

Appendix F: Fairness and Sensitivity Guidelines

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1. STEREOTYPING

Tests must not use stereotypes, standardized mental pictures held about members of a group that represent an oversimplified opinion, affective attitude, or uncritical judgment.

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The following are categories of stereotypes to be avoided:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Race/Ethnicity
- Sexual orientation

2. INFLAMMATORY OR CONTROVERSIAL MATERIALS

Avoid topics that are upsetting, divisive, and unrelated to what is being assessed. If the content is part of the academic content standards then it is to be assessed.

The following are examples of topics to be avoided:

- Abortion
- Animal rights
- Car accidents
- Death
- Disease
- Divorce
- Evolution
- Injuries
- Oppression
- Politics
- Pornography
- Poverty
- Race relations
- Religion
- Sexuality
- Unemployment
- War

3. ADVICE

Unless required by specifications, tests should not advise on matters pertaining to health and well-being about which there is not universal agreement.

The following are categories of advice to be avoided:

- Diet
- Health
- Religion
- Sexual preference
- Wellness

4. DANGEROUS ACTIVITIES

Unless required by specifications, tests should not contain content that portrays people engaged in or explains how to engage in dangerous activities.

The following are examples of activities to be avoided:

- Hunting
- Mountain climbing
- Parachuting
- Skiing

5. POPULATION DIVERSITY, REPRESENTATIVENESS, AND ETHNOCENTRISM

Tests should reflect in a positive fashion the racial and ethnic composition of the testing population.

- Reflect the diversity of the testing population
- People portrayed in nontraditional, positive roles
- Use stimulus materials (such as works of literature) produced by members of minority communities
- Use personal names from different ethnic origin communities
- Use pictures of people from different ethnic origin communities
- Avoid ethnocentrism (the attitude that all people should share a particular group's language, beliefs, culture, or religion)

6. DIFFERENTIAL FAMILIARITY: ELITISM AND DIF

Tests must avoid words, phrases, concepts, and beliefs that are likely to be familiar or accessible to **only** certain groups (gender, racial, geographical, socioeconomic, religious, or ethnic) of the testing population.

Specialized concepts and terminology from the following areas should be avoided:

- Construction
- Finance
- Knowledge of sports
- Law
- Machinery
- Leisure activities
- Military topics
- Politics
- Science
- Technology
- Agriculture
- Social functions

The following formats should be avoided unless being tested:

- Charts and maps
- Questions requiring use of spatial skills

7. LANGUAGE USE

Language must be as inclusive as possible

For example,

AVOID: The student is worried about her grades.
 CHOOSE: The student is worried about grades.

8. LANGUAGE ACCESSIBILITY

Tests should be free of language that could unfairly hinder the performance of nonnative speakers of English, speakers of nonstandard dialects of English, and people with language disorders.

Style	Grammar	Vocabulary
Wordiness	Rarified structures	Inappropriate register
Multiple subordinate clauses	Missing antecedents	Unnecessary jargon
Unnecessary passive construction	Grammatical double negatives	Incorrect collocations
Unnecessary conditionals	Incorrect grammar	Long compound nouns
Missing transitions	Nonstandard grammar	Gratuitous use of synonyms
Dialect/Idiolect		Low-frequency words
Rarified or regional idioms		Words with multiple meanings
Sports phrases		
Large distance between subject and verb		

9. GRAPHICS

All the foregoing standards apply to graphics.