



# BEST PRACTICES FOR **ECONOMISTS:**

**BUILDING A  
MORE DIVERSE,  
INCLUSIVE,  
AND PRODUCTIVE  
PROFESSION**

# AEA BEST PRACTICES FOR ECONOMISTS:

## BUILDING A MORE DIVERSE, INCLUSIVE, AND PRODUCTIVE PROFESSION

Visit [www.aeaweb.org/resources/bestpractices](http://www.aeaweb.org/resources/bestpractices) to find practical suggestions for implementation and supporting research and resources.



### CONDUCTING RESEARCH

#### 1. Organize conferences, seminars, and visitor programs that are inclusive.

Each conference, panel, seminar series, or other forum should feature a diverse group of economists.

#### 2. Ensure that the conferences and seminar discussions you host are constructive.

Setting and enforcing rules of responsible behavior by attendees at conference and seminar presentations can increase the quality of the intellectual exchange.

#### 3. Provide equitable access to journals.

Ensuring that boards of editors at journals are diverse, that high standards of ethical and equitable behavior are set, and that referees adhere to them may help reduce biases in the editorial process.

#### 4. Read and cite diversely; think inclusively.

Citing a diverse set of authors on syllabi and bibliographies and finding value in alternative research approaches can improve your research and the discipline.

#### 5. Share research opportunities broadly.

Seeking diversity when identifying research assistants and potential collaborators can help counter existing biases.



### SERVING AS COLLEAGUES

#### 1. Discuss and enforce a code of conduct.

Establishing rules for unbiased conduct facilitates important conversations, sets clear expectations, and creates a more productive and inclusive environment.

#### 2. Be an effective bystander.

Signaling a willingness to listen and to speak up when you observe inappropriate behavior helps set norms for fair conduct.

#### 3. Be a good mentor.

Improving your mentoring skills encourages those around you to do the same. A more supportive environment attracts better colleagues and creates productive work relationships.

#### 4. Create room for your colleagues' work-life choices.

Supporting one another's need for fulfilling professional and personal lives improves mental health and productivity.

#### 5. Meet your colleagues where they are.

Valuing differences helps individuals, and the profession, thrive. There is no set profile of what an economist should look like, and there is no rulebook for what constitutes economics research.



## WORKING WITH STUDENTS

### 1. Use outreach to counter stereotypes about economics and close other information gaps.

When faculty proactively offer information about the breadth of the field of economics, more students from underrepresented groups study economics. Simple changes can help students who are less familiar with academia.

### 2. Offer course content that is relevant for diverse students.

Students come to our classes with a wide range of life experiences and interests, but standard economics curricula often fall short of engaging diverse students.

### 3. Use effective and inclusive classroom techniques.

Active learning and other evidence-based pedagogical approaches are effective, inclusive, and straightforward to implement. These techniques have especially large benefits for members of underrepresented groups.

### 4. Build a sense of belonging for all students.

The extreme demographic imbalances in economics departments present an unhealthy environment and an unlevel playing field. When students from underrepresented groups receive explicit and implicit messages that they belong in the field, their performance and persistence improve.

### 5. Help your students understand and enjoy the learning process.

When students and faculty understand that abilities are developed through education, effort, and experience, academic performance improves, satisfaction increases, and race and gender gaps narrow.



## LEADING DEPARTMENTS AND WORKPLACES

### 1. Implement a structured and fair recruiting process.

Adopting best practices in recruiting can increase the diversity of candidate pools and decrease the influence of human biases on hiring decisions.

### 2. Conduct promotion, tenure, and annual performance reviews in a transparent and equitable manner.

Being transparent about the criteria that will determine evaluation outcomes, and thinking carefully about what those criteria should be, can reduce the biases that taint evaluation processes.

### 3. Implement an inclusive process for admitting and developing graduate students.

Departments can structure their admissions and advising processes to identify, recruit, and develop a much wider range of talent.

### 4. Create an inclusive, constructive culture and deal firmly with instances of exclusion, harassment, discrimination, and disrespectful treatment.

Clear and consistent communication about expectations for behavior and firm action when those expectations are not met can help establish a positive, productive, and inclusive culture.

### 5. Structure your meetings and workplaces to be inclusive.

Inclusive procedures and practices can increase productivity, avoid marginalizing certain voices, and ensure all members of the community have access to the resources and opportunities they need to thrive.

“When economics is tested by future challenges, I hope that our profession will be able to say that we have done all we could to attract the best people and the best ideas.”

—Janet Yellen



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Developed by the  
*AEA Task Force on Best Practices for  
Professional Conduct in Economics*

[www.aeaweb.org/resources/bestpractices](http://www.aeaweb.org/resources/bestpractices)

