

PESA: Safe spaces and integrity statement

This statement is a work in progress, an aspirational and living document. The purpose of this Statement is to recognize and to clarify the expectation that all members of PESA feel valued and safe within the Society; intellectually, physically, culturally and emotionally. Feeling safe is a subjective experience combining these dimensions. The Society demonstrates care and respect for the land and its custodians at every social gathering, function and meeting. The spaces in which PESA members feel safe should encompass physical, verbal, online spaces and temporal, for instance, in demands on one's time, emotional labour and ways of thinking and being. We recognise in this Statement the immense value of the diversity in philosophical work in education and the different methods of its embodiment. For instance, discussion, deliberation, argument, and dialogue are popular methods to practice philosophy. These forms of communication often produce strong emotions. Nevertheless, PESA expects that all members are treated respectfully, fairly, and in ways that advance viewpoints without demeaning, threatening, or disparaging other ideas or people. We aim to offer an environment where members at all career and life stages feel able to explore philosophical questions – especially of a nature that they may not be able to raise in other collegial or academic environments - and especially within the intensified conditions of academic precarity and increased workloads.

Membership is the heart of PESA and constitutes the integrity of our organisation. We oppose all forms of discrimination and harassment. We celebrate and actively include all forms of diversity, including our indigenous and non-indigenous members, members from diverse backgrounds, genders, sexual orientations, religious affiliation, abilities, health, age, institutional affiliation and academic and scholarly experiences.

At PESA events, in collective work, mentoring relationships and in interpersonal interactions we expect that all members uphold values such as:

- care
- academic, organisational and personal integrity
- respect
- equity and inclusion
- honesty
- openness to marginalised perspectives
- good faith negotiation of power imbalance and privilege

Membership is a community which is co-constructed and co-relational. We acknowledge that within such an organization power relationships are constantly present, fluid and dynamic. Power certainly operates formally, often through structural difference, for instance, age and experience, organizational positions, and, of course, background, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. Power also operates informally and subjectively, and with regard to how different people and different groups understand different practices of authority and different forms of influence. With this Statement we recognize that we are not “there yet”; there is still further work to be done; we can and must do more if greater equity and inclusion are our aims. Safety remains a precarious experience in a society and community marked by diversity, and where all are not in fact equal beyond the formal sense of the term. In considering the diversity of our membership (in location, career stage and certainty, cultural and linguistic differences; to name a few) we realise this is a problem of this and all communities, to work to lift the burden off those who are less powerful. Inclusion is not a responsibility of the powerless, the precarious, and the vulnerable, but rather of the powerful, the confident, the assured, and the privileged.

PESA Safe Spaces Statement [Version 1]

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