



## POLITICAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

### GUIDELINES FOR GOOD PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT<sup>1</sup>

Agreed by the PSAI AGM on October 18, 2014

*It should be noted that these are 'guidelines': that is they are intended to express aspirations of best practice by members of the Association. The PSAI is not a regulatory body. Nothing in these guidelines shall be taken to contradict or otherwise undermine the various codes of conducts and research ethics guidelines which adhere in the diverse universities and institutes to which the great majority of Association members are already bound by.*

#### **Profession and Subject**

PSAI members have a general duty to promote the growth and spreading of knowledge of political science and its related disciplines to the highest academic standards, to protect academic freedom, and to promote a working environment appropriate to these aims. The content of teaching and research is diverse and subject to change. Members should be prepared to recognise the diversity of their subject. Members are entitled to hold political opinions and to act politically. However they have a general duty not to present their own political convictions as though they carry the authority of professional knowledge. In all their work members should conduct themselves in a manner that does not bring into disrepute the discipline and their profession.

#### **Professional Canons of Citation**

Members have the obligation to report accurately their qualifications. The normal scholarly canons of citation allowing for verification should be thoroughly and rigorously maintained in curriculum vitae, job applications, in submission for promotion and assessment and in other public biographical information. Members should perform the work they undertake in a timely, competent and efficient manner.

#### **Colleagues**

The development of knowledge depends upon high personal standards of scholarly conduct. Such standards necessarily rely less on policing than on trustworthy behaviour. Members have the responsibility not to engage in actions that impede the reasonable professional activities of colleagues. This means that, inter alia, they should not unreasonably delay the flow of research data and should not condone falsification or distortion by others. They should not prejudice individuals, communities, agencies or institutions against a colleague for reasons of personal advantage. Trust should not be abused. Members have an obligation to maintain professional confidentiality where required.

#### **Refereeing and Reviewing**

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<sup>1</sup> These guidelines are based closely on a document produced by our sister association, the Political Studies Association (UK), that were drafted by Hugh Berrington, Joni Lovenduski, Geraint Parry and Albert Weale. The guidelines have been modified in places to suit the circumstances of the PSAI. We are grateful to the Chair of the PSA for permission to use this document for our own purposes.

Members may undertake a wide range of review processes including reviewing research proposals, or manuscripts before publication, book reviews, research grant applications, accreditation of courses, examination of theses, writing references for students and colleagues. Members have a general duty to ensure that any participation in review processes is an honest evaluation of the work in question and to make declarations of interest where these occur. The expression of strong views against a particular piece of work are part and parcel of the review process. In reviewing the work of others, however, members should avoid conflicts of interest. Normally they should also avoid participating in review procedures where their judgement could be compromised. Members should not normally review the same book in more than one journal, except in the relatively rare cases where the journals involved have non overlapping readerships and where the editors have agreed. All reviews should be based on full and conscientious reading and consideration of the work in question. Editors of journals or books accepting or soliciting manuscripts should ensure that publication is as prompt as is reasonably practicable. Potential delays should be communicated to the author as quickly as possible, with permission to seek publication elsewhere if the delay is likely to be prolonged. Members should supply requested references promptly and ensure these are full, fair and adequately considered. Within legal limits, they should not disclose personal information that is not directly relevant to the post in question without the subject's explicit and prior consent. In cases where they feel unable to give a positive reference, that information should be clearly communicated to the person concerned to enable them to seek other referees.

### **Professional Conduct**

Members employed in teaching institutions have both academic and ethical obligations to their students including general duties of competence in communication, adequate preparation and up to date knowledge. Members should take full account of the needs of students when seeking an appropriate balance between their teaching, administrative and research roles. Members should observe the following principles in their treatment of students: All students are entitled to adequate information in good time about the content of courses, programme choice, modes of assessment, and appeals procedures. They are also entitled to prompt and fair evaluation of their work and to keeping full and proper records of their progress. Members should support student studies in a diligent manner by regular attendance in teaching and by being available for consultation by students. Members have a duty to avoid unfair discriminatory practices. This applies particularly to racial and sexual harassment. Members should not allow intellectual differences or personal animosities among colleagues to impinge on students' relationships with those colleagues.

### **Research**

Research activities should be reported accurately and results should be disseminated as promptly as is reasonable. Research methods should be accurately and clearly reported and, where appropriate, replicability maximised. Members should never present others' work as their own or hold up the publication of work by others so that their own gets precedence. Members should never misrepresent knowingly the findings of their research or the work of others or claim falsely, either openly or implicitly, to have published research. Members should refrain from claiming the credit for the research and intellectual property of others and give due credit to the contributions of others in collaborative work. Members should not allow the undertaking of sponsored research to damage or otherwise impair the academic integrity of their professional conduct. The Association recognises the importance and value of anonymity and confidentiality in the work of many of the researchers in the field of political science, and that both are sometimes expected by those giving information for academic purposes. Members should, in the first instance, ensure that their research conforms with the ethical regulations of their own institutions. Members should treat their research subjects fairly. Subjects' agreement to participate should be given on a voluntary and informed basis. Participants should be made aware of the likely limits of confidentiality and must not be promised greater confidentiality than can be realistically guaranteed.

Members should acknowledge fully all those who contribute to their research and publications. Such acknowledgement should appear on all reports and publications in a form that is transparent and agreed by all contributors in advance of their making the contribution. Notes should be supplied to explain the meaning of the order of authors' names and of 'with', 'and' etc. Members should be particularly sensitive to this issue where there are student contributors.

### **Public**

Members have an obligation to the public to adhere to professional standards of conduct. They should keep up to date with their subject, publish their work and, where appropriate, make their research findings available in forms that are accessible. Also when engaging as an expert in the area members should be conscious that not only are they acting in the capacity of an institutional representative but they are also acting as ambassadors for the field of political science. Therefore they should be cognisant of this role when putting forward their views notwithstanding their duty to academic freedom and rightful expression.

### **Equal Opportunities**

Members should not act in ways that unfairly discriminate against students, colleagues or job applicants on the grounds of class, sex, civil status, family status, age, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or membership of the Traveller community.