

APA Official Actions

Position Statement on Academic Freedom of Psychiatrists

Approved by the Board of Trustees, July 2024

Approved by the Assembly, May 2024

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“Policy documents are approved by the APA Assembly and Board of Trustees. . . These are . . . position statements that define APA official policy on specific subjects. . .” – *APA Operations Manual*

Issue:

Psychiatrists are central to undergraduate medical education, graduate medical education, and continuing professional development. Psychiatrists also conduct critical research regarding the causes and treatments of mental illness. Academic freedom is the freedom of psychiatrists to effectively teach others about mental illness and to discover and disseminate new information about the field of psychiatry. Unfortunately, many challenges to academic freedom have arisen in recent years, including laws restricting speech at institutions of higher education.

APA Position:

It is the position of the APA that academic freedom is a critical element of teaching medical students, residents, fellows, and practicing psychiatrists. The goal of open dialogue in psychiatric education is to reduce bias and promote trust. Psychiatric educators must be allowed to create and implement curricula based on best available evidence that foster discussion of complex mental health topics. Effective psychiatric education creates a knowledgeable, diverse, equitable, and inclusive community of psychiatrists, who in turn will provide mental health care to an increasingly diverse population.

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Collaborators: N/A