved in response to changing laws and social norms in the wider society (Dovidio et al. 2017; this approach has also been used to study gender- and class-oriented bias; see also Alba et al. 2002 and Craig and Richeson 2014 on responses of attitudes about race and immigration to changing real or perceived demographics). For example, the theory considered how individuals self-identifying as White who explicitly endorse prevailing anti-discriminatory policies and practices may nonetheless, when in a direct interaction with an African American individual, experience discomfort, anxiety, ambivalence, or fear in ways that contribute to discriminatory outcomes, e.g., through failures of communication (Pearson et al. 2009).

The theory of aversive racism as a form of contextual bias is of special interest for educators since an important component of its evidence comes from studies of professional interactions, e.g., of physicians with patients. These studies include assessments of explicit and implicit attitudes, but also use such objective indicators as the kind of medical care given to a patient for a particular medical condition, as well as subjective indicators such as the self-reported experience of patients with the physician. The physicians studied generally saw themselves as non-prejudiced on matters of race and scored low on explicit bias measures, but their medical practice indicated differences in treatment between African-American and White patients with similar conditions, and the scores these physicians received on measures of implicit bias were predictive of lower quality of coronary care (Green et al. 2007), shorter visits (Cooper et al. 2012), and fewer prescriptions of narcotics for pain relief after pediatric surgery (Sabin & Greenwald 2012). Moreover, when Penner and colleagues looked at interactions between non-Black physicians with a profile of low scores on explicit bias measures but higher scores on implicit bias measures, they found that these physicians offered African-American patients less information about possible side-effects and that African-American patients on average reported lower levels of satisfaction and trust in the aftermath of interactions (Penner et al. 2010; Penner et al. 2012). The debate over sources of disparities in medical treatment and outcomes across racial categories is complex, and the contextual hypothesis of aversive racism must be placed in a yet larger social context (see below), but the hypothesis suggests that achieving more inclusive ideals as teachers and colleagues requires active attention not only to one’s personal attitudes, but to the structure and qualities of interactions and to the kinds of information that may as a result be consciously or implicitly exchanged. While implicit attitudes and their psychological workings might not be readily available to introspection, they may well manifest themselves in spontaneous affective responses of which we can become aware (Gawronski 2019). Such self-understanding, combined with greater sensitivity to context, may help cue attention to the need to provide more structure to interactions in order to promote fuller communication and more equal treatment (cf. Levishina et al. 2014). (For a critical discussion of recent attempts to understand implicit bias measures situationally, see Machery 2017.)

A second suggestive link with the theory of contextual bias arises in connection with hiring and selection decisions. Measures of implicit bias were found to be predictive of favoring White over non-White candidates primarily in those cases where neither candidate's credentials were clearly superior, or where the criteria for choice were unclear (Dovidio & Gaertner 2000; Son Hing et al. 2008). This research supports recommendations made throughout this guide that encourage the development of selection procedures where criteria are explicit and agreed upon in advance, and where candidates are scored and discussed on these individual criteria, rather than evaluated in more impressionistic or holistic manner. Uhlmann and Cohen (2007), for example, found that when experimental subjects were asked to evaluate two hypothetical candidates for police chief, one a man with more street experience and less formal training, and the other a woman with more formal training but less street experience, the man was favored and street experience was cited as more important in selecting a police chief than formal training. However, when the woman was described as having more street experience and the man as having more formal training, the man was again preferred, and this time subjects cited formal training as more important than street experience. Commitment to a weighing of job criteria in advance of awareness of candidate gender eliminated this effect (see also Hodson et al. 2002).

Structural bias and discrimination

Individual adoption of principles against prejudice and attempts to contend with explicit or implicit bias, even when combined with unit-level adoption of policies and practices, is not enough to contend with all the ways in which social fault lines and disparities associated with race, ethnicity, gender, or class tend to be self-reinforcing. Structural bias or discrimination arises when large-scale factors such as the distribution of resources and the background array of social institutions, policies, and practices have the effect of perpetuating various kinds of inequality in opportunity or achievement in ways that do not depend upon the existence of discriminatory attitudes at the individual or unit level (Bonilla-Silva 1997). For example, parents who are not authorized immigrants to the US, or whose immigration status is pending, may be reluctant to interact with the school system or other sources of social support, even though their children are fully-entitled US-born citizens. Even if the teachers and other officials were free of bias toward these children, there could be a cumulative effect on the children's education or health that results in lowered opportunities (cf. Viruell-Fuentes 2012 on immigrant health).

Colleges and universities need to be especially mindful of structural factors that may yield academic disadvantage for some students—and academic advantage for others—independently of faculty or administration attitudes or local policies. Talk of a promoting a more diverse student body or faculty may fail to take cognizance of the very different levels of family resources and social capital individuals bring with them to campus, and how these differences shape academic processes and outcomes (Anderson & Hansen 2012). For example, the precarious financial situation of the families of some college students can combine with other structural factors—such as background lack of access to health insurance, child care, or public transportation—to result in crises brought on by ill health or job loss in the family that disrupt a student's life and may force an interruption in the student's studies, resulting in a loss of equal ability to access educational opportunities for reasons that may be invisible to teachers and staff.

The existence of financial aid for students does not eliminate such disparities. Departments should be aware that a given level of graduate student funding, for example, can have quite different meaning for a student whose family has ample resources versus a student whose family is financially straitened. Questions such as when the first stipend of an academic year will be paid, or whether summer funding is available, or whether

travel funds are paid in advance, can make a considerable difference to some students' ability to pursue their graduate studies as successfully as possible. Departments therefore should seek to be informed about the adequacy of levels of support, and students should have access to information about how aid will be administered and to confidential financial counseling. Careful attention to matters of funding and effective communication with students does not remove structural bias, but they might at least help to avoid aggravating its effects.

Overcoming structural bias or discrimination typically takes efforts at many levels (Haslanger 2015), and recognition of the existence of structural factors is an important step toward understanding how discrimination works in the actual lives of our students and colleagues. Commitment to reducing discrimination or lack of equal access on a small scale thus requires commitment to working for larger-scale changes as well. In the end, overcoming bias and discrimination is not a matter of structure *versus* attitudes, but of structure *and* attitudes.

Contending with bias and discrimination

What is known about effective ways of contending with bias? Much less than we might hope. However, because explicit and implicit social cognition and affect are profoundly shaped by learning mechanisms (Baron & Banaji 2006; Castelli et al. 2008), similar mechanisms may also help in unlearning bias (Rudman et al. 2001; Devine et al. 2012; Forscher et al. 2017; though see also Forscher et al. 2016). The most effective ways of unlearning bias seem to involve bringing members of diverse groups together in settings in which they engage in joint projects where each makes a contribution (Dasgupta 2013). Colleges and universities are well situated to provide such experiences, which can fit naturally into their teaching and research mission. But success in these efforts requires active steps—simply bringing together a diverse student body without such structured occasions for bridging across social divides can have the effect of triggering and reinforcing, rather than challenging and reducing, negative stereotypes (Rae et al. 2015).

Moreover, contending with bias and discrimination should not be thought of entirely in terms of affecting attitudes. Discrimination is a matter of practice as well as attitudes, and changes in practice can reduce differential treatment or outcomes in admissions, hiring, and retention. Here are some practices or interventions that have shown promise in reducing discrimination:

- Taking active steps to diversify the pool of candidates at every level of recruitment (van Ommeren et al. 2005).
- Requiring those on hiring, promotion, and graduate admission committees to attend workshops on contending with explicit and implicit bias (see Jackson, Hilliard, and Schneider 2014) and inviting faculty with expertise in the various dimensions of bias and discrimination to make a presentation at a department meeting.
- Developing and using explicit criteria of selection or evaluation for deliberations about hiring, promotion, graduate admissions, fellowships, recognitions, etc.—seeking 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 & Baltes 2002; Uhlmann & Cohen 2005), and having available full applications, rather than relying heavily on letters of recommendation (Schmader et al. 2007).
- Asking for explicit justifications for rejecting candidates (Foschi 1996).

- Encouraging awareness—in assessments of the teaching of faculty or graduate students, or in evaluating the teaching dossier of candidates for positions—of typical patterns of variation in student comments for male vs. female instructors, or for instructors perceived as heterosexual vs. gay, or for instructors belonging to underrepresented groups in the discipline (this involves understanding a mixture of attitudes rather than unidimensional discrimination; see, e.g., Ewing et al. 2003; Waldo & Kemp 1997).
- Instituting a review process for letters of recommendation used in placement, and encouraging greater awareness in faculty of some of the ways letters of recommendation can reflect, or encourage, implicit bias (Morgan et al. 2013).
- Encouraging a systematic review of the ways in which departmental handling of financial questions may adversely affect students from relatively disadvantaged backgrounds.

For more discussion of relevant research, and of methods that can be effective in countering 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 3: Teaching, supervising, supporting, and mentoring students

Community college, college, and university campuses are among the locations in our society where there is the greatest diversity of representation of groups assembled together for shared purposes and for a significant length of time. Yet this does not guarantee that the educational experience will be effective or inclusive for all of those present on our campuses. What sorts of practices have been found to promote effective and inclusive teaching, and how are these connected to issues about the structure and content of the curriculum, of classes and discussions, and of other forms of instruction such as supervision and mentorship? How can instructors provide in their classrooms sufficient structure and support to sustain clear and high expectations for all students while also fostering respectful exchange of diverse opinions and perspectives? How can philosophy reach out to non-traditional or underrepresented groups of students? In what ways can students be encouraged and enabled to make their own contribution to creating and maintaining their learning community? With these and other questions in mind, here are some practices for faculty and graduate instructors that have helped promote reflective choices about diverse aspects of teaching.

Classroom teaching

While the teaching of philosophy is more than a sum of parts, it can be useful to consider the elements of teaching and teaching programs, and the distinctive ways they can promote or hinder the attainment of our goals in teaching along with the learning experience of students. Among these elements are the following:

Curricular design

The shape and content of a curriculum, whether by design or not, tends to be seen by teachers and students as conveying information about what is deemed to be most important, central, or foundational in the field, and what is peripheral. Similarly for questions about how philosophy might connect with other areas of inquiry, or about the role of philosophy in helping students develop skills and critical abilities that can contribute to their learning generally, or about philosophy's relation 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 incorporating authors of diverse backgrounds as well as philosophical content from diverse cultural traditions into syllabi and throughout the course. This may involve adding non-traditional topics, incorporating secondary literature, or inviting guest lecturers, and treating these contributions as integral to the course as whole. But this should be done with critical self-awareness: for instance, non-Western philosophical traditions often do not fit neatly into traditional Western philosophical categories, so including them can be more complicated than simply adding content. Instructors are encouraged to read widely in the relevant areas, to consult with colleagues or specialists working in these fields, and to attend panels and conferences devoted to these

areas. Departments can also reach out to other departments and programs, invite area specialists to speak, and explore the possibility of making appointments in these areas.

Resources for diversifying course content include the following:

- The APA's [Underrepresented Philosophers Directory \(UPDirectory\)](#)
- The APA's [Diversity and Inclusiveness Syllabus Collection](#)
- [Society for Teaching Comparative Philosophy](#)
- [The Deviant Philosopher](#)
- [American Society for Aesthetics Diversity Curriculum Grants](#)

When instructors remain current in their subject areas and strive to explore new areas, this contributes to enriching undergraduate instruction and better prepares undergraduates for subsequent coursework or careers. Similarly for remaining current with pedagogical research on effective teaching and learning, both within a given area and in such general areas as learning how to interpret text and write papers. Discussing teaching methods and coordinating content with colleagues in philosophy or other disciplines can also help foster undergraduate learning beyond individual classes. All of this takes time, and departments and other academic units are encouraged to provide various forms of support for such efforts, and to help faculty and graduate instructors to identify other sources of support. Finally, in choosing course content, instructors should be mindful of the financial burdens placed on students, e.g., the expense of assigned books, and should work with libraries or other resources on campus to help ensure equitable student access to course materials, while also helping students become aware of these resources.

Course structure

While some courses by their nature are flexible and open-ended, many students come to philosophy courses without a clear idea of what to expect, or of what will be expected of them. It typically is useful, then, for instructors to develop clear objectives for their courses, and to communicate these to students at the start of the term and on the course syllabus and website. Similarly for any assumptions about what skills or disciplinary content the course will assume. This will help students to make informed choices and to understand why the course and its assignments take the form they do. When a course requires flexibility or adaptiveness, instructors can help students stay oriented by making the changes clear to students and maintaining an accessible up-to-date syllabus.

By varying the types of assignments used, working to make writing assignments relevant and level-appropriate, and taking steps to ensure that tests are based upon the material students have been asked to master in the course, instructors can help minimize the extent to which differences in the backgrounds students bring to class will affect their overall performance. Some instructors have had success using practice exams, practice problem sets, and sample papers to aid students in figuring out what kinds of study or effort is required to succeed, and to level the playing field between those with different educational backgrounds. At the same time, instructors are also encouraged to be open to alternative ways in which students can establish that they meet course prerequisites, or can enrich their backgrounds outside of class in order to master course material.

One successful strategy is to scaffold course assignments, especially in introductory courses, 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 students to writing centers and support elsewhere in the college or university.

By employing active learning techniques—e.g., the use of small-group discussions, student presentations and debates, role-playing, team-based exercises, experiential learning, multiple media of instruction, and ungraded assignments evaluated by fellow-students—instructors can make the classroom accessible to students with a variety of learning styles, and can also gain valuable feedback about how well students are doing or what they might need in order to succeed. Many have found that active techniques also tend to encourage greater participation in subsequent classroom discussions and to increase student willingness to approach instructors, e.g., in office hours.

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

SEE ALSO: SECTION 3, APPENDIX A: SOME SUGGESTED PRACTICES IN TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Grading and assessment

Grading is most effective when performed in a timely manner: a reasonable goal is within two weeks of submissions or examinations. Whenever the nature of the assignment permits it, grading should be performed under a veil of student anonymity (even though, in practice, complete anonymity might not be possible). Students may be asked to provide detachable cover sheets, use student ID numbers, or submit using online classroom learning platforms. Providing distinct and clearly specified criteria (e.g., a rubric, especially in introductory courses), publicized in advance and explained to students, can be especially helpful to students without extensive background in philosophy or similar courses. Clearly specified criteria also help instructors to make clear both high expectations and their confidence in students’ ability to succeed through continued effort and practice in meeting these criteria. Comments that indicate strengths as well as weaknesses, and that suggest concrete ways to improve, can increase the learning value of assigning papers. When working with graduate student instructors or undergraduate student preceptors, faculty may want to calibrate grading across sections of the class, and to discuss ways of providing constructive feedback to students throughout the course.

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 discuss with students policies for encouraging wider participation: for instance, some instructors have had success with brainstorming and collectively agreeing to a set of “ground rules” on the first day of class.

Instructors are encouraged to take some time at the start of the term to clarify the roles and responsibilities of students. For example, what is expected with regard to class attendance, preparing for class, completing assignments, respecting fellow students in discussions, participating in course surveys, and adhering to academic integrity in their work? For written assignments, instructors are encouraged not to take for granted that students understand proper citation practices, and to provide them with appropriate links to sources of proper citation practices and to institutional guidelines for academic integrity, drawing attention

to these questions in class. Instructors are also encouraged to explain their own commitments with regard to, e.g., fair and timely grading, respect for students, ensuring accessibility and accommodation, and availability outside of class.

It is also a good practice to spend some time at the beginning of the course giving students an opportunity to share information that might be relevant for supporting their learning. For example, instructors should make an effort to learn their students' preferred names (and pronunciation), while also clarifying how they would like other students to refer to them. It is particularly important to respect students' pronouns. Some instructors ask students to turn in questionnaires where they may privately indicate their level of preparation, learning or other disabilities, special needs, naming preferences and pronunciation, and pronouns. By circulating the questionnaire to all students, and collecting them from all students, instructors can avoid singling out students or placing the burden upon individual students to initiate the providing of such information.

Monitoring and understanding discussion dynamics is a complex but key part of effective instruction, and may include the following: 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 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. Anonymous mid-course evaluations can be helpful for understanding discussion dynamics and the experience of individual students. Instructors are encouraged to model philosophical dialogue that is critical but constructive in the service of shared aims of greater understanding, e.g., in which people's views are treated charitably, their contributions are acknowledged, and their ideas (not their ability or character) are under evaluation.

Departments can provide faculty and graduate instructors with valuable feedback by instituting some form of regular teaching observations, either by peers or by instructional specialists at the institution. The pedagogical value of such observations will be enhanced if they are used for formative purposes and not exclusively for the summative assessment of instructors.

The Minorities and Philosophy (MAP) network offers a collection of resources on their website: ["Best Practices for the Inclusive Philosophy Classroom"](#)

SEE ALSO: SECTION 7, APPENDIX A: SOME GENERAL NORMS FOR DISCUSSIONS

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 can encourage a greater sense of community in the classroom by ensuring (in classes where this is feasible) that they and the students all know each other's names and pronouns, and working together with students to generate a common list of expectations and norms for classroom discussion, which can be revisited and updated periodically. Active learning techniques can also be used in ways to promote community and to ensure that students work with classmates outside their own self-selected groups.

Institutional partners and students in difficulty

Writing centers, libraries, academic support centers, women’s centers, multicultural centers, and centers providing academic support for student athletes can contribute importantly to the success of students from diverse backgrounds. Instructors should familiarize themselves with the various institutional resources available to students, make students aware of how to learn about such resources, and encourage their use. Most institutions also have procedures instructors should follow when they believe a student is in academic difficulty, and academic advisors are often a good source of initial consultation. Department and other academic units should provide such information to instructors at the beginning of each term, since procedures and services often change. Instructors may also need to be aware that the sources of a student’s difficulty with course material can be complex, and can reflect disadvantages in the student’s background or ongoing challenges owing to financial, familial, or medical difficulties. Making contact with a student in difficulty to invite the student to come to office hours or encourage the student to consult with their advisor can help the instructor understand the student’s situation and help the student make contact with appropriate services before the difficulties become severe. Such contact can also provide an opportunity for the student and instructor to work together to develop a roadmap for returning to good standing in the course. Instructors should also be informed of their responsibilities when they have reason to think that a student may be a danger to themselves or others, or may be subject to some form of harassment.

SEE ALSO: SECTION 8: MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Accessibility

It is a good practice when writing syllabi and announcements to place emphasis upon the commitment to an affirmative principle of ensuring that all students have full access to the course and its content, as opposed to merely “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 often are also able to give instructors 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, and so on. Departments and other academic units should provide instructors with information about what is considered a reasonable arrangement to accommodate religious holidays, lactation needs, caretaking responsibilities, and student work and athletic activity, as well as language difficulties students may experience. Instructors who do not receive such information are encouraged to request it, and to be sure that their own accommodations align with shared guidelines. Instructors should strive to cultivate relationships of trust with their students so that appropriate arrangements can be made that are both respectful and consistent with student responsibility for course material and assignments. In some cases, students may make requests (e.g., to record lectures) owing to disabilities they prefer not to disclose, and consultation with student disabilities services may provide a way of protecting student privacy with respect to their fellow students.

SEE ALSO: ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATION CHECKLIST

Events for students

Events that are not a part of the regular curriculum may still play an important role in student learning (e.g., departmental talks, undergraduate philosophy clubs, and discussion groups). Departments should attempt to organize events in such a way that it is not expensive to participate in them. For instance, if local events such as conference dinners and outings to coffee shops or bars are not paid for by the department, organizers should take into consideration that some venues could exclude poorer or underage students from participating.

Special opportunities for talented students

Instructors may be able to help highly talented students to identify co-curricular opportunities that enable them to deepen their engagement with philosophy, e.g., participation in a student journal, submitting work for publication, independent study, undergraduate research projects, and attending conferences and philosophy summer camps. These opportunities can be especially important for talented students who come from backgrounds in which they have not had such opportunities in the past, though, of course, all talented students should be encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities.

Supervising dissertations, undergraduate theses, and independent or directed studies

Supervision is a core part of the teaching of philosophy but can pose problems owing to a lack of formal structure or clear expectations. The APA recommends that faculty strive to maintain principles of transparency, accountability, and respect for the students they supervise. Faculty are encouraged to work with students early on to develop a framework with clear and explicit expectations for student and faculty alike. Advisors and advisees 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 student reviews and discussions of special fellowships. Some find helpful the formula that an advisor should be "partial to the student but impartial to the student's work," encouraging students as they develop their ideas, but also drawing upon the advisor's experience and perspective to guide students toward feasible projects, to give students an accurate idea of how their work can be improved, and to help students understand the relation of their projects to the current state of the discipline. Here are some general guidelines, which obviously need to be adapted to special situations:

Meetings

Faculty supervisors and their advisees should discuss in advance a mutually acceptable and pedagogically effective schedule of meetings, as well as an understanding about what is normally expected of both in preparation for a meeting. If the student is in residence, meetings should take place no less than once or twice per term, but every two or three weeks is a common norm, especially in the case of undergraduate advisees or early in the development of a dissertation project. In some cases, meeting as often as once a week may be appropriate. If the student is not in residence, some arrangement should be made to coordinate expectations and keep current information about how to contact one another.

Feedback

Whenever possible, feedback on student work should be timely, and possible delays should be anticipated and explained to the student. Faculty have many demands upon their attention, and students generally

should be encouraged to send reminders if a deadline is approaching, or if feedback is unusually delayed without explanation.

Professional opportunities

In addition to the regular work of advising, faculty can enhance student development by keeping aware of departmental or alternate sources of support, travel funding, etc., for students, and recommending that students apply when appropriate. Students may also need encouragement to consider submitting their work to journals or conferences, to apply for summer institutes or workshops, to attend talks and seminars, or to engage in reviewing and networking. When appropriate, faculty should introduce students to colleagues and visitors. One potentially valuable practice is for faculty to invite students to attend conferences with them, and co-author or co-review papers. 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 and expertise

Faculty are encouraged to share with their students such resources as journals, email lists, newsletters, calls for papers, blogs, and other electronic resources. Students may be unfamiliar with many resources, or unable to assess the potential value or reliability of resources, and faculty can take the initiative in providing information and guidance. At the same time, faculty should apprise students of what sorts of questions or appeals are appropriately directed elsewhere.

Progress and review

Departments should establish formal procedures and criteria for reviewing the progress of their graduate (and majoring) students. These procedures and criteria should be explained at the beginning of the program, and reviewed again at the beginning of each academic year, allowing students time to prepare for deadlines.

Letters of recommendation

Letters of recommendation should be honest and informed, and faculty asked to write letters should feel they can decline if they will not be able to write a positive or informative letter. 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 or create bias. When students are applying for jobs, placement directors usually review faculty letters for consistency and accuracy in the information they provide 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 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.

SEE ALSO: SECTION 2: CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF BIAS AND DISCRIMINATION

Teaching letters

Evidence of teaching effectiveness is an important part of the dossier, and departments should have processes that enable 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 who write teaching letters for students should be made 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.

SEE ALSO: SECTION 2: CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF BIAS AND DISCRIMINATION

Mentoring and supporting 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. Here are some further guidelines:

- 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 a particular student or in a particular situation. Faculty 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 take initiatives to get to know their students and their students' circumstances and background, as well as any special needs or concerns students might have.
- Mentors should remember that they might be taken as professional and personal role models. By telling mentees of their own mistakes or disappointments, and how these were overcome, they may encourage students to experiment and help students cope with mistakes and challenges. An ideal mentoring relationship is reciprocal, as each learns from the other. However, mentors should be careful to respect boundaries—a rough test sometimes used: 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. In allocating mentorships, it should be taken into account that personal relationships between mentor and mentee can undermine some of the functions of mentorship and be a source of inappropriately privileged access to departmental information and resources.
- Mentors are encouraged to actively provide occasions in which students can raise concerns about their professional lives, or about how their professional lives intersect with their personal responsibilities or well-being, or about matters of financial or intellectual need. Making such

occasions a routine part of advising mentees can minimize the extent to which they might be felt to intrude upon student privacy or autonomy.

SEE ALSO: SECTION 8: MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Mentors can help students to identify forms of internal or external support or recognition. Often these possibilities do not come to the attention of students in the normal course of events, so it is a good idea for mentors to review with students on an annual or term basis what such possibilities for support or recognition might be. Included in this review can be possibilities for submitting student work or proposals for conferences, publication, or grants.

Whether or not a department decides to institute formal mentoring relationships as well as other forms of student advising, departments should periodically revisit whether the overall structure of supervision and oversight for its graduate students is adequate, or functioning to meet existing needs. Program reviews and retreats can also be an occasion for such reflection. Keep 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. Here are a few guidelines:

- In cases (for example, in the first years of graduate study) where advisors are assigned, departments should pay attention to student needs in making such assignments.
- It is a good practice for programs to have explicit procedures for finding and changing advisors, and to bring these procedures to attention of faculty and students alike on a regular basis, in addition to posting these procedures on a departmental website.
- Students can benefit from 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 offers 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 recognizing and rewarding good supervising and mentoring, by making faculty contribution in these areas a component of faculty reviews, and nominating faculty for relevant awards or course relief. 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 formal 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 faculty should be made aware of these policies on a regular 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. Faculty who are mandatory reporters of complaints of harassment or discrimination should be aware of this role and what it involves.

- Some useful sources on advising and mentoring include the following:
 - The National Science Foundation (NSF) ADVANCE program at the University of Michigan, charged with increasing the representation and participation of women in STEM careers, has published two reports: [Giving and Getting Career Advice: A Guide for Junior and Senior Faculty](#) and [Creating a Positive Departmental Climate: Principles for Best Practices](#).
 - The University of Michigan Rackham Graduate School has published guides on mentoring for [faculty](#) and [graduate students](#).

Financial support

Departments should be mindful of the financial burdens faced by many graduate students, and the limited family resources some may have. In addition to providing an adequate living stipend (e.g., a stipend that takes into account the local cost of living and does not require students to take out loans in order to pursue their studies), departments are encouraged to take the considerations into account:

- Applying for graduate school can be expensive due to application fees and the costs of submitting official test scores, e.g., for the GRE and TOEFL. Institutions are encouraged to explore such steps as elimination of application fees, application fee waivers, elimination of test requirements, or acceptance of unofficial test scores.
- Graduate students often receive general information about the financial package that they would receive, but it is often unclear when they will receive their first paycheck, what fees they might be responsible for, when their summer stipends will be paid, and so on. These matters can pose real hardships for students who are not wealthy, cannot rely on familial support, have higher expenses owing to dependents or medical conditions, must travel from abroad, or lack access to credit cards. Departments should routinely make this kind of detailed financial information available to students as early as possible.
- Some departments make travel and research funding available on a case-by-case basis, without clear guidelines as to how much money each individual may request or can expect to receive. Such uncertainty can discourage students with fewer financial resources from making plans or commitments to attend conferences and other professional events. Thus, departments should be as transparent and equitable as possible in establishing rules and criteria for the allocation of such funding, and for opportunities to request additional funds. Departments should also help students become aware of relevant external grant and fellowship opportunities, and encourage them to consult the APA website for APA and non-APA sources of support. Since some of these sources of support require an extended application process, bringing relevant possibilities for external support to the attention of students at various points in their graduate career is desirable.
- Many institutions expect graduate students to pay up front for conference travel and expenses and be reimbursed later, and this may result in long waiting periods between making a payment and receiving funds. This disadvantages low-income students and faculty, along with international

students who may not be initially eligible for US credit cards. Departments are strongly encouraged to offer direct payment of travel expenses, and to monitor how long it takes to process reimbursements. Consider developing workarounds if reimbursement times are longer than a month.

- If there are opportunities for graduate students to earn extra money, e.g., by additional teaching or grading, these opportunities should be allocated through procedures that are fair and transparent, and details of remuneration should be clearly established in advance.
- Some institutions have graduate student labor unions that collectively bargain for working conditions, job security, higher salaries, and health benefits, and which have established grievance procedures for overwork, workplace harassment, and so on. In such contexts, departments are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the union contract, to ensure that their policies are in line with the contract, and to advise students concerning available union services or procedures.

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 an ombudsperson or persons should be made with an eye toward this distinctive role. There can be an advantage in students having this additional path 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. 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. The existence of an ombudsperson apart from the usual system of advising or administration thus can mean that students voice concerns that otherwise would go unheard. Students should be aware of the ombudsperson(s), and how they can be contacted, even outside of normal office hours.

However, if a department establishes an ombudsperson, 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 intra-departmental 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 3, Appendix A: Some suggested practices in teaching philosophy

The following additional guidelines for effective teaching of philosophy were drafted by the APA Committee on Teaching Philosophy and are reproduced here. Other resources on teaching philosophy are available on their website: [APA Committee on Teaching Philosophy](#).

Active learning: Good teachers employ active learning techniques, which include in-class exercises such as the following (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. Students respond 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 2- or 3-minute opportunity to express a point of view on a given topic, or passes, while others listen. This activity elicits a range of viewpoints and builds 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 a randomly assigned partner. By explaining conceptual relationships to partners, tutors are forced to develop their own understanding.

Lectures: 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.

Discussions: Good teachers 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-playing exercise. 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 2–3 hands before calling on the first person. Good instructors also typically encourage wider participation by, e.g., calling on people in order across the room, drawing names randomly, and 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.

Professional development: Not all philosophers naturally excel at teaching, but, like any subfield of philosophy, teaching 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. And campus teaching centers can provide resources on the latest innovations and best practices in teaching.

- The American Association of Philosophy Teachers (AAPT) organizes development sessions at APA meetings as part of the Teaching Hub, as well as a biennial conference. At these events, philosophers can participate in interactive workshops on philosophy teaching and learning.
- Many publications, such as the [“The Teaching Workshop”](#) on the APA Blog and the [APA Newsletter on Teaching Philosophy](#), provide active forums in which philosophers can reflect upon their own teaching and share their experiences.
- On questions of the allocation of effort and time management, some faculty have found useful Robert Boice, *Advice for New Faculty Members: Nihil Nimus* (Pearson, 2000).
- 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: Philosophy 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 in this area include the following:

- [Teaching Philosophy](#)
- [AAPT Studies in Pedagogy](#)
- [Journal of the American Philosophical Association](#)

Pedagogical activism: Recognizing the value and importance of teaching requires active support, especially at universities that emphasize research over teaching, on both individual and institutional levels.

Individual instructors should support their institution's efforts to improve faculty teaching and student learning by attending development events, mentoring less experienced teachers, and making the discussion of teaching a central part of department culture. Departments should support teaching by rewarding excellent teaching, developing meaningful tenure and promotion standards for good teaching, and advocating for the fair and equal treatment of non-tenure-track instructors, who are often responsible for teaching of large, and sometimes vulnerable, student populations.

Section 4: Professional development of students and faculty

Professional development is a concern at all levels of college and university life.

Professional development in graduate programs

The APA's guidance documents for the academic job market, listed below, provide a comprehensive discussion of many aspects of the placement process. This discussion of good practices is intended as a supplement to those documents, with special focus on questions of diversity.

- [Guidance for Philosophy Job Seekers](#)
- [Guidance for Placing Departments](#)
- [Best Practices for Hiring Departments](#)

Professional development plays an increasing role in graduate student success, especially in the academic job market, 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:

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

The job search process itself can be difficult, and encouraging an atmosphere of support and engagement by the faculty as a whole can help make the process more bearable, and students more likely to succeed. Part of this support is to show respect for the diverse array of potential positions, academic and non-academic, that are available to students. Philosophy departments, faculty, and graduate students are encouraged to take the following steps:

- Start job market discussions early. Invite all graduate students to meetings that intended to discuss key aspects of the application process (e.g., teaching portfolios, cover letters). Departments can also give students more insight into the hiring process by allowing graduate student representatives to attend and vote in hiring meetings, sit on search committees, and so on.
- Host professionalization events that describe concrete strategies and tips for submitting, presenting, and publishing work, e.g., for journals or conferences. Students can be encouraged to come to these events with questions—perhaps through an anonymous submission process. More advanced students with experience on the job market can be invited to share their own experience and insights.

- Be open to all careers, including non-academic and “alt-ac” positions. Treat such careers as one of several legitimate options, rather than a form of failure. (Resources on non-academic and “alt-ac” jobs may be available to departments through their college of university career offices.)
 - Faculty should be aware that bias against graduate students who opt for careers beyond the professoriate is a serious concern and may take subtle and implicit forms. Such bias can also be present within the graduate student body itself, and countering this may require that faculty give prominence to the discussion of a variety of potential career paths at graduate student orientation and other regular meetings. Some departments have had success in inviting graduates who have gone on to careers outside the academy to make presentations to the department or to meet with current students or job-seekers.

SEE ALSO: SECTION 2: CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF BIAS AND DISCRIMINATION

- 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 one’s own institution. 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 (within and beyond academia) and larger trends in higher education, and be frank about the ups and downs of the job market.
- Encourage students to explore and build relationships with faculty and students at neighboring institutions, including institutions of diverse kinds serving diverse constituencies. This will assist students in preparing job materials for wide and varied academic job searches.
- Encourage students to consider applying for university or national dissertation-completion fellowships. The experience of applying for such fellowships can provide an early setting in which students and faculty can review readiness for entering the job market, set deadlines for the completion of dossier materials, and refine and explain written work for novel audiences. Ideally, departments will maintain up-to-date lists of possible dissertation fellowship opportunities, along with relevant information about to how to apply and samples of applications from previous years.
 - The APA maintains a [list of societies and organizations that grant fellowships](#) of interest to philosophers.
- Foster a community of support. Encourage student-to-student mentoring, e.g., by former or more experienced students. Such mentoring can be supported by departments through helping to match mentors and mentees, maintaining a database of placement information, including sample application materials from former students and placement records over time, providing funds for mentors and students to have coffee or meals together, notifying mentors of institutional training sessions directed at mentors and encouraging their attendance, and so on. Mentors can make sure mentees know that they are available for advice and support, help keep (other) faculty aware of ongoing progress, and direct mentees to relevant networks or sources of expertise and knowledge (e.g., others’ experience of the market, the diversity of academic institutions, the nature of higher

education in other countries). 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.

- Schedule job market workshops for students in the spring so that students will be able to make better use of the summer months. All students who are thinking about going onto the academic job market—or who are simply interested in finding out about the job search process—should be invited to attend. The workshops should provide a timeline for job-seekers to prepare writing samples and other application materials so that they can get their work to faculty in time for review and revision by the early fall.
- Offer financial support, where possible, for dossier services and travel—even small amounts of support can make an important difference for students whose financial resources are limited. Students should be aware early on of the significant financial burden they can incur on the job market (through travel, paying for dossier services, etc.), 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 begin their job searches should be encouraged to become members of the APA, and perhaps other professional associations as well, and departments should consider making funds available to help subsidize such memberships. (The APA offers bulk membership discounts for departments wanting to provide membership for their students and/or faculty.)
- Encourage job seekers to familiarize themselves with the APA's policies, statements, and publications, particularly as these relate to job-seeking. In addition to [PhilJobs: Jobs for Philosophers](#), students should be encouraged to consult *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Inside Higher Ed*, email listservs, and other publications and online sources with information about job postings, including positions in other disciplines, in university administration, or 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.
- Be familiar with the special issues that candidates from underrepresented groups or 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 make it possible 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 and responsibilities for reporting problems in these areas, should they arise.
- Encourage placement directors to meet early and often with students, and to make clear to job seekers 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.) Many of the skills and tasks required for participation in the academic 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. Maintaining a collection of job search materials (e.g., timelines, tips, strategies, sample dossiers) that is accessible to all graduate students can enable students to acquire vital information through their own research and to manage some of the uncertainties associated with the prospect of eventually going on the job market.

- 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. 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.
- Consider how a placement director’s greater familiarity with some students than others might have a biasing effect when it comes time to advise potential candidates in the job search process. Placement directors should therefore strive insofar as possible to use uniform procedures for all students and to base advice to candidates on known, professionally relevant criteria. Placement directors are officers of the department and responsible for assuring that personal information on matters of race, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, political conviction, national origin, age, disability, actual or potential marital status, and actual or perceived medical condition not play a role.
- Consider as well possible benefits of creating a team of placement mentors, ideally representing a range of sub-disciplines, each of whom has special responsibility for several of the students on the market. In such a scheme, which some departments have used with success, placement mentors 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.
- Take into account the fact that most job interviews are now conducted electronically, and thus make available to students resources that can enable them to have effective, professional electronic interviews. This may include arranging practice video interviews, providing information about video interviewing, and making suitable spaces available for such interviews to take place, either in the department or the academic unit, equipped with high-speed connections, freedom from distractions, and so on.

SEE ALSO: SECTION 5, APPENDIX A: SOME RECOMMENDED PRACTICES FOR PHONE AND INTERNET INTERVIEWS

Candidates and their families may come under special psychological pressures during the job search process, and departments should make information available about resources in the college or university, or in the wider community, for practicing anxiety and stress management and for counseling, and support. Providing such information to all candidates early on as a matter of course can avoid various concerns about privacy or stigmatization. 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 their new positions, or move themselves or their families to a new city. 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 difficult transitions.

Information about placement services and accurate and complete data on past placement should be available to prospective students as well as students enrolled in the program. Such records should include information concerning initial enrollment, attrition, and employment histories extending beyond the first year post-degree (when such information can be obtained). Some programs provide such information in an anonymized manner (though identifying employing institutions), while others list students and advisors by name. Note, however, that student permission must be obtained for any such use of their names. Since students might be reluctant to refuse, and the rise of social media has made it problematic in general to provide identifying personal information on the web, anonymizing the information may be a preferable approach.

SEE ALSO: SECTION 5: INTERVIEWING AND HIRING

Professional development in undergraduate programs

It goes without saying that professional development is a concern for undergraduates as well as graduate students, and philosophy serves in many ways to enhance not only the skills of individuals who do not go on to graduate study in philosophy, but their quality of life. 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*](#), and the ["Who Studies Philosophy?" webpage and poster series](#).)

Undergraduates today are experiencing unusually high levels of anxiety, whether about their many commitments, their academic performance, or their futures beyond college. Departmental advising can play a role in encouraging students to think realistically about their programs and course selection, and departments can hold or sponsor accessible, open discussions for their undergraduates in which realistic information is provided about post-graduate study and ways in which study in philosophy can contribute to their intellectual and professional development. One way of encouraging such discussions is to invite back former philosophy students who have gone on to a variety of areas of study or careers, and who can speak from personal experience about what philosophy has meant for them. Many departments also maintain active communication with former students, through regular newsletters, departmental Facebook pages and other forms of social media, or by working through the college or university alumni office. Loyalty to philosophy is often strong, even in those who have gone on to careers beyond academic philosophy, and a strong alumni base can contribute vitally to the support for a department and provide potential resources for current undergraduates.

While only a fraction of undergraduates who take courses in philosophy will go on to do graduate work in philosophy, still, this is the life-blood for the next generations of academic philosophers. Undergraduate teaching and advising can play a critical role by providing encouragement and guidance to college-level students for whom graduate study and perhaps an eventual career in academic 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 of 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, what financial support will look like, 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, and what acceptance rates are typical. The diversity of graduate programs, and of possible positions in philosophy, can also be stressed—there is not a single or guaranteed path to a career in teaching philosophy. Departments should consider creating structured opportunities for such discussions with undergraduates. There are many options: a lunch for juniors or seniors, a meeting of the philosophy club, class meetings of junior or senior seminars, etc.
- Undergraduates focused on graduate school admission should be given accurate information about the demands of graduate school, rates of successful completion of the PhD, and the likelihood of success in finding long-term employment in philosophy. At the same time, information about alternate paths for philosophy graduate students, whether in the form of joint degree programs, graduate certificate programs, successful transfer into other areas of study, or the pursuit of non-academic careers, should be made available. This information should be made available to all students as a matter of course to avoid singling individuals out. Without minimizing the challenges involved, discussions with undergraduates can include the satisfactions of graduate study in philosophy, including the opportunity to participate in and contribute to a scholarly community and often to have an unusual degree of autonomy in the selection of one’s own research questions.
- Students should be informed about ways to obtain information about graduate programs and their strengths, but also cautioned about how to read rankings of departments—these may not reflect the needs of all students and can be based on incomplete data and non-representative survey samples. As stated in the [APA Statement on Rankings of Departments](#), students and administrators seeking comparative information should be encouraged not to rely on any single source but rather to check a wide variety of sources and to be aware of the methods of each.
 - The APA maintains a [Guide to Graduate Programs in Philosophy](#) that provides self-reported information from graduate programs about a variety of factors important to prospective students: faculty and their specializations, financial support, diversity and climate initiatives, and so on.
 - The APA-funded project on Academic Placement Data Analysis provides recent placement statistics organized by graduating program, interactive data tools, and reports on recent trends.
- In addition to hearing from departmental faculty, it is good for undergraduates to hear the views and personal experiences of graduates who are currently in or 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 compare with what you expected? What aspects of life as a graduate student are the most and the least rewarding? How do you balance teaching classes or

being a teaching or research assistant 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, careers, and traditions, as well as demographic diversity and diversity of institution.

- As mentioned above, the primary responsibility in supporting students interested in studying philosophy at the graduate level typically rests with 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 or presenting at undergraduate conferences, not only to strengthen their applications but as a way of trying out their ideas with communities of their peers. Departments are encouraged to support this interest by developing a “resources” section of the department website featuring information about undergraduate journals and upcoming conferences, along with links to summer programs in philosophy such as the [UCSD Summer Program for Women in Philosophy](#) and the [Philosophy in an Inclusive Key Summer Institute](#) programs. Departments with available funding for undergraduate travel to conferences should make sure that information about this funding, as well as application procedures, reaches all undergraduates.
- In addition, departments can also request sample 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, application to 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 their 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 GradCafe](#) 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 campus visit. Faculty should be aware of when this notification period begins so they can be particularly attentive to signs of student distress.
- Some colleges and universities have funds available for undergraduate research initiatives, and faculty research funds can in many cases be used for undergraduate research assistantships. These opportunities can be a valuable way for students to develop philosophically and become better

prepared for graduate study. Departments should bring information about these potential opportunities directly to the attention of all faculty and undergraduates.

Formal and informal programs for professional development and mentoring of tenure-track faculty

The challenge of developing the next generation of philosophers extends to the faculty level as well. The interests of junior faculty, departments, institutions, and the profession as a whole are advanced when junior faculty receive effective support for their teaching and research, and are able to receive informed advice about the profession, their new institution, and relevant practices and resources. Recommended practices in promoting the professional development and effective mentoring of junior faculty include both formal and informal processes.

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, 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 the faculty member can take 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 become part of a pathway to tenure and can be consulted 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. Responsibility for communicating the results of periodic reviews lies with the department 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.

The periodic review is also an occasion for departments to consider whether a junior faculty member is being asked to bear an inappropriate teaching or service burden. While it is important not to ask junior faculty to do a large number of new course preparations, it is also important to give junior faculty the opportunity to teach a range of courses in order to develop their teaching portfolios or to teach in areas of their greatest interest. Junior faculty may need greater protection of time for research than already-tenured faculty, and may need additional resources in order to manage time- or work-intensive courses. Similarly, junior faculty should be protected from highly burdensome administrative responsibilities. Junior faculty with young families, eldercare responsibilities, or other caretaking demands may find it especially difficult to balance these responsibilities with teaching or administrative demands, given the pressures of an impending promotion review. By incorporating opportunities to indicate these special needs into the standard process for faculty expression of teaching and administrative preferences, a department can spare junior faculty the burden of taking the initiative in raising questions about special consideration they might understandably be reluctant to broach. And departments are increasingly recognizing the multiple challenges faced by junior faculty by giving them special priority in the provision of leave or teaching relief.

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 the faculty member’s particular area of research, or might be more comfortable approaching a colleague other 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 a senior colleague to help with professional development and acclimation to the new institution. Core questions for senior faculty 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, assisting junior faculty members in navigating college or university bureaucracies or in settling into their new town, and so on. Senior faculty 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 mentor as substituting for a well-developed plan of formal departmental feedback and review, or to expect mentors to be 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, where possible, 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).

While junior faculty should be protected from heavy administrative assignments insofar as possible, they should also be afforded equal opportunities to participate in department life, e.g., choosing and inviting colloquium speakers or serving as liaisons to other units on campus, which could assist them in becoming more a part of the wider institutional community and contribute to their service record at the time of tenure review.

Junior faculty may also need access to additional financial support in order to develop their research programs. This support can take many forms, including start-up funding, travel funds for presenting at professional conferences, funds to hire students to provide research assistance, assistance with membership in professional associations, and publication subventions. Programs should inform potential faculty at the time of recruitment about the extent to which such funding may or may not be available. To be sure, the need for supplementary financial support to help faculty meet research expectations is not restricted to junior faculty alone. See the APA [Statement on Research](#) for further discussion of research support to faculty in philosophy.

Some special considerations

As increased funding flows into interdisciplinary initiatives, more faculty positions will involve appointments in multiple departments. In such cases it is especially important to have coordinated plans for formal review as well as informal mentoring of junior faculty. It is a good practice in such cases for the different units to work together to design a coordinated periodic review process when formulating the initial hiring agreement or initial memorandum of understanding for the joint appointment of an existing junior faculty member. Junior faculty contemplating joint appointments 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 of research, teaching, and service will be

used to evaluate the faculty member. 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, as well as those whose area of research is not well represented in the department, can face an array of special challenges and demands. 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, and it is a good practice for colleges and universities to make available funding to support such arrangements (e.g., travel, honoraria).

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, in which several faculty from other institutions are asked to read some of the candidate's work and to participate in a roundtable discussion held at the candidate's home department. This enables candidates to receive external feedback from established scholars in their field in a manner that anticipates some aspects of a tenure review, but that leads 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 for colleges and universities to make available funding to support such arrangements (e.g., travel, honoraria).

Supporting non-tenure-track (NTT) faculty

An increasing 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](#)), NTT faculty are an important and often critical 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 the tenure track. Concern over the discipline's future should therefore extend to the professional development of NTT faculty as well. Indeed, given the heavy teaching loads NTT faculty often carry, longer-term concern for their development as teachers and scholars, and recognition of them as valued colleagues, is especially important.⁴

In accordance with the [APA Statement on Non-Tenure-Track Faculty](#), departments are encouraged to actively advocate for a healthy core of tenure-track faculty, as the tenure system ensures conditions vital for excellence in research and teaching: protection of academic freedoms, and the secure employment that undergirds long-term, full-time investment in student learning and the growth of their disciplines. Thus, departments should collect and publicize data on the percentage of courses taught by full-time and part-time NTT faculty, establish targets for the above, and work with NTT faculty unions. They should strive to move part-time faculty into full-time continuing positions to the extent possible, and to work with other nearby institutions to help NTT find other employment as needed. Departments should allow NTT faculty to participate in all relevant and appropriate faculty meetings, committees, and assessment exercises.

Departments should also follow employment and re-appointment practices commensurate with the recognition that NTT faculty's expertise in teaching philosophy is a valuable skill. This includes, where feasible, advertising all multi-year and renewable part- and full-time positions on a national basis and a year in advance, rather than hiring locally and on the basis of the chair's personal discretion. If the institution is

⁴ What follows is adapted from the APA Statement on Non-Tenure-Track Faculty and a draft APA Statement on Best Practices Regarding the Support and Treatment of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty.

committed to the respectful treatment of NTT faculty, this commitment may be listed on job postings, along with an explicit permission for NTT faculty to be released from the position if they accept a tenure-track job elsewhere. NTT faculty should receive official job contracts detailing their responsibilities, and should be given titles appropriate to their level of experience and expertise. NTT faculty courses should be publicized in the same manner as other courses, and in online postings NTT instructors should be listed by name along with links to their webpages, rather than merely referred to as “Staff.” NTT are a vital part of the department, and should be invited to all new faculty orientation events, and included in all department social events. Departmental administrative and office staff should be made aware that they are expected to provide appropriate support to NTT faculty. Departments might also consider making a teaching-focused hire who can serve as a pedagogical coordinator, taking on tasks such as training teaching assistants, advising junior tenure-track faculty, conducting peer observations, giving feedback on teaching portfolios, sharing pedagogical scholarship, and developing innovative initiatives such as experiential learning and undergraduate research programs. NTT faculty may be invited to give department workshops on pedagogy, which should be duly compensated.

Departments should also strive to offer NTT faculty the same salary and benefits (e.g., medical and parental leaves, moving allowances, travel and research funding, merit pay, faculty discounts, retirement matching) as new tenure-track faculty, and should compensate NTT faculty for any teaching or service performed in addition to what is specified in their contracts—including independent studies and advising—and should try to ensure that appointments and payment begin prior to the first day of classes. Since many NTT faculty are under constant pressure to excel at their jobs in hopes of being hired into more secure positions, they are often at risk of being exploited; departments may thus want to consider prohibiting arrangements whereby NTT faculty are asked to take on uncompensated labor in teaching, advising, or service.

When NTT 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 NTT faculty to receive feedback on their teaching and research and make progress in their careers. This review and promotion process will, of course, have criteria appropriate to the nature of the position so that NTT faculty are not being asked to accomplish all that is expected of junior faculty while also carrying a heavier teaching load. Developing a respectful, collegial atmosphere for NTT faculty can be encouraged by associating the review process with a promotion ladder and a set of appropriate titles—e.g., non-tenure-track assistant professor, associate professor of practice (without tenure), associate professor of teaching (without tenure). When the appointments are non-renewable, it is of considerable value if some member of the department has come to know the NTT faculty member’s 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 with respect to tenure-track faculty, it can be a good practice for faculty other than the chair to be involved in an informal mentoring process as well.

Here are some more detailed recommendations, as outlined by a draft APA Statement of Best Practices Regarding the Support and Treatment of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty:

To support NTT faculty as teachers, departments can take the following steps:

- Avoid “just-in-time” hiring by giving NTT faculty sufficient time to prepare for courses before the term begins. If a NTT instructor is taking over for another faculty member, provide contact information and previous syllabi that will aid in course preparation.

- Assign NTT faculty to teach in their areas of expertise whenever possible, taking into account their specific skills and background. Consult with NTT faculty members to decide upon an appropriate number of new preparations, taking into consideration the need to protect the faculty member's time for research, further training, or family responsibilities.
- Reserve a fully equipped, private, lockable office for each NTT faculty member for the hours they are required to be on campus, and ensure that each NTT faculty member has access to a computer or laptop. Seemingly minor decisions or inequities can convey unintended information to faculty and students about the value of NTT faculty to the department, so NTT faculty should have mailboxes in the same location as those of tenure-track faculty, and should appear on departmental websites and have their photos posted in the department alongside other departmental faculty. When possible, make parking privileges available in college or university facilities to NTT faculty, keeping in mind that parking fees can be especially burdensome for them and that many must commute between multiple campuses in the course of a day and work unusual hours.
- Assign a faculty mentor to NTT faculty, such as a more senior NTT faculty member, and provide compensation for this mentoring work if it is not already specified in the mentor's contract. Consider developing a NTT faculty handbook that introduces new instructors to the curriculum, institutional rules and regulations, and the duties and responsibilities of their position.
- Ensure that NTT faculty are eligible for teaching awards.

To support NTT faculty as researchers, departments can take the following steps:

- Invite interested NTT faculty to give talks to the department and to participate in department colloquia, seminars, and reading groups. Introduce NTT faculty to other faculty who work in the same areas.
- Offer conference travel and research funding, preferably available in advance, and encourage NTT faculty to apply for this funding. Where funds are scarce, departments can create a common pot to which individual faculty might apply.
- Ask NTT faculty about their professional goals and arrange opportunities for them to receive career advice from tenure-track and tenured faculty. Departments should advocate for their NTT faculty in job searches just as they do their graduate students, e.g., by writing strong letters of recommendation.
- In organizing events such as conferences, or calls for workshops, anthologies, and grants, designate and reserve spaces for scholars in NTT or teaching-intensive positions. Waive or significantly reduce registration fees for NTT faculty, and make travel grants available to them.
- Nominate work by NTT faculty for research prizes.

Other resources

The foregoing section reflects in part material drawn from the descriptions of mentoring programs at a number of universities, collected together in Rachel Thomas, "[Exemplary Junior Faculty Mentoring Programs](#)," written for the Women's Faculty Forum at Yale University. This document 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.

Section 5: Interviewing and hiring

The search and recruitment process for hiring new faculty plays a critical role in shaping not only departments, but also the profession as a whole. This process is central to increasing diversity in philosophy, both in its teachers and in its students.⁵

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 shortlist, interviewing and deliberating about candidates, and making and negotiating offers. The following resources address these issues:

- APA guidance documents on the academic job market:
 - [Guidance for Philosophy Job Seekers](#)
 - [Guidance for Placing Departments](#)
 - [Best Practices for Hiring Departments](#)
 - [Best Practices for Interviewing](#)
- [Best Practices for Conducting Faculty Searches](#), prepared by 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 recommended practices for enhancing fairness and diversity

Many universities now require members of search and hiring committees to take a diversity and inclusiveness training course that offers an overview of good practices for conducting an inclusive hiring search. Such trainings usually (i) identify good practices for an inclusive search process; (ii) identify good practices for diversifying the candidate pool; (iii) review federal regulations and university requirements concerning affirmative action, Equal Employment Opportunity, and confidentiality; and (iv) offer strategies for mitigating various forms of bias throughout the search process.

The following discussion of recommended practices in interviewing is intended to outline documented techniques or practices that tend to result in fairer outcomes in recruitment. These recommendations may reasonably be modified to fit particular institutional situations and structures, and many institutions may have developed their own set of recommended practices. 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.

Preliminaries

This guide focuses on 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

⁵ This section was primarily drafted by the Subcommittee on Interviewing Best Practices, chaired by Julia Driver, with additional information, including the entirety of Appendices A, C, and D, provided by the APA Task Force on a Good Practices Guide.

advertise a position and should work to recruit as large and diverse a pool of candidates as possible. One resource to aid in doing so is the APA's Underrepresented Philosophers Directory (*UPDirectory*). Those involved in the search should develop a list of job-related criteria, and read application files applying these criteria consistently. Some departments have tried to eliminate bias by anonymizing the initial screening (to prevent search committee members from making assumptions about a candidate with respect to sex, gender, race, ethnicity, etc.), and by not reading recommendation letters until a later stage of the search. These same considerations of fairness and consistency carry through to the interview process itself.

Some departments, in order to lessen the burden on candidates and letter-writers, do not request letters until after a shortlist has been formed by the hiring department; other departments find that letters are valuable even in the early stages of reviewing applications. Departments are encouraged to avoid application requirements that must be customized to the position in question, except when such customization is a matter of qualifying to apply for the position. If needed, more specialized material can be requested when the review process has focused on a smaller group of candidates.

SEE ALSO: SECTION 5, APPENDIX B: RESEARCH ON INTERVIEWING

Departments should also follow the [APA Statement on the Job Market Calendar](#), which recommends for tenure-track or continuing positions advertised in the second half of the calendar year an application deadline of November 1 or later. It is further recommended that positions be advertised at least 30 days prior to the application deadline to ensure that candidates have ample time to apply. In normal circumstances, a prospective employee should have at least two weeks for consideration of a written offer from the hiring institution, and responses to offers of a position whose duties begin in the succeeding fall normally should not be required before February 1. When advertising in [PhilJobs: Jobs for Philosophers](#), advertisers are asked to confirm that the hiring institution will follow the above guidelines. If an advertiser does not do so, the advertisement will include a notice to that effect.

The first-round screening interview

Departments standardly select from the application files received a short list for a first round of screening interviews. In the past, the first-round interviews usually took place at a professional meeting, generally the APA Eastern Division meeting. However, most departments now opt to use video conference software or conference calls to conduct first-round interviews. Though a few may still conduct their screening interviews at the APA Eastern Division meeting in early January, the APA no longer provides placement services or support for these interviews. Video or phone interviews typically pose less of a financial burden to the candidate; they also eliminate some of the risks of inappropriate treatment of candidates—especially women—that were present in the setting of the convention interview process. For a variety of reasons, then, applicants can no longer routinely be expected to attend the APA Eastern Division meeting for interviewing purposes, and departments who hold first-round interviews there thus may find that they still must do a significant portion of first-round interviewing by teleconference or videoconference, and this could introduce unwanted differential treatment into the interviewing and evaluating process.

SEE ALSO: SECTION 5, APPENDIX A: SOME RECOMMENDED PRACTICES FOR PHONE AND INTERNET INTERVIEWS

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. Such interviews must conform to APA policies on interviews, including the restriction that interviews must not be conducted in a hotel room used for sleeping. See the [APA Statement on Hotel Room Interviews](#) for further discussion.

Departments that plan to conduct electronic screening interviews should be mindful of various associated challenges and should prepare for them in advance. Interviewing departments and individual interviewers should keep in mind the following issues:

- Technical glitches and poor audio or video connections can detract from an interview in a way that can be disadvantageous to the candidate. It is of particular importance for interviewers to ensure that the interviewee is able to hear and see all of them well throughout the interview.
- Relatedly, electronic interviews can favor candidates who have access to superior technical facilities. To achieve greater equality among candidates or institutions that may lack such resources, some hiring departments provide funding for candidates to use a commercial electronic conferencing facility during the interview.

Whether a department chooses to conduct an in-person or electronic interview, it is a good practice to keep in mind that judgments about a candidate should be made on the basis of agreed-upon criteria, and be aware that impressions of candidates such as “fit,” “collegiality,” and “friendliness” are especially subject to bias. Psychological research has cast doubt on the predictive value of unstructured interviews in hiring, and emphasized the dual liability of such interviews: their unstructured character tends to invite various forms of bias even as their first-person salience tends to produce excessive confidence in one’s impressions. In consequence, some departments have decided to eliminate first-stage interviews, focusing instead upon the content of the dossier, and inviting a smaller group of candidates to campus directly.

SEE ALSO: SECTION 2: CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF BIAS AND DISCRIMINATION

SEE ALSO: SECTION 5, APPENDIX B: RESEARCH ON INTERVIEWING

To reduce the risks of unstructured interviews, departments and search committees should develop a rubric of evaluation criteria that align with the job description, pose questions that could elicit reasonable information concerning these criteria and give candidates a chance to explain their qualifications, and keep written notes rather than relying upon memory. It is a good practice to discuss in advance what questions will be asked of interviewees and in what order, and, insofar as possible, to use the same set of questions for all candidates. Not all questions need be identical, of course, since questions will naturally need to reflect specifics of the candidate’s research, teaching experience, and so on. However, interviewing committees should attempt to ensure that questions from the same *categories* are asked, and that every candidate has been given a chance to answer questions corresponding to the full set of criteria being used. This helps provide the committee with a uniform range of information about candidates, and helps preclude the possibility that candidates may be disadvantaged because some questions were overlooked. Structure also helps reduce the chance that inappropriate questions will be asked, and members of interviewing and hiring committees should discuss among themselves in advance guidelines concerning acceptable questions to candidates. Some questions that may be appropriate *after* an offer has been made (e.g., inquiring about possible family responsibilities that may affect the potential hire’s ability to accept an offer) are *not* appropriate beforehand.

SEE ALSO: SECTION 5, APPENDIX C: GUIDE TO ACCEPTABLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Members of the hiring committee should be well prepared for the interviews, and each should have access to the same information for each candidate. This information may include, among other things, the candidate's CV, writing sample, and perhaps a sheet listing highlights from the candidate's dossier. Moreover, when possible, interviewees should be given the names of those who will be conducting the interview in advance, and be given an idea of how many candidates are being interviewed. In fairness to the candidates being interviewed, departments should limit the number of interviews to a reasonable number.

Most departments schedule 60 to 90 minutes per interview, which allows the interviewers to talk to the candidate for at least 45 minutes, some of which time can be reserved for the candidate to ask questions as well. This also leaves time for the committee to have a brief discussion of the interview in light of search criteria once the interview is over, and to prepare for the next candidate.

Those who will be conducting interviews should discuss interviewing practices in advance, keeping in mind relevant guidelines, including the [APA Statement on Non-Discrimination](#):

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 expected to maintain the highest standards of professionalism and refrain from behavior that may distract or intimidate the candidate. Interviewers and other members of the department are strongly discouraged from conducting pre- or post-interview "interviews" on their own before or after a screening interview.

The campus visit

After the first round of interviews, the search committee or department generally decides to invite a short list of candidates to campus for visits to continue the interviewing process. It is a good practice to inform candidates who do not make it onto the shortlist as soon as possible, consistent with the progress of the search. Each candidate on the short list should receive information on arranging for transportation and accommodation. To avoid disadvantaging candidates with access to fewer resources, 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 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.

The hiring committee should provide candidates with a detailed itinerary and contact information in advance of campus visits, and the itinerary should incorporate breaks to allow the candidate ample time to meet personal needs and prepare for each stage of the interview. At all stages of the process, the interviewing department should make reasonable accommodation for candidates with disabilities. Accommodation for disabilities may include making sure that all interview-related activities take place in

accessible locations for candidates with mobility impairments, or providing large print materials or recordings of printed materials for candidates with vision impairments.

SEE ALSO: ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATION CHECKLIST

The campus visit is also a good time to provide candidates with—and make sure they have a chance to review and discuss—written 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, healthcare 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. Candidates unable to travel to campus should be provided with a similar packet of materials, as well as a chance to discuss its content.

Many departments include in the campus visit a teaching demonstration as well as a “job talk.” If a teaching demonstration is 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. Departments should ensure in advance that accessibility standards are met uniformly for all candidates, and all candidates should be asked in advance about any technical support they might need for their teaching demonstration.

A “job talk” may take various forms depending on the institution and its practices, and, since practices vary, candidates should be informed as early as possible about the department’s practices and expectations (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 again, departments should ensure uniform accessibility in advance, as consult with individual candidates about what technical support they might need for their talks.

While other components of the invitation process and campus visit may vary according to the nature of the position or the interests of the candidates, candidates should be treated uniformly insofar as possible. This applies to the initial communications with candidates and also to the opportunities afforded candidates while they are on campus, e.g., meeting with faculty, students, or administrators. Prior to the candidates’ campus visits, departments should remind faculty, students, and staff of the importance of treating all candidates for a given position in comparable ways. As in the initial interviews, thinking through questions of structure in advance and providing a similar structure for all candidates is important, both for consistent and relevant information-gathering about candidates and to reduce the chance of various forms of bias.

Dual-career families are becoming increasingly common in academia, and questions about dual careers sometimes 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 and should provide candidates with information about campus resources for accommodating dual careers, family responsibilities, or accessibility, but must provide all candidates with the same information. Chairs typically have primary responsibility for providing such information, and should be sure that they are in a position to answer questions with up-to-date information. A candidate who anticipates finding 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](#).

Before a campus visit is over, the candidate should be informed as fully as possible concerning 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, a single person—normally, the department chair—should be responsible for all official communication with the candidate.

After the campus visit

Contact with candidates after the campus visit and prior to an offer of employment should be as consistent as possible for all candidates. 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 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 for the search, and inform that person whether contact has taken place. Since informal contact with faculty might occur at any point in the recruitment process, it is a good practice to remind all faculty at the start of the recruitment process of the “ground rules” for conversations with candidates. Regardless of who initiates post-interview contact, information gained during these post-interview conversations should be considered private, and not introduced into the hiring process without the express consent of the candidate and clearance with the official contact person for the search.

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.

SEE ALSO: SECTION 5, APPENDIX C: GUIDE TO ACCEPTABLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Offers of employment⁶

Deadlines for responses to offers

The circumstances under which offers are made are so various that no rule will cover all cases, but norms of professional courtesy suggest the following practices, intended to enable employers and prospective employees to be cognizant of one another's legitimate concerns. Employers are properly concerned about their ability to plan for the contingency of making another offer in a timely fashion should an existing offer be turned down. Prospective employees are properly concerned to have reasonably clear information about which offers they are actually going to receive as they make an important career decision.

Such legitimate concerns, however, have the potential to set a hiring department and the candidate to whom they have made an offer at cross-purposes, and so it is important for hiring departments and prospective employees to be able to discuss frankly and with mutual regard their concerns in order to arrive at a mutually agreeable deadline for a response from the candidate. In normal circumstances a prospective

⁶ Adapted from the [APA Statement on Offers of Employment](#)

employee should have at least two weeks for consideration of a written offer from a properly authorized administrative officer. In accordance with the [APA Statement on the Job Market Calendar](#), we recommend that “responses to offers of a position whose duties begin in the succeeding 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 appropriate.

Oral offers and acceptances

It is important to note that *there are circumstances in which oral contracts are legally binding*—the absence of a written offer letter or written acceptance need not mean that a contract is not enforceable. Two types of situations involving oral offers or acceptances have in the past proven especially problematic.

In the first type of situation, a prospective employee who has received what appears to be a firm oral job offer forgoes other opportunities only to learn subsequently that the prospective employer has no job to offer—for example, because the position does not receive final administrative approval. In order to prevent misunderstandings on this score, the prospective employer should make very clear to the prospective employee whatever contingencies might be involved in a position and whether a formal offer is in fact being extended by the oral communication. If a prospective employer is only in a position to say that a formal offer will be forthcoming provided that a departmental recommendation receives administrative approval, and can only predict such approval but not guarantee it, the prospective employee should be informed explicitly of this. In the second type of situation, a formal offer has been orally made and accepted and the prospective employee subsequently receives another offer and wants to accept it. In such a case, the candidate is under a strong *prima facie* obligation to respect the initial oral acceptance, and only very weighty reasons can offset this.

Cases of both types can present legal and moral problems that require specific solutions, but awareness of the seriousness of oral agreements and observance of norms of professionalism, transparency, and trust by all parties can reduce the chance of either type of situation arising.

Section 5, Appendix A: Some recommended practices for phone and internet interviews

It has now become the predominant practice to conduct first-round interviews using video conferencing software or conference calls. Here are some recommended practices for conducting such interviews.

In general, electronic interviews should adhere to the guidelines for in-person interviews whenever this is practicable, including the uniform treatment of candidates. Use of electronic interviews can introduce some inequalities in treatment, for example, if special circumstances result in hiring departments using a mixture of in-person and electronic interviews. In such cases, search committees and hiring departments need to be aware of the potential advantages or disadvantages individual candidates may receive from the differences between in-person and electronic interviews. Similarly, both placing and hiring departments should be aware of advantages or disadvantages that can arise in electronic interviews when candidates have differential access to technical resources. Placing departments should seek to make available to candidates appropriate facilities for electronic interviewing, and inform candidates about special facilities their institution may have for this purpose. Some departments or institutions may lack such resources, however, and candidates may be traveling or living away from their home institution. In such cases, placing or hiring departments may wish to consider providing candidates with funds to use appropriate commercial teleconferencing or video conferencing facilities so that candidates with limited personal resources are not disadvantaged. Special measures may need to be taken to ensure equal accessibility for candidates with disabilities, and the availability of such accommodations should be indicated to all candidates as a matter of routine so that the burden of initiating discussion of accommodation is not placed on the candidate.

Interviewing institutions and individual interviewers

- Arrange video and phone interviews using the same procedures one would use in arranging an in-person interview.
 - Inform the candidate about what to expect in the interview, e.g., the approximate length and structure of the interview, and who is likely to be present. Allow enough time between your invitation and the actual interview for the candidate to prepare and to make whatever technical arrangements might be needed.
 - Ensure that technological assistance at your institution is available during interviews. Interviews should be conducted in a professional manner with as few difficulties as possible. Inadequate connectivity or lack of technological assistance in an interview can distract a committee or the candidate and increase whatever anxiety is associated with the interview. Similarly, both the candidate and the search committee should have one another's contact information in case a problem with connectivity or audio or video quality arises.
 - Departments are encouraged to inquire with their institution's technical staff concerning the forms of teleconferencing or videoconferencing with which they have had the best experience, and to consult in advance with candidates concerning the electronic resources

available resources available to them and make appropriate arrangements. Departments may want to encourage candidates to use a headset or external microphone to avoid feedback loops.

- It is a good practice to ask candidates to have a preliminary 5-minute trial run before the actual interview to make sure that the candidate understands the operation of the interviewing software and that communication is working smoothly in both directions. Preferably this will be done by a department administrator rather than a member of the interviewing committee. Whoever does the trial run should be aware that the same restrictions on appropriate questions or mode of address apply during the test period as during the interview itself.
- Arrange an appropriate location for the interview.
 - Universities often have a room designated for internet video conferencing. The location should be free of distractions and have a secure, wired internet connection.
 - Test the space and the connection in advance.
 - Make sure a telephone is available in case there is a problem with the video conference 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 and hear, and any other information that may be appropriate.
 - If the interview space is a classroom, consider whether additional microphones are needed.
- Allow ample time immediately before and after the scheduled interview.
 - In addition to providing an opportunity for other recommended preparation for an interview, time before the interview allows you to check that the technology is working appropriately. Leaving some “buffer” time between interviews will help ensure that, in case of technical difficulty, each candidate is still able to receive their full allotted time.
 - Arrive at 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 disconnected before beginning discussing of the interview or candidate.
- Ask questions with the same animation as an in-person interview, but keep in mind that there may be a time-lag in the connection, depending upon the technology being used.
 - Speak clearly, audibly, and at a reasonable pace. Be aware that if multiple individuals are using the same connection, they will need to project their voices and avoid talking at the same time.
 - In telephone interviews with multiple interviewers, speakers should identify themselves whenever speaking. This may also be helpful during video interviews, where the image may not contain enough information to enable the candidate to keep track of who is speaking.
 - Allow for pauses.

Placement advice for candidates

- Placement directors at the candidate's institution should consider giving candidates advice about how best to arrange interviews, and should make them aware of whatever technical support may be available. Here are some suggested guidelines to give candidates:
- Plan well in advance for a suitable location for your interview. Inform your placement director that the interview will take place, and inquire with the placement director or department about available facilities for teleconferencing or video conferencing, or provisions for such services if you are away from your home institution.
 - Ask the interviewers how long you should expect the conversation to last so that you are able to schedule the appropriate facilities.
 - If no spaces are designated for interviews at your department or institution, ask if your department can make available a suitable, quiet office for the duration of the interview. 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, or consider using commercial facilities that offer such services.
 - The space should be free of distraction. Think especially about the material that forms the backdrop of your interview, and avoid objects that would convey personal information.
 - For video interviews, a wired, high-speed connection is best. Check your webcam and microphone well in advance of the interview and be sure you are familiar with their operation.
 - For telephone interviews, try to use a landline, which normally has better sound quality and more reliable connectivity 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 a video or phone interview in the same manner you would prepare for an in-person interview.
 - Know the college or university as well as the department that will be interviewing you.
 - Ask the department for the names of those who will interview 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 or on hand for the actual interview.
 - 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 non-distracting form. Avoid clutter surrounding the computer.
 - Dress as you would for an in-person interview. Video tends to skew bright colors, stripes, etc., so avoid creating visual distraction by wearing solid, muted colors. Even in telephone interviews, keep in mind that you will want to be in the frame of mind made possible by a professional setting.

- It can be disconcerting for interviewers if the candidate appears to not be looking at them during the interview. Experiment with lighting and camera angles to find a way to create an image in which you will look most natural and be able to see the interviewers most clearly without looking down. Practice looking into the camera.
- Check the internet connection, webcam, and microphone at the location and with the equipment you will be using during your actual interview.
- Note that a headset or external microphone may be useful for avoiding feedback loops that frequently occur when internal microphones are used.
- Make sure that the interviewing committee has an alternate phone number for reaching you in case of technical difficulties and that you have a number for reaching them.
- Speak with your placement director about the possibility of arranging a mock interview of the kind you will be having. This is also an opportunity to check to see if you have found a satisfactory setting, lighting, camera angle, etc. for the interview.
- Request that the interviewing institution arrange for a 5-minute trial run to be sure that the audioconferencing or videoconferencing software is understood, and communication is smooth in both directions.
- During the interview, avoid distractions.
 - Make sure any phone present in the room that is not being used in the interview is turned off. If a cellphone is being used as a backup, turn down the ringer.
 - For video interviews, close all other programs on your computer.
 - Be aware that video and telephone interviews, even more than in-person interviews, invite distraction for all parties. You can help alleviate this if you answer the questions clearly and succinctly.

Placement officers and graduate programs

- Begin preparation for electronic interviewing well before the job market season, looking into possible facilities and assessing available technology, making improvements if needed. Provide potential job seekers with information about electronic interviewing, including these guidelines from the APA.
- Advocate for the students on the market with your university. If there is currently no designated space or support service for video and telephone interviews, lobby for this.
- Work with faculty and candidates to set up mock electronic interviews.
- For further discussion, see also the [APA Guidance for Placing Departments](#) and [Best Practices for Interviewing](#).

Section 5, Appendix B: Research on interviewing

Most departments feel that there is value in first-round or screening interviews. They believe that they are better able to ascertain the research potential or teaching effectiveness of a candidate through a face-to-face interaction with the candidate, whether in person or electronically. Some also view the in-person first-round interview as an opportunity to “sell” their department more effectively to prospective colleagues.

Other departments do not conduct first-round interviews, preferring instead to invest more time studying the dossiers, and choosing a shortlist of candidates to bring to campus on that basis. 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)

There is compelling evidence that impressions from *unstructured* interviews are poor predictors of eventual job performance, and that such interviews may actually undermine the quality and fairness of interviewers’ judgments (Dana et al. 2013). A caveat: much of this evidence is gathered from interview settings not specific to academia.

Though research consistently shows that unstructured interviews tend to provide less reliable predictions of job performance than more structured interviews, there remain open questions concerning the types of structure that are most appropriate for a given interview type (Macan 2009; Hartwell et al. 2019). What is meant by “structured” is not always clear, but the most common understanding involves making the

interview procedure as uniform across candidates as possible.⁷ For example, candidates can be asked the same questions and, insofar as possible, in the same order.⁸ Since it is possible the wording of the questions plays a biasing role, care should be taken to make sure that the questions are presented in essentially the same way for all the candidates. Structure also can include settling upon relevant criteria in advance, making sure the interview covers all of these criteria, and using a consistent rating scale to evaluate interviewees' performance or promise (see Macan 2009, 206). For example, skills-based interview questions can be evidentially relevant, especially with respect to teaching. While there is 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), one should be cautious in translating this evidence into actual interviewing practice, especially since academic interviews typically need to range over many dimensions, and research projects and teaching experience may vary considerably, calling for different lines of questioning and follow-up. Interview formats that fall between the two extremes, e.g., *semi-structured interviews*, in which the interview experience is kept as consistent as possible between candidates, but allowance is made for questions that permit "probing" or following up on a given response, may be appropriate.

However, it should also be recognized that reliance upon dossiers alone might not diminish certain forms of bias. In a well-known 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 stereotypically male name or a stereotypically female name. CVs bearing a male name received higher evaluations than those bearing a female name, though the CVs were otherwise identical (Steinpreis et al. 1999). In another study, applicants with "White-sounding" names received 50 percent more callbacks after a resume review than applicants with "African-American-sounding" names (Bertrand and Mullainathan 2004). To minimize the role implicit bias plays in reviewing dossiers, some recommend that files be anonymized prior to review. This may involve using a multi-step screening process. For example, first, personnel not involved in the evaluation process can anonymize CVs, writing samples, teaching, and research statements, and a preliminary assessment of these documents can be used to narrow the pool; letters of recommendation, which tend to contain identifying information it would be difficult to remove, are read only after this narrowing has occurred.

One worry about first-round face-to-face interviews is that such forms of anonymizing are usually impossible. Of course, anonymity is impossible at the point of campus visits, but there is value in reducing bias in the selection of those who come to campus. Some evidence suggests that biases can be partially mitigated by the passage of time. Kunda and 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). This suggests that retaining the 45-minute norm for face-to-face interviews may be helpful, even when the interviews are electronic; this likewise permits the coverage of job-related criteria to be more thorough and detailed, which may also help counter certain kinds of bias. However, Kunda and Spencer also report that stereotypes can reassert themselves at any point throughout an interaction, especially if the purpose of the interaction is to determine "attributes or likely behavior" of the other, as interviews typically do. They

⁷ See Macan (2009) and Levishina et al. (2014) for reviews of some of the different ways "structured" is understood in the research literature.

⁸ See, for example, *Structured Interviews: A Practical Guide*, US Office of Personnel Management, September 2008.

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 [minutes] 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 attention to the problem of counteracting stereotypes is required even in longer interviews and campus visits (see Kunda and Spencer 2003 for further discussion).

SEE ALSO: SECTION 2: CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF BIAS AND DISCRIMINATION

There are several concerns about eliminating first-round interviews. They may enable the search committee to fill gaps in information left by the dossiers, and that would help identify an evident lack of fit between the candidate and the job criteria. This may be especially important for departments with very limited resources for bringing candidates to campus. Another concern is that such interviews can afford job candidates valuable information about the hiring department and worthwhile feedback on their work and on how they are faring on the job market. For example, candidates may use the number of first-round interviews they receive as a source of information about how well their dossiers are being perceived, whether or not they finally obtain a job in a given job cycle. One way departments could address this problem is by having a policy of informing candidates when they have made a long-list, or of requesting additional material from candidates who are still in contention at a certain point in the hiring process.

Other resources

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

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

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Section 5, Appendix C: Guidelines for interview questions

Many universities have formulated guidelines for interviewing candidates that are in accordance with university and federal regulations concerning Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination. It is essential for all members of a search committee to be aware of these guidelines and follow them in both spirit and letter—for example, information that should not be requested explicitly should not be asked about indirectly, either. Note that if one candidate is asked a question about potentially conflicting responsibilities, needs for accessibility, criminal record, etc., the same question must be asked of all candidates. The following 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](#)). Recently institutions have begun promulgating guidelines with respect to pronouns; be sure that you understand and follow relevant guidelines in your interviewing practices. Once again, it is important that all candidates be treated equally.

While some questions are unacceptable, it is permissible for departments to ask candidates to submit a statement describing how the candidate could contribute to departmental or institutional initiatives to promote diversity. Candidates should have full discretion in determining how to respond to such requests.

| Subject | What may be asked | What may NOT be asked |
|--------------------|---|---|
| Name | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is your name? Are there nicknames or initials that we would need to know to check your work and educational record? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Birth name if name has legally changed, e.g., at marriage. Inquiries about the name that would seek to elicit information about the candidate’s ancestry or descent. |
| Age | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If hired, can you offer proof that you are at least 18 years of age? Questions about the applicant’s career stage. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How old are you? What is your birthdate? |
| Sex or Gender | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No questions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you male, female, transitioning, transgendered? |
| Sexual orientation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No questions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is your sexual orientation? Are you gay? |

| Subject | What may be asked | What may NOT be asked |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Religion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No questions. (You may inquire about availability for weekend work.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is your religion? Which church do you attend? What are your religious holidays? |
| Birthplace | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No questions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where are you (or is your family) originally from? |
| National Origin / Race | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No questions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you consider yourself Latinx? |
| Citizenship | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If hired, can you show proof of your eligibility to work in the US? Are you fluent in any languages other than English? (You may ask this question only as it relates to the job being sought.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you a US citizen? Where were you born? |
| Language | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What languages do you read fluently? Write fluently? Speak fluently? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inquiries into how the applicant acquired the ability to read, write, or speak a foreign language. |
| Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inquiries into the academic, vocational, or professional education of the candidate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions about education designed to determine how old the applicant is. |
| Disability or medical history | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If appropriate accommodations are available—regardless of the extent to which you might use them—are you able to perform the essential functions of this job? Provide the position description so that the applicant can give an informed answer. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you disabled? What is the nature or severity of your disability? Have you ever received workers' compensation? Do you have HIV/AIDS? Have you ever been treated for drug abuse or alcoholism? |

| Subject | What may be asked | What may NOT be asked |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| Marital / Family Status | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have any responsibilities that conflict with job attendance or travel requirements? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you married? What is your spouse's name? What is your maiden name? Do you have any children? Are you pregnant? What are your childcare arrangements? Are you related to the philosopher _____? |
| Residence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is your address? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you own or rent your home? Who resides with you? |
| Military | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidate's work experience, including names and addresses of previous employers, dates of employment, reasons for leaving | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inquiry into an applicant's type of military discharge. |
| Criminal record | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you ever been convicted of a crime? (You must state that a conviction will be considered only as it relates to fitness to perform the job being sought.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you ever been arrested? |
| Memberships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you a member of any professional societies or organizations? (Exclude inquiries into organizations the name or character of which indicates the race, creed, color, or national origin of its members.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inquiry into applicant's membership in unions or nonprofessional organizations (e.g., clubs, lodges, etc.). |

Section 5, Appendix D: Sample candidate evaluation sheet

This evaluation sheet is 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-tenure-track and senior tenured faculty searches.

Candidate's Name: _____

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

- Read candidate's CV
- Read candidate's scholarship
- Attended meal with candidate
- Read candidate's letters of recommendation
- Attended candidate's job talk
- Met with candidate
- Other (please explain): _____

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

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

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 positively contribute to department 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/school community member | | | | | | |

Section 6: Social events and activities

Social activities, even those of an informal kind, such as clubs, discussion groups, sports teams, and social outreach programs, can help to make a department a community. At the same time, they pose challenges along multiple dimensions, and attention to these considerations can help avert some of the most serious problems a philosophical community can face.

Social activities and inclusivity

While departments may be mindful of questions of inclusion for official events, informal activities by their nature tend to be organized in a decentralized way, and departments, faculty, or students may not be aware that certain groups of individuals are informally excluded by the nature of the activities, lack of funds, or living arrangements. Therefore, it is important that departments make an effort to review on a regular basis what kinds of informal activities are available to students and faculty, ask whether the range of activities provides everyone with some opportunity to take part, and encourage faculty and students to be attentive to these considerations when planning or taking part in such activities. This section discusses various dimensions of social events that departments may wish to consider.

Social events and alcohol

It is often suggested that professional philosophy in the English-speaking world has 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 where alcohol is served, drinking can lead to behavior that is problematic in a wide range of ways, from offensive or harassing conduct to behavior that is aggressive, dangerous, or illegal. Events involving philosophers are no exception.

Recommended practices in the area of social events and alcohol concern not only mitigating the possibility of unprofessional or dangerous behavior, but enhancing inclusiveness. Faculty and students may choose not to drink or to drink very little for a variety of reasons—it might be a personal matter, have a religious basis, be connected with a health issue (that the individual may not wish to make public), or be a question of prudence (for example, if they plan to drive following 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 socializing, or to meeting and conversing with colleagues or departmental visitors. 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 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 to hold 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 a departmental event that will take place at a bar, or a departmental picnic at which a truck from a local brewery would be present.)
- Non-alcoholic beverages should be available at all social events involving alcohol; such beverages should be as centrally and readily available as those containing alcohol, and those who choose not to drink alcohol should not be made conspicuous or marginalized.
- 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 instructors (including graduate teaching assistants) and students decide to adjourn to an informal location following a class or seminar, instructors 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, instructors should ensure that all students are above drinking age. But if bars are habitually chosen, instructors should be aware that this could 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 care should be taken so that students do not feel excluded from them. 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 adequate measures have been taken in the planning of such events to make them accessible to those who might have limited mobility or 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 2015.⁹

Accessibility and accommodation checklist

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

- Consult a member of the APA Committee on Inclusiveness in the Profession, or someone familiar with and working on disability issues.
- Consider inviting disabled philosophers to contribute a paper or panel.
- Consider including disability among the areas in which submissions are invited.
- Put in the conference announcement information about the accommodations you will be able to provide, the accessibility of parking and the locale, and list a contact person for questions of access. This person should have sufficient information and 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 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 call 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, allergies, alcohol, etc.).
- Before the conference or meeting, arrange for event staff and volunteers to have an orientation session that deals with how they can best help individuals with disabilities—this is, indeed, an opportunity for general learning made concrete. Staff from the Office of Disability Services at your institution or volunteers with disabilities can help you conduct these orientations. Be sure that you consider the full range of disabilities—visual or hearing impairments, mobility impairments, needs for physical assistance, learning disabilities, and so on—keeping in mind that some disabilities may be hidden. Review the collateral as well as main activities of the meeting and ask how they may all be made accessible to all who attend. Here are some more specific recommendations that should figure in conference planning:

⁹ This checklist is a work in progress, and we welcome collaborative contributions to it. The recommendations listed here are not in any particular order and some are intentionally repeated. It includes wording from and information provided by the listed sources. Those with recommendations or suggestions of any kind are invited to contact the APA at info@apaonline.org.

- At conference registration, make someone 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; ensure that a registration table is available at a height appropriate for attendees using wheelchairs, scooters, and other mobility aids (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 that food is properly labeled for dietary restrictions, allergies, etc. For food served by a wait staff, be sure that you have made the wait staff aware of any dietary restrictions, and ask that they be able to respond to questions about the ingredients of the food they are serving.
- If you are planning a reception or buffet-style meal during or after the meeting, ask participants with disabilities if they will need assistance; assign staff to help at breaks or meals.

Some general planning considerations

- When budgeting for meeting or conferences, include accommodations for people with disabilities as a budget item. If you need to get an idea of costs, speak to the Office of Disability Services or others on your campus who have already planned events using accessibility accommodations.
- Consider offering a free or reduced registration rate for a companion assisting an attendee with a disability.
- Consult with the Office of Disability Services or other units to identify individuals who would be willing to volunteer as readers, guides, and personal assistants, or perform other functions related to accommodating individuals with disabilities. Be sure that these volunteers have had training or experience for working with people with disabilities, and include them in any staff orientation.
- Consider putting together a group of volunteers as a Digital Access Facilitation Team ([such as the one at 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 discussion about the use of tweeting and other forms of recording as potentially undermining a safe space for discussing sensitive and often difficult experiences that can arise within contexts engaging topics like race or racialization, sexuality, gender, and disability. Obtain permission from speakers in advance before recording, transcribing, or tweeting, and, if permission is granted, inform audiences at the outset of sessions that presentations and discussions will be live-tweeted. This allows individuals to use their own discretion about what to say or withhold.

- Arrange for good internet connections when needed.
- The internet can be used to provide alternative formats of materials during presentations—for example, allowing people using screen readers or other assistive technologies to follow along with an online version of your displayed material. For remote CART (Communication Access Realtime

Translation), you will need a connection that is reliable and has sufficient bandwidth for transferring audio.

- Have a designated, accessible quiet room, especially if the participants are not staying in the same location as the conference or meeting. This is helpful for a range of disabilities and impairments including, but not limited to, sensory processing disorder, chronic fatigue, and any participant who needs access to a safe and private space for medication, injection, or nursing.
- Where applicable, make sure you make available a list of adaptive and public transportation, including cabs, vans, and city buses, if any, and of volunteers to give people rides to lodging and other event locations.
- Consider providing an [accessibility guide](#), which includes contacts, information for the conference or meeting itself, as well as accessible local eateries and other points of interest. 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?
- Are trained staff available familiar with these evacuation procedures?

More specific recommendations

An inquiry can be made to meeting facilities requesting confirmation of the answers to most of these questions, but some require special attention from conference organizers.

Work together with the campus disability office, 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 disability office or in the office that plans meetings and conferences). When in doubt, walk through the facility with an individual knowledgeable about access issues.

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 (see also “Washrooms,” below)? Where is it located?
- Is the room/theater accessible? Are the doors wide enough for someone in a wheelchair or scooter 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 service animal sit?
- Is there someone assigned to guide attendees 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?
- If there is an elevated stage, can those using mobility aids access the stage?
- Are all parts of the venue smoke free and free of strong scents, e.g., fresh paint or floor varnish?

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 those 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.
- 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 the stall door to be closed? (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 those in wheelchairs to wash their hands?
- Will those using wheelchairs or scooters be able to easily reach the paper towel dispensers or hand dryers?
- Are there shelves or other projections that could be hazards for those 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 large print, Braille, or electronic format if requested?
- Are podium heights adjustable to meet the needs of different speakers?
- Can microphone heights be adjusted?
- Have you scheduled sufficient breaks during the day?

Access for individuals who are deaf or hearing impaired

- According to the Americans with Disabilities Act, all meetings and conferences must be accessible to individuals with hearing impairments. Therefore, provisions must be made for people who are deaf or have reduced hearing.
- Make sure in advance that assistive listening devices are available for those using hearing aids or needing sound amplification and that you know how to obtain them. Usually, the Office of Disability Services at your institution has access to such equipment and can explain how to use the equipment or connect you with service personnel who will do so. Make sure that service personnel will be on call if the equipment is not functioning during the times of the meeting.
- If requested, the host campus must provide for a sign language or other interpreter for hearing impaired or deaf individuals. You should make sure that such services are available without cost, or that your conference budget plans for this potential expense. Again, the disability services office can provide you with guidance and with names of qualified interpreters should they be required.
- You may also need to provide note-takers for some individuals. This is a legitimate accommodation request and such service can often be provided by the disability services office or by recruiting volunteers at meeting sessions or from the meeting staff who are able to carry out this task.

Access for individuals with visual impairments

- Ask for information on the conference registration form concerning whether the registrant will need for conference materials to be available in large print, audio recording, digital format, or Braille—where the choice of format is determined by the registrant's preferred mode of communication. Your budget should include this as a possible expense.
- Identify one or more individuals to serve as guides and/or readers for visually impaired attendees, making sure they have access to proper training. The guides should be prepared to take an attendee to a specific workshop, to the washroom, or to lounges and dining areas, and may be asked to stay with the attendee or to return when the activity has been completed, depending on the attendee's needs. Guides may also be asked to orient an attendee to the meeting facilities so that the attendee can travel about independently. Readers may be asked to read from the printed meeting program, handouts, session evaluation forms, or other print materials, if these have not been made available to the participant in another requested format.
- Someone at the registration desk should be prepared to read items for an attendee or to assist them in filling out evaluations and other forms. If you have more than one workshop, be sure that the

workshop coordinators are prepared to help an attendee with a visual impairment fill out the workshop evaluation form at the end of the session.

- Make a service animal relief area available to attendees.

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 individuals with disabilities such as diabetes, heart conditions, asthma, and arthritis can have a place to rest. This rest area may serve multiple purposes, giving an attendee a quiet place to rest, read information, or fill out evaluations.
- 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.
- As before, make sure you have a list of both adaptive and public transportation, including cabs, vans, and city buses, if these services are available, or of volunteers able to give people rides to hotels and other event locations.

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](#) (University of Waterloo)
- [How to Make Your Presentations Accessible to All](#) (Web Accessibility Initiative)
- [Accessibility Guidelines for Presentations](#) (Society for Disability Studies)
- [Composing Access](#) (links to sources 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](#) (National Council of Teachers of English)
- Consider browsing the informative and ongoing [#AcademicAbleism](#) hashtag on Twitter
- [PhDisabled – What It's Like Doing Academia with Disability & Chronic Illness](#)

Section 7: Communication

Effective communication plays an important role in maintaining a healthy departmental climate, and in identifying problems and contending with them when they arise. This section offers examples of effective practices within departments, programs, or other units to encourage open lines of communication across all levels. (Here the focus is primarily upon communication to and among faculty and students, with only occasional reference to staff; communication with and among staff is a topic meriting separate discussion.)

Communication across levels

It is useful for departments to think about the goals that they are trying to achieve in communication. Communicative practices within a department can help or hinder transparency, cooperation, and inclusiveness. Many questions departments face concerning personnel require some degree of confidentiality, but seeking insofar as possible to create a climate of transparency and openness can help faculty and students understand the processes, constraints, and reasoning behind decisions, enabling them to resolve certain corrosive forms of doubt and distrust. This openness also permits faculty and students to formulate clearer questions about the appropriateness of procedures or decisions, fostering wider discussion and more information sharing, contributing in the long run to better decision-making. Moreover, transparency helps faculty and students to be aware of what is expected of them, and what they can expect of one another. Such shared expectations allow students and faculty to hold themselves and each other accountable for their actions and behavior, and greatly facilitates the work of staff. Members of a department are also more likely to be willing to work together if they understand the department's (and the university's or college's) rules, and are confident that these rules will be followed fairly. Since many decisions seriously affect the lives of students and faculty, the existence of standard procedures and clear criteria, as well as appropriate processes for grievances or the appeal of decisions, is vital to maintaining cooperativeness in a setting where the success of the department's activities depends so heavily upon good will. When some are perceived as receiving special treatment without adequate explanation, this tends to break down general willingness to contribute to the department's essential activities.

Inclusiveness, too, can be affected by communicative practices in the department. Inclusiveness matters both for reasons of fairness and as a way of encouraging the most effective development of the capacities of all members. As a result, inclusiveness can have a positive effect on rates of retention and satisfaction with the program, both for faculty and for students, and can enable a program to grapple more effectively with the problems and crises that will inevitably arise. To take just one example, using the correct pronouns or other forms of address for individuals is an important component of mutual respect and trust, and departments can by their regular practices manifest such respect and trust, creating a background against which occasional misunderstandings can be dealt with constructively.

We have organized this discussion of recommended practices in communication by the type of communication: some forms of effective communication are top-down, some are bottom-up, and others are neither or both.

Top-down communication

Top-down forms of communication come not only from the chair and executive committee, but from advisors, supervisors, directors of undergraduate and graduate studies, and chairs of committees. That is,

from all those in positions with supervisory or resource-allocating roles. It is important that such communication conveys information and expectations accurately, and often this is best done in written as well as oral form to help ensure shared understanding and memory. Some policies can be made most accessible if posted on the department website, though posting alone tends to be insufficient and should be accompanied by communications at appropriate times to remind faculty, students, and staff of rules and regulations they are expected to follow. This approach is inextricably tied with holding people accountable for their actions and allowing them to hold others accountable as well. Good practices for effective top-down communication include the following:

- Communicating expectations for promotion to tenure-track assistant and associate faculty.
- Communicating expectations for annual merit reviews in teaching, service, and research to faculty members.
- Communicating expectations for graduate students concerning the meeting of MA or PhD program requirements, including for advancement to candidacy, qualifying exams or submission of qualifying papers, and 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, and in cases in which progress is inadequate, communicate expectations for restoring adequate progress both orally and in writing to the student.
- Communicating, typically in consultation with the department 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 and 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.

Bottom-up communication

The bottom-up forms of communication come from all members of the department, in reporting to those who are in positions of responsibility any problems or issues that need attention in the department. Of particular concern to a department's climate is the question of whether those who have some degree of formal or informal authority over others are following department and institution rules and regulations. Familiar examples of abuses of such authority include sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination, and other forms of discrimination or marginalization. In a department with a poor climate, members of the department report concerns to those in authority but do not receive indications that these concerns are being taken seriously, or members lacking in authority may be too uncertain of the response they will receive to report them at all. Other abuses include violations of basic principles of collegiality and mutual respect. Good practices for effective bottom-up communication include the following:

- Communicating to faculty and those in reporting roles the rules for reporting abuses, and the mechanisms for protecting those who raise such concerns by acting as whistleblowers or bringing forward a complaint.
- Communicating to faculty and students their rights as members of the academic community.

- Creating ombuds roles in the department or identifying campus ombudspersons and other officials exempt from mandatory reporting rules, and making sure that everyone in the department knows who they are.

SEE ALSO: OMBUDSPERSON SUBSECTION IN SECTION 3: TEACHING, SUPERVISING, SUPPORTING, AND MENTORING STUDENTS

- Maintaining a climate page on the department website with information about where students can go for help and assistance.

Communication in discussions

Another important area of communication is, of course, the many discussions that occur among members of the department in formal and informal settings on questions of philosophy, research projects, and teaching. All members of the department should be able to participate in such discussions in an environment where their viewpoints and work are taken seriously, and where discourse is civil, respectful, and professional. Members of the department should show civility, mutual respect, and collegiality by extending common courtesies, being personally accountable, and being willing to contribute their ideas and efforts to the effective functioning of the academic unit. Department members 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, and acknowledge academic debt. They should strive to be objective in professional assessment of students, candidates, colleagues, and staff members. And they should respect the privacy of and not discriminate against or harass colleagues and staff members. Good practices include the following:

- Faculty in particular, but students as well, should model a high level of professional respect toward others, where this is more than mere politeness, but includes taking each other seriously as fellow members of the department and of the wider community of philosophy.
- Faculty in particular, but students as well, should encourage open-mindedness about the scope of intellectual inquiry, 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 more effective when it is focused and constructive rather than overly broad and dismissive. Criticisms that could reasonably be construed as personal attacks are strongly discouraged—especially in public contexts.
- A department with a good climate will also cultivate norms of respectful, constructive, and inclusive discussion in classrooms and seminars. Some may experience the seminar room as a hostile environment, and faculty and students in their zeal to “do philosophy” can often be highly judgmental. In such an environment, those who lack confidence will sometimes stop participating, to their own detriment and to the detriment of the quality of discussion and effectiveness of graduate training.
- Moreover, students and faculty alike should be aware that hostile and aggressive behavior has been explicitly or implicitly seen as stereotypically male and heterosexual. As a result, 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 (2012), pp. 238–40; and Beebee (2013), §2.

Departmental colloquia and public talks pose special challenges to the pursuit of constructive, inclusive exchange. Among good practices for chairing talks are the following:¹⁰

- 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. The chair can keep track of those seeking to raise questions, and then attempt to allocate time and order the sequence of questioners so as to permit fully inclusive discussion. For example, the 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 permit more focused and productive discussion and can give people who tend not to speak the opportunity to ask smaller, "safer" questions. However, the finger convention can be abused by some to monopolize discussion or prevent moving on to other questions, and the chair should be recognized as having the authority to decide whether or when to cut short a long series of follow-ups. 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 of the 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. Depending upon audience size and available time, discussion chairs may find it helpful to announce in advance a time target for individual questions. This can help ensure that more people will have a chance to participate in discussions, cue questioners about how to formulate their questions, and make it possible for the discussion chair to limit a questioner without creating an appearance of arbitrariness.
- 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.

SEE ALSO: SECTION 7, APPENDIX A: SOME GENERAL NORMS FOR DISCUSSIONS

References

Antony, L. "Different Voices or Perfect Storm: Why Are There So Few Women in Philosophy?" *Journal of Social Philosophy* 43 (2012): 227–55.

Beebe, 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.

¹⁰ The text in this section is adapted from the BPA/SWIP UK *Good Practice Scheme* section on "Seminar chairing policy suggestions."

Electronic communication

Other forms of communication in the department include communication among members of the department as part of effective communal decision-making, communication by the department and groups within it to the outside world, and the ways that individual members of the department communicate with each other and those outside the department, especially via social media. In contemporary academia, these forms of communication often take place electronically, and that can raise special issues. As noted in **SECTION 1: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF GUIDELINES FOR GOOD PRACTICES**, it can be a good practice to organize public discussions within the department on questions about recommended practices or norms, and whether it is desirable to adopt these for the departmental community. Practices and norms for electronic communication continue to evolve, and in the absence of shared expectations or standard procedures it is of particular importance for departments to encourage wide and inclusive discussion of these questions. The following is a sample outline of points that a potential set of guidelines concerning electronic communication and social media (herein below, “ECSM guidelines”), developed or adopted by a unit or institution, could include. There are many ways to structure such guidelines; the list of topics given here does not pretend to be exhaustive.

- **Introduction and background:** This section of the ECSM guidelines could explain the reasons for having such a policy and indicate its scope, namely, that it applies to covering the use of institutional computing resources, including computer equipment, networks, and systems. It could also provide definitions of whatever terms seem helpful—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 college or university have a general policy on appropriate computer usage? Some institutions have restrictions on what can be said or 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 signal key features of this policy and link to the full policy. In addition, department members have responsibilities to abide by all broader legal rules and regulations directly related to electronic and social media usage that apply to their institution. Links to these policies, e.g., the *Digital Millennium Copyright Act* (DMCA), could be included in this section as well.
- **Other relevant institutional policies:** Care must be taken to avoid violations of other policies, including the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA) and institutional non-discrimination and anti-harassment policies, when using institutional computing resources. Links to these policies could be included in a separate section, accompanied by a reminder that departmental members have responsibilities to abide by all applicable policies.
- **Access:** Faculty and students should also be made aware that most private and public institutions 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 connected with or supported by federal funding, electronic communications may be subject to *Freedom of Information Act* (FOIA) requests from private individuals. The nature and scope of Freedom of Information rights depend upon state and federal law; for general information, see [the FOIA website](#) or consult your state government’s website.

- **APA Code of Conduct:** A separate section of ECSM guidelines could link to the [APA Code of Conduct](#). The code grounds professional conduct in a code of ethics that stresses the value of academic freedom to professional work in philosophy, as well as other professional conduct values such as fairness, equity, and dignity. ECSM guidelines could emphasize that these values should be respected in not only “real world” professional interactions, but also all forms of electronic and social media communications. Additionally, the Code of Conduct contains sections on [Electronic Communications](#) and [Bullying and Harassment](#), which includes cyber-bullying. ECSM guidelines could also include this statement or a link to it.
- **Privacy:** Given that respect for privacy is critical for establishing communicative trust in online environments, it is important for ECSM 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. 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, Twitter, or Facebook (regardless of whether one’s social media accounts use private/protected settings).
- **Confidentiality:** FERPA requires confidentiality as the default mode for relating to student records. ECSM guidelines should mention, though, the importance of confidentiality in general with regard to electronic communications and social media. If the sender of an email message requests confidentiality, it should not be forwarded to others, and in general the presumption should be against forwarding content that is not specifically intended for others to see. 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, ECSM guidelines could also mention the value of reserving an institutional email account for professional email, and using other email accounts for one’s personal use. They could also mention the value of creating social media accounts for classroom use, ones that would be separate from personal accounts, and deleting them when the course has ended. At the same time, it is important to note that no matter what account a department member uses to send a message or to post something on social media, the recipient could, as mentioned above, “broadcast” the content over email and social media to many others. For this reason, it is a good practice to keep a professional tone in all employment-related online communications. That is, use respectful and collegial language in all professional communications, independently of whether the communications are addressed to one’s actual colleagues.
- **Posting ECSM guidelines:** Departments choosing to develop ECSM guidelines are also encouraged to make the policy available on departmental websites, to explicitly bring it to the attention of new department members, and also to make it a part of new student orientation.
- **Electronic device policies in courses:** Departments are encouraged to ask all instructors to state explicitly on course syllabi how they will use electronic and social media communications in a responsible manner. Such an “electronic device” section of a syllabus could take the form of referring to departmental guidelines and a commitment to abide by them. That section could also set out faculty preferences for student use of social media in class. 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 “tweeted” while it is unfolding. Such transparency and clarity would contribute to increasing trust within the classroom environment.

Email

Communication among members of the department is necessary for effective communal decision-making. Here, habits and practices have been transformed by the use of email in the past 15 years, where members of a department rely more and more on email not only to communicate with each other, but also to make collective decisions. Email is, of course, a useful way of keeping in touch with colleagues and students, and making announcements to the department. However, in using email, one has to balance the importance of ready connectedness with the importance of avoiding the pitfalls that come with email communication. 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 civility and professionalism. Email communication has serious limitations that can breed misunderstanding and conflict. Furthermore, in many instances it cannot substitute for face-to-face interactions among colleagues or students.

Good practices for email use include the following:

- Some departments have taken steps to limit email, recommending, for example, that email not be used as a substitute for talking in person, and setting out clear guidelines for what are or are not appropriate subjects for email. For discussion of sensitive or contentious matters, it is normally preferable to meet in person. Email is, however, a useful way of confirming important results of a conversation, or coordinating with colleagues on a proposed plan of action.
- 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 confidential matters. And emails are typically not protected against Freedom of Information requests.
- Colleges, universities, and other academic units often have very strict rules about what can or cannot be transmitted through email, and FERPA provides privacy guarantees of which students, faculty, and staff should be aware.
- Some departments designate an individual, such as the chair, to be responsible for monitoring email and empower this person to shut down email threads that appear to be spiraling out of control, e.g., with disrespectful or offensive posts. It is often easier for emails to be misunderstood, especially with respect to tone, than more direct personal communication.
- Some departments restrict access to listserv addresses that send messages to the faculty or department as a whole. Limiting group emails and discouraging the use of reply-all 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*—or read in a court of law.
- 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 may be reasonable to limit group emails to announcements that cannot be conveyed through any other means, and which do not require a reply from recipients. Moreover, if no reply is required, indicate this explicitly in the message.
- To avoid proliferation, many departments compile announcements of talks, events, and news into a single weekly electronic newsletter. Such a newsletter should be inclusive in the events it will announce.

Social media

For many who work or study in academia, the use of social media for professional purposes is a routine, everyday practice. By enriching student learning, scholarship, and philosophical community, as well as allowing powerful opportunities for philosophers to communicate with the public, the use of social media can bring remarkable benefits. The use of social media and other forms of online communication can also promote inclusivity: for instance, some students who might feel uncomfortable about speaking up in class might be avid participants in an online discussion forum. Social media can be a useful way of networking and promoting one’s work, soliciting ideas and suggestions about teaching or research, and advertising an event or conference widely. They can also bring down barriers between people at different institutions and at different stages in their careers.

At the same time, the very 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 then posted on social media, 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 original sender, but also institutional or legal sanctions. Messages that were intended only for close friends, or meant to be kept in confidence, or that were written in haste, can end up shared with a much broader audience, including the rest of the department, professional communities, and the public. Such comments can easily be taken out of context, causing unintended pain and damage to reputations. Students and faculty who enjoy the benefits of social media should 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.

While the very seamlessness with which electronic and social media have become integrated into the lives of their users brings many benefits, it also makes it possible to mix the professional and personal in ways that can blur important lines. For example, faculty who “friend” or “follow” students run a number of risks. First, this may send the student the message that the faculty member expects close personal relationships with students, or that the absence of a personal relationship could harm a student’s long-term success in the program and beyond. This is, of course, inappropriate, and can be particularly problematic when the faculty

member is male and the student female. Second, “friending” students can seem to pressure them into sharing personal information that the students would not normally want to share with faculty. Third, “friending” can appear to draw in-group/out-group lines that can be corrosive to student morale and create the appearance of favoritism. All of these problems can be avoided by careful and appropriately restrained use of social media.

- Faculty members may wish to consider making a policy of not adding current graduate and undergraduate students in their program to their online social networks. Some departments have adopted an informal policy along these lines, offering faculty a policy-based explanation for declining social media connection requests from students. However, social media can also be a useful way of developing professional relationships with students, as long as certain guidelines are followed, including the following:
 - Learn 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 block posts that share information best left out of a professional setting. For example, some forms of personal information—including marital status, religious affiliation, and sexual orientation—are protected information that employers and graduate admissions committees are prohibited from considering, and that one may not want them to know.
 - Understand and respect students’ FERPA privacy rights.
 - When posting, always be aware of one’s audience. Posts visible to colleagues and students should observe norms of professional respect.

Twitter and similar forms of microblogging social media make it possible to share news and information, broadcast opinions and requests, and 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 broadcasts or tweets. 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 and similar microblogging social media have important drawbacks, which include the ease with which personal and professional activities and opinions can intermix, and the fact that one’s opinion may end up broadcast to a much larger audience, and with less context, than one intended. Posts made in one’s role as faculty should be professional and should never contain or refer to confidential information. Student information is, as noted above, protected by FERPA and by norms of privacy that should always be observed by professional educators. The use of Twitter or other social media in order to broadcast denigrating or humiliating remarks about others is never appropriate.

Communication on department websites

Many departmental websites are oriented toward recruiting undergraduate majors or minors, or graduate students. 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-American PhDs in these discipline. 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 and make changes as appropriate.

In addition, departments should carefully phrase references on websites to departmental areas of emphasis and strength. If a program is strong in history of philosophy and in epistemology, for example, but does not have course content from non-Western traditions, these strengths should be identified as being in “Western history of philosophy” and “Western epistemology.” If a program is not truly comprehensive, broad, or inclusive with regard to traditions and readings, the department website should not describe the program in such terms. (This recommendation is in line with the [APA Statement on the Global Character of Philosophy](#).)

It is a good practice for departmental websites to refrain from referring to rankings based on incomplete data or non-representative survey samples in order to promote their reputation in the field.

References

Leslie, S.-J., A. Cimpian, M. Meyer, and E. Freeland. “Expectations of Brilliance Underlie Gender Distributions across Academic Disciplines.” *Science* 347, no. 6219 (2015): 262–65.

Section 7, Appendix A: Some general norms for discussions

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 on the climate for discussion in the department, its talks, and its classes and seminars. Placing the possible adoption of a set of norms on the agenda might encourage taking the climate for discussion seriously. The norms below are excerpted and adapted from a [list compiled by David Chalmers](#).

Norms of respect

- Don't interrupt.
- Don't present objections as flat dismissals. (Leave open the possibility that there's a response.)
- Don't be incredulous or sarcastic, or mime astonishment or amusement to others in the audience.
- Don't start side conversations parallel to the main discussion.
- Acknowledge your interlocutor's insights.
- Object to theses, not to people.

Norms of constructiveness

- Objections are fine, but it's also always okay 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 okay to question the presuppositions of a project or an area, but discussions in which these questions dominate can be unhelpful.
- Don't 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 okay to ask a question that you think may be obtuse or uninformed.

- Don't use unnecessarily offensive examples.
- Be aware of others in the audience who might be attempting unsuccessfully to enter the discussion, or are being interrupted, and attempt to find a way to incorporate or invite them into the discussion.
- Many departments have had good success with the practice of asking first for questions from undergraduates or graduate students before proceeding to questions from faculty or others.

Section 8: Mental and emotional health and safety

Academic life is notorious for its pressures upon students and faculty alike, yet questions about mental and emotional health often go undiscussed. Members of the academic community are often unclear about how to respond when fellow members of the community appear to be undergoing psychological difficulty, or how privacy considerations interact with the concern to help, or what resources might be available to them and others for contending with issues of mental and emotional health and safety. In the background are also more general concerns about how to create a climate in which questions of mental and emotional health are less stigmatized and isolating, and individuals are more likely to receive the treatment they need.

Student mental and emotional health and safety

Students at all levels are under exceptionally high levels of stress, and the proportion of students seeking help for anxiety, depression, and related disorders has risen from 19% in 2007 to 34% in 2017, while lifetime diagnoses rose from 22% to 36% (Lipson et al. 2018). Debate continues over whether these increases are reflective of underlying changes in mental health as opposed to greater willingness to seek treatment, but even if the underlying rates are constant, we should be aware that it is likely that one in five undergraduates is experiencing mental health difficulties. Such problems of mental and emotional health are often the cause of academic failure even in dedicated and talented students. This should be a special concern for us as educators, particularly because colleges and universities often have available facilities for the treatment of psychological distress and disorder, though at present those facilities are having difficulty meeting demand. Depression is of particular concern since, while twenty percent of college students say their depression level is higher than it should be, only 6 percent say that they would seek help, and still fewer actually do seek help. Suicide is now the second leading cause of death for students at college or university, and the number of students taking their own lives or attempting to do so is increasing, and the chief cause of suicide in this age group is untreated depression. 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 are covered by student or faculty health plans. Be aware that some students come from backgrounds where family resources and lack of adequate insurance have meant that seeking professional help has been limited to serious emergencies. 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 also 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—they are often the first in any official capacity 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 they should know that *FERPA (the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974)* is not a barrier to taking steps to provide necessary support for individual students in crisis, or to protect 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 the student or others, you are not violating privacy rights to raise the issue with the student. You can encourage the student to discuss their 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 and cannot promise confidentiality*. When students discuss suicide, threaten the safety of others, or give you information that suggests that they or other students might be involved in sexual misconduct covered under Title IX or that might pose a threat to safety inside or outside the classroom, you are under a professional 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 recommended 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 concerns without your 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 them 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 coping methods they have used in the past.
- Attempt to get the student to agree to take manageable, concrete steps to help overcome whatever academic difficulties might have arisen from their distress—uncompleted work, inability to study, failure to attend classes or exams, etc.—and to agree to keep you informed as these steps are taken.
- Have confidence in your insight and reactions in spotting difficulties and offering help, 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 safety issues arise. Your college or university may have specific guidelines for conduct in such cases and for reporting, which are normally available on the website of campus security services.

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 ceased 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.

Departments should ensure that all instructors 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 for all faculty and graduate students in which relevant mental health professionals and legal staff at the college or university provide guidance in dealing with student difficulties.

Faculty and instructors should be aware that the sources of student distress are varied and often arise from concerns outside the classroom. Most colleges and universities have offices that provide counseling and help for students who are victims of assault or harassment, who are struggling with substance abuse, whose family life is in crisis or disarray, or who face financial difficulty, however, the nature of these difficulties may make students reluctant to come forward and ask for help. Creating an environment where students feel able to bring such concerns forward and receive help is a complex matter, but is a fundamental obligation of institutions and individuals. Many faculty and staff are mandatory reporters of sexual harassment or assault under Title IX or the Clery Act, and all faculty or staff should be aware whether or not they have this responsibility, what it involves, and to whom they must make a report. It is a good practice for departments to take steps to ensure that mandatory reporters receive proper information and, where applicable, training. If a student approaches you with a concern about sexual assault or harassment, be sure to inform them immediately whether you are a mandatory reporter, but also clarify that bringing their concern to a mandatory reporter does not oblige them to take any particular action—whether to initiate a formal complaint remains their decision. Because policies concerning the reporting of potential sexual misconduct vary across institutions and are subject to change, faculty with advisory roles are encouraged to develop familiarity with their institution’s specific current guidelines, processes, and procedures for handling reports, along with possible accommodations (e.g., changing class schedules) that can be made to support students contending with such issues.

Some institutions are experimenting with creating an ombuds role that does not entail mandatory forwarding of reports of sexual harassment, which enables individuals with concerns who are uncertain or who fear reprisal to make an initial contact, explore relevant questions and alternatives, and receive advice and help. Moreover, some institutions have established “first responder” programs which train faculty and instructors on appropriate responses to students who confide with them any potential sexual misconduct; faculty and instructors can be required or encouraged to enroll in such programs, and departments can make publicly available a list of trained faculty (e.g., on the department website). In any case, faculty, instructors, and staff have the special responsibility in that they might be the individual best placed to detect signs of such problems, or to whom the student feels able to come to discuss concerns. Faculty moreover may be able to encourage students to seek assistance by helping them directly to take the next steps.

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 Emotionally Distressed Students \(UC Santa Cruz\)](#)

Faculty and staff mental and emotional health and safety

Problems with mental health and substance abuse are not confined to students. However, while many of the same good practices discussed above apply when one encounters potential mental health problems among faculty 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. Confidential personal advice that would be acceptable in an informal setting between peers can be inappropriate in the setting of various institutional relationships. It is therefore often appropriate, when approached by a colleague or staff member in psychological distress or with a concern over harassment or substance abuse to encourage the individual to contact the college or university counseling services or other units specifically designed for these purposes. Faculty should be aware of whether they are mandatory reporters of sexual harassment or assault (see the section above for further discussion of mandatory reporting.) One should make it clear that, in advising a colleague to approach relevant college or university services, one is not attempting to dismiss or minimize the individual's concerns, but rather is seeking to support and protect the individual by facilitating access to expert guidance under conditions where the rules of confidentiality and information-sharing will be strictly observed. Following up with the individual can help assure that the concern is being taken seriously.

Special services for meeting faculty and staff needs can also serve to provide a contact that is available outside the department, and available -after business hours. All faculty and staff should familiarize themselves with these services and how to reach them. If a colleague or staff member expresses imminent suicidal tendencies, appears to pose a danger to others, or discusses behavior that constitutes sexual harassment or is otherwise unlawful, it is one's professional responsibility to determine which authorities should receive this information, and to share it with them—and to be clear with the colleague or staff member that one will be doing so. Be aware also 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 in distress, and discretion must be used in deciding whether the seriousness of the distress warrants taking any further action.

Among the forms of information departments should ensure that all faculty and staff receive are the following:

- The services available to them, including confidential ways of contacting counseling services.
- What their health or other insurance will support by way of counseling or treatment for themselves or their families.
- Good practices and professional responsibilities in dealing with a colleague or staff member who is, or appears to be, in psychological distress or a threat to others.
- How to obtain further information.

Additionally, 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 to them, and manifests the commitment of the university, college, and department to providing the support needed for maintaining mental health.

This commitment should extend beyond providing information and making services available for those in direct need. 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. Consider inviting a college or university health professional to make a presentation at a regular departmental meeting to discuss questions that might arise about physical and mental health and the services the college or university makes available. This kind of meeting 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 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 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, chair, or counseling services about mental health or substance abuse problems. While institutional concerns and procedures are important, it is also important to recognize that a colleague or staff member seeking help is in distress and needs active concern and support from those the person knows and trusts.

Responding to traumatic events on campus

Sadly, various kinds of traumatic events continue to occur on campus, including incidents of individual violence as well as harassment and intimidation of members of the academic community on grounds of race, religion, ethnicity, gender, class, or sexual orientation. Acts of individual violence can leave a long wake of student distress behind them, and acts of harassment or intimidation can be harmful not only to individual students or groups, but also to the overall climate for inclusiveness and mutual trust and respect. Typically, it will fall to larger units—the college, the university, the faculty senate, the governing board—to publicly take the lead in responding as an institution to such incidents. However, contending with such incidents 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 that is the case, 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 11th; attacks on members of particular racial, ethnic, or religious groups; the appearance of posters or messages threatening students or demeaning groups of students; campus violence; and Hurricane Katrina) suggests that simple acknowledgement by instructors of these events can be helpful for students, some of whom may be feeling anxious, upset, marginalized, and unsafe. Such acknowledgement

also creates an opening for further discussion or for students to approach faculty outside class with their concerns (Huston & DiPietro 2007).

Classroom discussion of these traumatic events, like classroom discussion in philosophy generally, is likely to be more constructive if the instructor provides some structure 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 11th anxiety in college students found that mental disengagement and emotional venting alike led to reduced ability to cope (Liverant et al. 2004).

Faculty should also be aware of campus guidelines and procedures in the event of a natural disaster or act of violence, and what role they are expected to play in helping to protect the safety of colleagues, staff, and students. Departments can help promote such awareness by scheduling presentations from those with primary responsibility for such issues on campus.

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.

Lipson, S.K., E.G. Lattie, and D. Eisenberg. “Increased Rates of Mental Health Services Utilization by U.S. College Students: 10-Year Population Level Trends, 2007-2017.” *Psychiatric Services* 70 (2019): 60–63.

Liverant, G.I., S.G. Hofmann, and B.T. Litz. “Coping and Anxiety in College Students after the September 11th Terrorist Attacks.” *Anxiety, Stress, & Coping* 17 (2004): 127–39.

[Guidelines for Discussing Incidents of Hate, Bias, and Discrimination](#) (Center for Research on Teaching and Learning, University of Michigan).