

Development of APS Ethical Guidelines

1. Introduction

The purpose of the APS Ethical Guidelines is to clarify and amplify the application of the general principles and specific standards contained in the Code, and to facilitate their interpretation in contemporary areas of professional practice. The Guidelines are subsidiary to the relevant sections of the Code and must be read and interpreted in conjunction with the Code. Members acting inconsistently with the Guidelines may be required to demonstrate that their behaviour was not unethical.

2. Development of Ethical Guidelines

2.1. The Executive Director, in conjunction with the APS Board of Directors, established in 1998 an Ethical Guidelines Advisory Group (EGAG) to oversee the development of Guidelines and the regular review and revision of existing Guidelines. This group is now known as the Ethical Guidelines Committee (EGC), and its current membership includes the Chair of the EGC, the Executive Director, the Chair of the Ethics Committee, Manager Member Services, and at least three other Members who are appointed by the Board on an annual basis.

2.2. While EGC is established to develop and review Guidelines on a regular basis, a new guideline may be proposed by a member or any Unit within the Society, for example, in response to a contemporary practice issue or to a perceived professional need.

2.3. The EGC co-ordinates the development, implementation, evaluation, review and revision of APS Ethical Guidelines. EGC works in consultation with key stakeholders inside and outside the Society. These external stakeholders might include other professional associations, consumer groups, or other groups potentially affected by the adoption of the particular guidelines.

3. Rationale

All Ethical Guidelines must have a clear rationale for their development. Such a rationale should include:

- a clear context
- the benefit to members of the Society of having such Ethical Guidelines
- the benefit to clients or other consumers of psychological services
- the social or professional need to have Ethical Guidelines in a particular area
- the vulnerability of certain clients to techniques, practices or behaviours of psychologists
- the need to amplify and/or clarify the **Code**

4. Nature of the Guidelines

Ethical Guidelines must be congruent with the Principles and Standards in the **Code**, and should be:

- current and relevant to contemporary professional practice
- distributed for consultation and comment both within the APS, and where appropriate, outside the APS,
- evaluated regularly and updated every five years

5. Publication

Ethical Guidelines will be produced periodically as a booklet published by the APS. Availability of the Ethical Guidelines will be notified via APS Matters on the APS website, and through InPsych. It is anticipated that it will be updated and reprinted regularly. Members can download all Guidelines from the APS website.

6. Evaluation, review and update

All Ethical Guidelines should be reviewed regularly. All Ethical Guidelines are clearly marked with their date of adoption by the Board of Directors. Evaluation of any Ethical Guidelines should take place regularly with a view to making revisions or a decision about their usefulness on a five year cycle. More regular revisions may take place if required. The EGC will provide an opportunity for members to contribute to the review of Ethical Guidelines.