
SAPEA Strategy on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Principles of engagement

1. Respect all participants

Treat all participants professionally and with respect, regardless of seniority, role, discipline, academy Fellowship status, institutional affiliation, career stage, gender, or geographical background.

2. Respect dissenting views

Recognise disagreement as a normal and productive part of the scientific exchange and engage with dissenting views thoughtfully and without dismissal. Dissenting views on evidence, evidence-based conclusions and policy options are made transparent in the publication.

3. Critique ideas, not individuals

Direct critique at evidence, methods and arguments, not at the individuals advancing them.

4. Listen attentively

Give all speakers full attention, avoid interruption and allow time for reflection before responding

5. Create conditions for inclusive participation

Foster a working environment in which participants from different disciplines, career stages, gender, geographical backgrounds and communication styles feel welcome and able to contribute to discussion and deliberation in ways that suit them. This includes being attentive to how seniority, disciplinary norms, institutional status, language fluency or confidence may shape participation, and taking shared responsibility for creating inclusive discussion.

6. Be open to revision

Treat feedback and critique as part of the scholarly process and remain open to revision in light of new arguments, evidence or data.

7. Respect confidentiality

Respect the confidentiality of unpublished work, preliminary findings and personal remarks informally shared.

8. Acknowledge contributions

Attribute ideas and contributions accurately, including in informal settings.

9. Address issues constructively

Raise concerns directly, respectfully and in good faith, at the earliest appropriate opportunity.

10. Focus on shared inquiry

Keep collective understanding as the primary purpose of discussion, above the defence of positions or the outcome of individual arguments. This means contributing to an environment in which participants feel able to ask questions, express uncertainty, offer challenge and share perspectives without fear of dismissal or professional disadvantage.