

APAGS Climate Guide for LGBTQ+ and Allied Students and Professionals

APAGS Committee on Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity
Second Edition ■ July 2018

Introduction

Dear Colleague:

Finding an academic program, internship, or work site that is welcoming to LGBTQ+ individuals can be challenging. The American Psychological Association of Graduate Students (APAGS) - Committee on Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity (CSOGD) has created this guide to help you determine if an organization will be inclusive to you. This guide does not guarantee that you will have a positive experience, but it should help you to ask the types of questions that allow you to make an informed decision about whether or not an organization will be inclusive. We also hope that site administrators will use the guide to help inform policies and procedures to make their site more inclusive and welcoming to LGBTQ+ students and allies. We acknowledge that there will be room for future revisions, improvements, and additions to this second edition so that it can be as helpful and accessible as possible. We invite your comments for future changes at apags@apa.org.

Thank you,
APAGS Committee on Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity

Authors of the First Edition (2010) were members of the group formerly known as the APAGS Committee on LGBT Concerns: lore m. dickey (chair), Frank Golom, Mike C. Parent, Bekah Jackson, Troy Loker, Ryan Cheperka

Authors of the Second Edition are members of APAGS-CSOGD:
Mary Guerrant (chair), Samantha LaMartine, Meredith Maroney, Em Matsuno, Abby Nissenbaum, Sean Rose, J Stewart

Using this Guide

The APAGS-CSOGD Climate Guide is intended to be a resource for LGBTQ+ students and allies to evaluate potential sites for graduate school training, practica, internships, pre- and post-doctoral training, and/or professional work. We present important questions related to sites organized by seven specific domains. Questions for each domain were identified by the committee as being important to LGBTQ+ and allied students. They may be answerable through research on sites using the internet and other resources. Not all information may be readily obtainable through research; some questions might best be answered through interviews with site staff or current students or professionals. Use your discretion when determining when and whom to ask.

We understand that not all questions are applicable to all everyone using the guide, or for all sites one is surveying. As such, we provide no single rating scale to judge or compare sites. Instead, the guide is intended to facilitate evaluation of sites according to your personal needs with a worksheet to help you do so. We encourage you to use this guide as a companion to *Proud and Prepared, a Guide for LGBT Student Navigating Graduate Training* (apa.org/apags/resources/lgbt-guide.aspx).

1. External Environment

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

- Does the location the site is in recognize same-sex marriages?
- Does the location have laws protecting same-sex domestic partners?
- Is sexual orientation covered under nondiscrimination laws?
- Is gender identity covered under nondiscrimination laws?
- Does the location have hate crimes legislation regarding sexual orientation and gender identity?
- Where is the office located (is it in a high-profile area or is it hidden somewhere that makes it harder to access)?

2. Organizational Track Record

Organizational performance on LGBTQ+ issues is not only an outcome, but also an indicator of effort or achievement.

- Does the organization have any type of award recognizing accomplishments by LGBTQ+ community members?

- Does the organization have any type of award recognizing contributions to the LGBTQ+ community?
- Have members of the organization been recognized by an LGBTQ+ advocacy group?
- Has the organization itself been recognized by any LGBTQ+ service groups?
- Has the organization, or members of it, received any attention for not being LGBTQ+ friendly?
- What is the organization's track record regarding LGBTQ+ discrimination?
- Do LGBTQ+ employees at the site feel fairly compensated for their work?

3. Leadership

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

- Have leaders in the organization been publicly supportive of the LGBTQ+ community?
- Are there currently openly LGBTQ+ individuals in high-level leadership positions?
- Has there historically been openly LGBTQ+ individuals in leadership positions?
- Is there a committee that deals with LGBTQ+ issues in advising decision-making?
- Are leaders exposed to LGBTQ+ issues in mandatory diversity training?
- Are research projects on LGBTQ+ issues supported by administrative personnel? Are research funding sources available or is there an unwritten policy regarding not supporting this type of research?

4. Mission and Strategy

Mission and strategy are what the organization's top leaders believes and have declared to be, the organization's guiding values and principles, its strategic approach to achieving alignment with such values and principles, and what employees see as the central purpose of the organization.

- Is diversity and inclusion part of the mission and strategy of the organization?
- Does a commitment to diversity explicitly include LGBTQ+ issues?
- Does the organization have a strategy for addressing LGBTQ+ inclusion and/or incidences of gender and sexual minority inequity?
- Are there explicit and achievable goals for the organization regarding LGBTQ+ inclusion and/or addressing gender and sexual minority inequity?
- Does a commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion also prioritize intersections with other marginalized identities and statuses (e.g., race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, religion)?
- Does the organization have LGBTQ+ stakeholders?
- Is service to LGBTQ+ communities a part of the organization's mission or practices?
- How much autonomy do LGBTQ+ persons at the site have (i.e., does it differ from the level of institutional autonomy offered to heterosexual and/or cisgender colleagues)?
- To what extent are LGBTQ+ topics and concerns addressed across subject matter content?
- Is knowledge of LGBTQ+ topics and concerns expected? Or, is it viewed as more of a "special interest"?
- Is work that incorporates LGBTQ+ issues and concerns met with support and encouragement or with roadblocks, resistance, and/or disapproval?

5. Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is the collection of enduring overt and covert rules, values, and principles that guide its behaviors.

- Are LGBTQ+ concerns included in discussions about diversity?
- Does the organization consider diversity within the LGBTQ+ community?
- Are LGBTQ+ issues addressed in promotion materials, marketing materials, or employee resources?
- Are supervisors prepared, willing, and able to discuss cultural considerations specific to the LGBTQ+ community both within and outside of supervision as needed?
- Do members identify their pronouns on name tags and in email signatures?
- Are LGBTQ+ persons at the site able to openly identify as LGBTQ+?
- Do/did LGBTQ+ persons at the site feel safe coming out?
- Are LGBTQ+ persons able to talk about their personal life in a way that doesn't rely on "code" (e.g., using the correct gender for your partner rather than hiding your relationship, sexuality, gender identity, or all of the above)?
- Do organization members with whom LGBTQ+ persons work talk with LGBTQ+ members about their personal lives in a manner similar to how they talk with heterosexual members about their personal lives (e.g., ask about the partner or family of an LGBTQ+ colleague just as they would ask how a heterosexual and/or cisgender colleague's partner or family is doing)?

- Do colleagues demonstrate heteronormative and cisnormative bias in their daily conversations?
- Is knowledge of LGBTQ+ topics and concerns incorporated across the organization for the wellbeing and best interest of LGBTQ+ identifying colleagues, trainees, and employees?
- Are LGBTQ+ individuals comfortable pursuing initiatives of interest/importance to them?
- Do LGBTQ+ persons at the site feel comfortable and supported in addressing LGBTQ+ topics related to any coursework, research, or clinical experiences?

6. Structure

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

- How are LGBTQ+ topics and concerns addressed and to whom is this responsibility assigned (e.g., only to the LGBTQ+ staff member)?
- Do divisions within the organization demonstrate culturally competent service?
- Does the organization have an LGBTQ+ affinity group for students or employees, and/or an Office on LGBTQ+ Affairs or Well-Being? If you've participated, what has been your experience? If there's not currently a group or office, has interest for one been expressed?
- Is the office given sufficient resources and staff? (Does the website list one person or many?)
- Are there safe spaces for LGBTQ+ members of the organization to meet?
- Does the site have all-gender restrooms?
- Are trans or gender diverse employees able use their name on emails, organization documents, evaluations, etc. if it has not been legally changed?
- If news of "life accomplishments" (marriage, baby, etc.) are announced in publications, does this include events for LGBTQ+ individuals?
- Are employees able to put photos of their family members in their work area of partners, children, biological family, chosen family, or otherwise?
- Do LGBTQ+ persons at the site feel comfortable and supported in addressing LGBTQ+ topics related to any coursework, research, or clinical experiences?
- How much autonomy do LGBTQ+ persons at the site have (i.e., does it differ from the level of institutional autonomy offered to heterosexual and/or cisgender colleagues)?
- Are LGBTQ+ individuals comfortable pursuing initiatives of interest/importance to them?
- Does the organization have an LGBTQ+ listserv or equivalent?
- When referring to other employees/students, are LGBTQ+ individuals outed as the spokesperson for all LGBTQ+ people? Do LGBTQ+ employees ever feel unduly tokenized?
- Are LGBTQ+ employees asked explicitly about their needs?
- Does the organization collect systematic data on the needs and experiences of LGBTQ+ employees?

7. Systems (Policies and Procedures)

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

- Is there a Safe Zone or similar program?
- Is there an ally training program?
- Does the organization actively recruit LGBTQ+ employees?
- Has the organization responded positively to local or national initiatives to gain LGBTQ+ rights?
- Does the organization have a position that explicitly prohibits political involvement?
- Is the organization affiliated with a religious organization? If so, might this religious institution or tradition espouse homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, or otherwise oppressive sentiments towards members of the LGBTQ+ community? If so, how does the organization manage this affiliation in relation to its LGBTQ+ members?
- Does the organization's insurance provider(s) offer medical benefits for the gender affirming care of trans-identified people, including but not limited to hormone therapy, gender affirming surgery, facial feminization surgery, electrolysis, and voice therapy?
- Does the organization provide partner benefits?
- Does the organization have sexual orientation nondiscrimination policies?
- Does the organization have gender identity nondiscrimination policies?

- Does the organization enforce sexual orientation nondiscrimination policies?
- Does the organization enforce gender identity nondiscrimination policies?
- Does this organization use LGBTQ-inclusive intakes/demographic forms?
- What is the organization's track record regarding LGBTQ+ discrimination?

Worksheet

The following worksheet is intended to be used for your evaluation of sites. For each site, record important strengths and weaknesses that may be especially important for you. Then, for each of the seven categories in this guide, record a score for the site based on how well the site performs in each category.

Site A:						Other Notes
1. External Environment	A	B	C	D	F	
2. Organizational Track Record	A	B	C	D	F	
3. Leadership	A	B	C	D	F	
4. Mission and Strategy	A	B	C	D	F	
5. Organizational Culture	A	B	C	D	F	
6. Structure	A	B	C	D	F	
7. Systems	A	B	C	D	F	
Strengths:						
Weaknesses:						
Site B:						Other Notes
1. External Environment	A	B	C	D	F	
2. Organizational Track Record	A	B	C	D	F	
3. Leadership	A	B	C	D	F	
4. Mission and Strategy	A	B	C	D	F	
5. Organizational Culture	A	B	C	D	F	
6. Structure	A	B	C	D	F	
7. Systems	A	B	C	D	F	
Strengths:						
Weaknesses:						
Site C:						Other Notes
1. External Environment	A	B	C	D	F	
2. Organizational Track Record	A	B	C	D	F	
3. Leadership	A	B	C	D	F	
4. Mission and Strategy	A	B	C	D	F	
5. Organizational Culture	A	B	C	D	F	
6. Structure	A	B	C	D	F	
7. Systems	A	B	C	D	F	
Strengths:						
Weaknesses:						

References and Further Reading

Burke, W. W., & Litwin, G. H. (1992). A causal model of organizational performance and change. *Journal of Management*, 18, 532-545. [This is the model that was used as the basis for the development of the Climate Guide.] ■ Rankin, S. (2003). *Campus climate for sexual minorities: A national perspective*. New York: N.Y.: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute. [This is an example of a work that addresses LGBTQ+ campus climate.] ■ Schein, E. H. (1990). Organizational culture. *American Psychologist*, 45, 109-119. [This reference is for a general article regarding organizational culture.]