

Grievance Policy for Addressing Formal Complaints of Sexual Harassment Under the Title IX Regulations

1. INTRODUCTION

What is the purpose of the Title IX Grievance Policy?

Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 prohibits any person in the United States from being discriminated against on the basis of sex in seeking access to any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. The U.S. Department of Education, which enforces Title IX, has long defined the meaning of Title IX's prohibition on sex discrimination broadly to include various forms of sexual harassment and sexual violence that interfere with a student's ability to equally access our educational programs and opportunities.

On May 19, 2020, the U.S. Department of Education issued a Final Rule under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 that:

- Defines the meaning of "sexual harassment" (including forms of sex-based violence)
- Addresses how this institution **must** respond to reports of misconduct falling within that definition of sexual harassment, and
- Mandates a grievance process that this institution **must** follow to comply with the law in these specific covered cases before issuing a disciplinary sanction against a person accused of sexual harassment.

See, 85 Fed. Reg. 30026 (May 19, 2020). The full text of the Final Rule and its extensive Preamble are available here: <http://bit.ly/TitleIXReg>

Based on the Final Rule, the College of Westchester will implement the following Title IX Grievance Policy, effective August 14, 2020.

How does the Title IX Grievance Policy impact other campus disciplinary policies?

In recent years, "Title IX" cases have become a short-hand for any campus disciplinary process involving sex discrimination, including those arising from sexual harassment and sexual assault. But under the Final Rule, the College of Westchester must narrow both the geographic scope of its authority to act under Title IX and the types of "sexual harassment" that it must subject to its Title IX investigation and adjudication process. **Only** incidents falling within the Final Rule's definition of sexual harassment will be investigated and, if appropriate, brought to a live hearing through the Title IX Grievance Policy defined below.

The College of Westchester remains committed to addressing any violations of its policies, even those not meeting the narrow standards defined under the Title IX Final Rule.

Specifically, our campus has a **Code of Conduct** that defines certain behavior as a violation of campus policy and a separate **Policy Against Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct** that addresses the types of sex-based offenses constituting a violation of campus policy, and the procedures for investigating and adjudicating those sex-based offenses.

To the extent that alleged misconduct falls outside the Title IX Grievance Policy, or misconduct falling outside the Title IX Grievance Policy is discovered in the course of investigating covered Title IX misconduct, the institution retains authority to investigate and adjudicate the allegations under the policies and procedures defined within the Policy Against Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment Not Covered by Title IX and Code of Conduct, as applicable, through a separate grievance proceeding. <https://www.cw.edu/title-ix-policy-prohibiting-sexual-harassment-and-sexual-misconduct#:~:text=The%20College%20of%20Westchester%20further,those%20terms%20are%20defined%20below.>

The elements established in the Title IX Grievance Policy under the Final Rule have no effect and are not transferable to any other policy of the College for any violation of the Code of Conduct, employment policies, or any civil rights violation except as narrowly defined in this Policy. This Policy does not set a precedent for other policies or processes of the College and may not be cited for or against any right or aspect of any other policy or process.

How does the Title IX Grievance Policy impact the handling of complaints?

Our existing Title IX office and reporting structure remains in place. What has changed is the way our Title IX office will handle different types of reports arising from sexual misconduct, as detailed in full throughout Section 2.

2. THE TITLE IX GRIEVANCE POLICY

Table of Contents (with page numbers as they appear in your final, adopted policy)

General Rules of Application

Effective Date

This Title IX Grievance Policy will become effective on August 14, 2020, and will only apply to formal complaints of sexual harassment brought on or after August 14, 2020. Complaints

brought prior to August 14, 2020 will be investigated and adjudicated in accordance with the Policy Against Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment in effect at the time the harassment occurred.

Revocation by Operation of Law

Should any portion of the Title IX Final Rule, 85 Fed. Reg. 30026 (May 19, 2020), be stayed or held invalid by a court of law, or should the Title IX Final Rule be withdrawn or modified to not require the elements of this policy, this policy, or the invalidated elements of this policy, will be deemed revoked as of the publication date of the opinion or order and for all reports after that date, as well as any elements of the process that occur after that date if a case is not complete by that date of opinion or order publication. Should the Title IX Grievance Policy be revoked in this manner, any conduct covered under the Title IX Grievance Policy shall be investigated and adjudicated under the existing Sexual Misconduct Policy.

Non-Discrimination in Application

The requirements and protections of this policy apply equally regardless of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, immigration status, citizenship status, national origin or other protected classes covered by federal or state law. All requirements and protections are equitably provided to individuals regardless of such status or status as a Complainant, Respondent, or Witness.

Anyone found to have violated this Policy will be subject to disciplinary action.

Individuals who wish to file a complaint about the institution's policy or process may contact the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights using contact information available at <https://ocrcas.ed.gov/contact-ocr>.

Non-Binding

Nothing in this document should be construed to create a contract between any student, employee, staff member, contract worker, vendor, visitor, or any other third party subject to or affected by the contents of this policy. The College of Westchester reserves the right to amend this policy at any time, subject to Federal and state laws and regulations.

Covered Sexual Harassment

For the purposes of this Title IX Grievance Policy, “covered sexual harassment” includes any conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. An employee conditioning educational benefits on participation in unwelcome sexual conduct (i.e., quid pro quo);
2. Unwelcome conduct that a reasonable person would determine is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the educational institution’s education program or activity;
3. Sexual assault;
4. Domestic violence;
5. Dating violence;
6. Stalking.

Sexual assault, which includes any sexual act directed against another person, without the consent of the victim including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent.

Sexual Assault is divided into the following two categories of behavior:

Sexual Assault–Non-consensual Sexual Contact: Behavior including any intentional touching of a sexual nature, however slight, whether clothed or unclothed, with any object or body part by a person against another person that is without Affirmative Consent and/or by force. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Intentional contact with the breasts, buttocks, groin, or genitals;
- Intentional touching of another with breasts, buttocks, groin, or genitals;
- Compelling someone to touch another person or oneself in a sexual manner; and
- Any intentional bodily contact in a sexual manner.

Sexual Assault–Non-consensual Sexual Intercourse: Behavior including any sexual intercourse, however slight, with any object or body part by a person against another person that is without Affirmative Consent and/or by force. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Vaginal penetration by a penis, object, tongue or finger;
- Anal penetration by a penis, object, tongue or finger; and
- Oral copulation (mouth-to-genital contact or genital-to-mouth contact).

Dating Violence includes violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim. The existence of such a relationship

would be determined based on the reporting party's statement and with consideration of the length of the relationship, the type of relationship, and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship. For the purposes of this definition, dating violence would include, but would not be limited to, sexual or physical abuse or the threat of such abuse.

Domestic violence which includes any felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim, by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common, by a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner, by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under New York State domestic or family violence laws or by any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person's acts under the domestic or family violence laws of New York.

Stalking is a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear for her, his, or others' safety, or to suffer substantial emotional distress.

Examples of stalking include but are not limited to:

- constantly appearing at places the victim is known to frequent;
- persistent unwanted communication or contact whether in person, by telephone, text, or email;
- persistent unwanted gifts;
- following or surveillance;
- spreading harmful gossip about victims;
- breaking-and-entering that can include vandalism, theft, or even simply rearranging objects so that victims know the stalker was there.

Note that conduct that does not meet one or more of these criteria may still be prohibited under the Code of Conduct or Policy Against Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct.

Other Definitions

Affirmative Consent ("Consent") is a knowing, voluntary, and mutual decision among all participants to engage in sexual activity. Consent can be given by words or actions, as long as those words or actions create clear permission regarding willingness to engage in the sexual activity. Silence or lack of resistance, in and of itself, does not demonstrate consent. The definition of consent does not vary based upon a participant's sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

The following are guiding principles for consent:

- Consent to one form of sexual activity does not imply consent to other forms of sexual activity, nor does past consent to intimacy imply consent to future intimacy.
- Consent to engage in sexual activity with one person does not imply consent to engage in sexual activity with another.
- Consent is required regardless of whether the person initiating the act is under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.
- Consent may be initially given but withdrawn at any time.
- Consent cannot be given when a person is incapacitated. A person may be incapacitated due to mental disability, sleep, unconsciousness, physical restraint, or from the consumption (voluntary or otherwise) of incapacitating drugs or quantities of alcohol. Sexual activity with someone whom you know or, reasonably should know, is mentally or physically incapacitated (i.e., by alcohol or other drug use, unconsciousness or blackout) constitutes a violation of this policy. Evidence of incapacity may be detected by physical cues, such as slurred speech, bloodshot eyes, the odor of alcohol on a person's breath or clothing, inability to maintain balance, vomiting, unusual or irrational behavior, and unconsciousness. Incapacity may be indicated by the quantity of alcohol consumed. The presence of one or more of these cues does not necessarily indicate incapacity, nor does the absence of these cues necessarily indicate capacity.
- In order to give consent, a person must be of the legal age of consent, which is 17 in New York.
- Consent cannot be given and is deemed invalid when it is the result of any coercion, intimidation, force or threat of harm.
- When consent is withdrawn or can no longer be given, sexual activity must stop.

Complainant

For the purposes of this Title IX Grievance Policy, Complainant means any individual who has reported being or is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute covered sexual harassment as defined under this policy.

Education Program or Activity

For the purposes of this Title IX Grievance Policy, the College of Westchester's "education program or activity" includes:

- Any on-campus premises
- Any off-campus premises that the College of Westchester has substantial control over. This includes buildings or property owned or controlled by a recognized student organization.
- Activity occurring within computer and internet networks, digital platforms, and computer hardware or software owned or operated by, or used in the operations of the College's programs and activities over which the College has substantial control.

Formal Complaint

For the purposes of this Title IX Grievance Policy, “formal complaint” means a document – including an electronic submission - filed by a complainant with a signature or other indication that the complainant is the person filing the formal complaint, or signed by the Title IX Coordinator, alleging sexual harassment against a respondent about conduct within the College’s education program or activity and requesting initiation of the procedures consistent with the Title IX Grievance Policy to investigate the allegation of sexual harassment.

Relevant evidence and questions

For the purposes of this Title IX Grievance Policy, “relevant” evidence and questions refer to any questions and evidence that tends to make an allegation of sexual harassment more or less likely to be true.

“Relevant” evidence and questions **do not** include the following types of evidence and questions, which are deemed “irrelevant” at all stages of the Title IX Grievance Process:

- Evidence and questions about the complainant’s sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior unless:
 - They are offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the conduct alleged by the complainant, or
 - They concern specific incidents of the complainant’s prior sexual behavior with respect to the respondent and are offered to prove consent.
- Evidence and questions that constitute, or seek disclosure of, information protected under a legally-recognized privilege, unless the person holding such privilege has waived the privilege.
- Any party’s medical, psychological, and similar records unless the party has given voluntary, written consent.

Respondent

For the purposes of this Title IX Grievance policy, Respondent means any individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute covered sexual harassment as defined under this policy.

Disability Accommodations

This Policy does not alter any institutional obligations under federal disability laws including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Parties may request reasonable accommodations for disclosed disabilities to the Title IX

Coordinator at any point before or during the Title IX Grievance Process that do not fundamentally alter the Process. The Title IX Coordinator will not affirmatively provide disability accommodations that have not been specifically requested by the Parties, even where the Parties may be receiving accommodations in other institutional programs and activities.

Making a Report Regarding Covered Sexual Harassment to the Institution

Any person may report sex discrimination, including sexual harassment (whether or not the person reporting is the person alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sex discrimination or sexual harassment), in person, by mail, by telephone, or by electronic mail, using the contact information listed for the Title IX Coordinator, or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person's verbal or written report.

Contact Information for the Title IX Coordinator:

Dr. Stacy Larson
325 Central Avenue
White Plains, NY 10606
slarson@cw.edu

Jason Schoen
325 Central Avenue
White Plains, NY 10606
jschoen@cw.edu

Janna Gullery
325 Central Avenue
White Plains, NY 10606
jgullery@cw.edu

The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for coordinating The College of Westchester's efforts to comply with Title IX, overseeing the College's responses to reports of Title IX violations, and identifying and addressing any pattern or systemic problems.

The Deputy Title IX Coordinator is:

Anna Bravo
Manager of Administrative Services/Human Resources
325 Central Avenue
White Plains, NY 10606
914-831-0353
abravo@cw.edu

The Deputy Title IX Coordinator will oversee compliance involving employees and will provide updates to the Title IX Coordinator.

Such a report may be made at any time (including during non-business hours) by using the telephone number or electronic mail address, or by mail to the office address listed for the Title IX Coordinator.

Confidential Reporting

The following Officials will provide privacy, but not confidentiality, upon receiving a report of conduct prohibited under this policy:

- Title IX Coordinator or designee
 - Deans
 - Manager of Human Resources
 - Security staff
 - Career Counselors
 - Veterans Support staff member
 - Executive Office staff
 - Managers and supervisors
 - *OPTIONAL: Other Required Reporters {Identify names or identities of other individuals mandated to report}*

The following Officials may provide confidentiality:

The Counseling Center: counseling@cw.edu or 914-831-0441

Privacy vs. Confidentiality

Consistent with the Policy Against Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment, references made to *confidentiality* refer to the ability of identified confidential resources to not report crimes and violations to law enforcement or college officials without permission, except for extreme circumstances, such as a health and/or safety emergency or child abuse. References made to *privacy* mean the College of Westchester offices and employees who cannot guarantee confidentiality but will maintain privacy to the greatest extent possible, and information disclosed will be relayed only as necessary to investigate and/or seek a resolution and to notify the Title IX Coordinator or designee, who is responsible for tracking patterns and spotting systemic issues. The College of Westchester will limit the disclosure as much as practicable, even if the Title IX Coordinator determines that the request for confidentiality cannot be honored.

Non-Investigatory Measures Available Under the Title IX Grievance Policy

Supportive Measures

Supportive measures are neither disciplinary, nor punitive. They are intended to provide support and facilitate access to the College's education program and activity. Complainants who report allegations that could constitute Sexual Harassment Prohibited by Title IX are entitled to receive supportive measures from the College regardless of whether they choose to file a formal complaint. These supportive measures may include, as appropriate:

- counseling
- extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments
- modifications of work or class schedules
- campus escort services
- restrictions on contact between the parties (no contact orders)
- changes in work or housing locations
- leaves of absence
- increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus
- No Contact orders, only when applicable to both parties

Supportive measures are non-disciplinary and non-punitive.

Request for Review and Modification: Student Complainants and Respondents may request review and modification of any supportive measure(s) that directly impact them, including review of the need for and terms of the measure(s), by submitting a request in writing to the Title IX Coordinator along with any evidence they wish to present. In the event the measure impacts the other party, they will be given an opportunity to state their position and present evidence as appropriate. The Title IX Coordinator or designee will review the submissions and make a determination.

The individual who hears the challenge to the removal determination will not be involved in any decision regarding responsibility or appeal of that decision regarding responsibility.

Emergency Removal of Student-Respondent

The College of Westchester retains the authority to remove a respondent from the College of Westchester's program or activity on an emergency basis, where the College of Westchester (1) undertakes an individualized safety and risk analysis and (2) determines that an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual arising from the allegations of covered sexual harassment justifies a removal.

If the College determines such removal is necessary, the respondent will be provided notice and an opportunity to request review and modification of the decision immediately following the removal

Administrative Leave

The College retains the authority to place a non-student employee respondent on administrative leave during the Title IX Grievance Process, consistent with the Staff & Faculty Handbook.

3. THE TITLE IX GRIEVANCE PROCESS

Filing a Formal Complaint

The timeframe for the Title IX Grievance Process begins with the filing of a Formal Complaint. The Grievance Process will be concluded within a reasonably prompt manner, and no longer than **ninety (90) school days** after the filing of the Formal Complaint, provided that the Process may be extended for a good reason, including but not limited to the absence of a party, a party's advisor, or a witness; concurrent law enforcement activity; or the need for language assistance or accommodation of disabilities. The procedure for applying for extensions is described below.

To file a Formal Complaint, a complainant must provide the Title IX Coordinator a written, signed complaint describing the facts alleged. Complainants are only able to file a Formal Complaint under this Policy if they are currently participating in, or attempting to participate in, the education programs or activities of the College, including as an employee. The College reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to utilize the Policy Against Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Not Covered by Title IX to address complaints from complainants who are not currently participating or attempting to participate in the education programs or activities of the College.

If a complainant does not wish to make a Formal Complaint, the Title IX Coordinator may determine a Formal Complaint is necessary. The College will inform the complainant of this decision in writing, and the complainant need not participate in the process further but will receive all notices issued under this Policy and Process.

Nothing in the Title IX Grievance Policy or the Policy Against Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Not Covered by Title IX prevents a complainant from seeking the assistance of state or local law enforcement alongside the appropriate on-campus process.

Informal Resolution

A complainant who files a Formal Complaint may elect, at any time, to address the matter through the Institution's Informal Resolution Process. All Parties to a Formal Complaint must agree to enter the Informal Resolution Process through an informed written consent. Information about this Process is available here: [LINK]

Multi-Party Situations

The institution may consolidate Formal Complaints alleging covered sexual harassment against more than one respondent, or by more than one complainant against one or more respondents, or by one party against the other party, where the allegations of covered sexual harassment arise out of the same facts or circumstances.

Determining Jurisdiction

The Title IX Coordinator or designee will determine if the instant Title IX Grievance Process should apply to a Formal Complaint. The Process will apply when all of the following elements are met, in the reasonable determination of the Title IX Coordinator:

1. The conduct is alleged to have occurred on or after August 14, 2020;
2. The conduct is alleged to have occurred in the United States;
3. The conduct is alleged to have occurred in the College's education program or activity; and
4. The alleged conduct, if true, would constitute covered sexual harassment as defined in this policy.

If all of the elements are met, the College will investigate the allegations according to the Grievance Process.

If a complaint is dismissed from the Title IX Grievance Process, the Title IX Coordinator may refer the complaint to be addressed under the Policy Against Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Not Covered by Title IX or any other relevant College of Westchester policy.

Allegations Potentially Falling Under Two Policies :

If the alleged conduct, if true, includes conduct that would constitute covered sexual harassment and conduct that would not constitute covered sexual harassment, the College may elect to investigate and adjudicate the conduct that would not constitute covered sexual harassment in accordance with the Title IX Grievance Process or another applicable policy, at the College's discretion. The College will notify the parties as to which procedure will be applied in the investigation and adjudication of each of the allegations.

Notice of Dismissal

Upon reaching a decision that the Formal Complaint will be dismissed, the institution will promptly send written notice of the dismissal of the Formal Complaint or any specific allegation within the Formal Complaint, and the reason for the dismissal, simultaneously to the parties through their institutional email accounts. It is the responsibility of parties to maintain and regularly check their email accounts.

Notice of Removal

Upon dismissal for the purposes of Title IX, the College retains discretion to utilize the Code of Conduct and the Policy Against Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Not Covered by Title IX (<https://www.cw.edu/title-ix-policy-prohibiting-sexual-harassment-and-sexual-misconduct#:~:text=The%20College%20of%20Westchester%20further,those%20terms%20are%20defined%20below.>) to determine if a violation of the Code of Conduct or Non-Title IX Sexual Misconduct Policy has occurred. If so, the College will promptly send written notice of the dismissal of the Formal Complaint under the Title IX Grievance Process and removal of the allegations to the conduct process.

Notice of Allegations

The Title IX Coordinator will draft and provide the Notice of Allegations to the Complainant(s) and Respondent(s) as soon as practicable after receiving a Formal Complaint of the allegations, absent extenuating circumstances. The notifications will be sent to the parties' institutional email accounts if they are students or employees or by other reasonable means if they are neither students nor employees.

The institution will provide sufficient time for the parties to review the Notice of Allegations and prepare a response before any initial interview.

Contents of Notice

The Notice of Allegations will include the following:

- Notice of the College’s Title IX Grievance Procedure and a hyperlink to a copy of the process.
- Notice of the allegations potentially constituting covered sexual harassment, including sufficient details known at the time the Notice is issued, such as the identities of the parties involved in the incident, if known, including the complainant; the conduct allegedly constituting Title IX sexual harassment; and the date and location of the alleged incident, if known.
- A statement that the respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct and that a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process.
- A statement that the parties may have an advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney.
- A statement that before the conclusion of the investigation, the parties may inspect and review evidence obtained as part of the investigation that is directly related to the allegations raised in the Formal Complaint, including the evidence upon which the institution does not intend to rely in reaching a determination regarding responsibility, and evidence that both tends to prove or disprove the allegations, whether obtained from a party or other source.
- A statement that the College prohibits knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information during the grievance process.

Additionally, the College will provide written notice of the date, time, location, participants, and purpose of all hearings, investigative interviews, or other meetings with a party expected to attend, with sufficient time for the party to prepare to participate.

Ongoing Notice

If, in the course of an investigation, the institution decides to investigate allegations about the complainant or respondent that are not included in the Notice of Allegations and are otherwise covered "sexual harassment" falling within the Title IX Grievance Policy, the institution will notify the parties whose identities are known of the additional allegations by their institutional email accounts or other reasonable means.

The parties will be provided sufficient time to review the additional allegations to prepare a response before any initial interview regarding those additional charges.

Advisor of Choice and Participation of Advisor of Choice

The College will provide the parties equal access to advisors and support persons; any restrictions on advisor participation will be applied equally.

The College has a long-standing practice of requiring students to participate in the process directly and not through an advocate or representative. Students participating as Complainant or Respondent in this process may be accompanied by an Advisor of Choice to any meeting or hearing to which they are required or are eligible to attend. The Advisor of Choice is not an advocate. Except where explicitly stated by this Policy, as consistent with the Final Rule, Advisors of Choice shall not participate directly in the process as per standard policy and practice of the College.

The College will not intentionally schedule meetings or hearings on dates where the Advisors of Choice for all parties are not available, provided that the Advisors act reasonably in providing available dates and work collegially to find dates and times that meet all schedules.

The College's obligations to investigate and adjudicate in a prompt timeframe under Title IX and other college policies apply to matters governed under this Policy, and the College cannot agree to extensive delays solely to accommodate the schedule of an Advisor of Choice. The determination of what is reasonable shall be made by the Title IX Coordinator or designee. The College will not be obligated to delay a meeting or hearing under this process more than five (5) days due to the unavailability of an Advisor of Choice, and may offer the party the opportunity to obtain a different Advisor of Choice or utilize one provided by the College.

Notice of Meetings and Interviews

The College will provide, to a party whose participation is invited or expected, written notice of the date, time, location, participants, and purpose of all hearings, investigative interviews, or other meetings with a party, with sufficient time for the party to prepare to participate.

Delays

Each party may request a one-time delay in the Grievance Process of up to five (5) days for good cause (granted or denied in the sole judgment of the Title IX Coordinator, Director of Student Conduct, or designee) provided that the requestor provides reasonable notice and the delay does not overly inconvenience other parties.

For example, a request to take a five day pause made an hour before a hearing for which multiple parties and their advisors have traveled to and prepared for shall generally not be granted, while a request for a five day pause in the middle of investigation interviews to allow a party to obtain certain documentary evidence shall generally be granted.

The Title IX Coordinator or designee shall have sole judgment to grant further pauses in the Process.

Process Free from Bias or Conflict of Interest

Both the Complainant and the Respondent have the right to have a fair and impartial investigation, determination and appeal. If either party has any reason to believe that the Investigator, the Title IX Coordinator, or any of the Hearing or Appeals Officers has a conflict of interest or would otherwise be unable to be fair and impartial, the concerned party should submit a letter explaining the basis for their concern.

- Regarding the Investigator or the Hearing Officer, to the Title IX Coordinator; and
- Regarding the Title IX Coordinator, to the 504 Coordinator.

The other party will be provided with a copy of the letter and will have an opportunity to respond. Based upon those submissions and any independent inquiry the decision-maker may choose to make, if it is determined that a conflict of interest exists, another individual will be appointed to take on the role of the conflicted person. If it is found that no conflict of interest exists, the individual will continue in their role. Concerns regarding conflicts of interest should be raised as soon as they are identified and whenever possible before the allegedly conflicted person renders a determination, for example, prior to the submission of the investigative report, the Hearing Officer's determination, or the appeal decision

Investigation

The Title IX Coordinator will assign an Investigator. The Investigator will direct the investigative process and confer with the Title IX Coordinator as appropriate. The investigation will be prompt, thorough, and impartial.

There will be no Retaliation against any individual for filing a Complaint and/or for assisting, testifying, or participating in the investigation of a Complaint.

All Complaints will be kept private and disclosed only to the extent necessary for a thorough investigation.

Each party will have an equal opportunity to present witnesses, including fact and expert witnesses, and other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence, (i.e. evidence that tends to prove and disprove the allegations) as described below.

The Investigator will take the following steps:

- Thoroughly review the Complaint and all supporting documentation and evidence.
- Interview both the Complainant(s) and the Respondent(s).
- Give both parties the opportunity to identify witnesses and provide relevant documentary and physical evidence. (This may include, but is not limited to, texts, emails, photos, social media posts, voicemail messages, etc.)
- The Investigator will contact witnesses who may have relevant information and engage in good faith efforts to meet with the witnesses. If a witness is not cooperative, the Investigator will not unreasonably delay the investigation.
- The Investigator has the discretion to identify and interview witnesses who were not identified by any party.
- The Investigator has the discretion not to interview a suggested witness where none of the information the party indicates that the witness can share would be relevant in the Investigator's judgment.
- Exclude from consideration information about the romantic or sexual history of either the Complainant or the Respondent, except as to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the conduct alleged by the complainant or with respect to the parties shared sexual history when offered to prove consent. If either party offers such information, the other will have the right to respond.
- Exclude from consideration medical records and information, including mental health history or treatment, absent a waiver from the individual who is the subject of the medical record.
- Exclude from consideration information protected under a legally recognized privilege such as the attorney-client privilege unless the person holding such privilege has waived the privilege.

Parties' Inspection and Review of Evidence

Once the investigation has concluded, the Investigator, in conjunction with the Title IX Coordinator or designee, shall gather all evidence that is directly related to the allegations. Unless otherwise prohibited by law, the Title IX Coordinator or designee shall make electronic copies of the evidence available to the parties and their advisors. Given the confidential nature of the materials and proceeding, the parties and their advisors will be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement not to disseminate any of the evidence subject to inspection and review and not to use the evidence for any purpose other than the Title IX Grievance Process. Any violation of the non-disclosure agreement may result in additional misconduct charges against a party, a report to an attorney's professional licensing board, or other legal action.

The parties may then review the information gathered. Both will have an opportunity to respond in writing to this information within [seven] business days.

Any evidence subject to inspection and review will be available at any hearing, including for purposes of cross-examination.

Inclusion of Evidence Not Directly Related to the Allegations:

Evidence obtained in the investigation that is determined in the reasoned judgment of the investigator not to be directly related to the allegations in the Formal Complaint will not be disclosed, or may be appropriately redacted before the parties' inspection to avoid disclosure of personally identifiable information of a student. Any evidence obtained in the investigation that is kept from disclosure or appropriately redacted will be documented in a "privilege log", which may be reviewed by the parties and their advisors, if any.

Investigative Report

The Investigator will consider the parties' responses in completing the final investigative report, which will compile all relevant evidence. The report will be provided to the parties no later than ten business days before any hearing on the formal complaint and before any pre-hearing meeting. The final investigative report will be redacted for information that is irrelevant or privileged. Unless otherwise prohibited by law, the Title IX Coordinator or designee shall make electronic copies of the evidence available to the parties and their advisors. The parties shall have the opportunity to provide any written response to the investigative report to the Title IX Coordinator within five business days of receipt. The parties may request to review the other party's written response statements once they have been submitted.

If at any stage following the submission of the parties' responses new evidence directly related to the allegations is gathered, it will be shared with the parties and their advisors in line with the parameters set forth above. The parties will have an opportunity to submit an additional written response within a time frame determined by the Title IX Coordinator or designee. The parties may request to review the other party's written response statements once they have been submitted, but they will not be permitted to submit any further written response.

Hearing

Hearing

Prior to taking any disciplinary action with respect to Title IX Sexual Harassment, the College will hold a live hearing. The parties cannot waive the right to a live hearing. The live hearing may be conducted with all parties physically present in the same physical location, or, at the Title IX Coordinator's discretion, any or all parties, witnesses, and/or other participants may appear at the live hearing virtually through a remote conferencing platform. This technology will enable participants simultaneously to see and hear each other. In the event of technological difficulties outside the parties' control, the College may delay or adjourn a hearing. Any party who wishes to participate remotely may submit such a request to the Title IX Coordinator with an explanation for the request.

The College may determine that multiple sessions or a continuance (i.e. a pause on the continuation of the hearing until a later date or time) is needed to complete a hearing. If so, the College will notify all participants and endeavor to accommodate all participants' schedules and complete the hearing as promptly as practicable.

The hearing will be recorded through [CHOOSE AT LEAST ONE: audio recording; audiovisual recording; transcript]. That recording or transcript will be made available to the parties for inspection and review, provided that they and their advisors have signed a non-disclosure agreement not to disseminate the hearing [recording/transcript] or use it for any purpose other than the Title IX grievance process. Any violation of the non-disclosure agreement may result in additional misconduct charges against a party, a report to an attorney's professional licensing board, or other legal action.

The deliberations of the Hearing Officer will not be recorded.

Continuances or Granting Extensions

The College may determine that multiple sessions or a continuance (i.e. a pause on the continuation of the hearing until a later date or time) is needed to complete a hearing. If so, the College will notify all participants and endeavor to accommodate all participants' schedules and complete the hearing as promptly as practicable.

Evidence Not Previously Disclosed

As a general rule, no new evidence or witnesses may be submitted during the live hearing.

If a party identifies new evidence or witnesses that were not reasonably available prior to the live hearing and could affect the outcome of the matter, the party may request that such evidence or witnesses be considered at the live hearing.

The Hearing Officer will consider this request and determine (1) whether such evidence or witness testimony was actually unavailable by reasonable effort prior to the hearing and (2) whether such evidence or witness testimony could affect the outcome of the matter. The party offering the newly-discovered evidence or witness has the burden of meeting this burden by the preponderance of the evidence.

If the Hearing Officer determines that this standard is met, then the parties will be granted a reasonable period of time to review the evidence or prepare for questioning of the witness.

Participants in the live hearing

Live hearings are not public, and the only individuals permitted to participate in the hearing are as follows:

- Complaint(s) and advisor(s)
- Respondent(s) and advisor(s)
- Hearing Officer
- Title IX Coordinator or designee
- Witnesses (only while they are being questioned)
- COLLEGE employees needed to provide technological support/assistance.
- Stenographer (if the hearing is being transcribed)

Complainant and Respondent (The Parties)

- The parties cannot waive the right to a live hearing.
- The institution may still proceed with the live hearing in the absence of a party, and may reach a determination of responsibility in their absence, including through any evidence gathered that does not constitute a “statement” by that party.
 - For example, A verbal or written statement constituting part or all of the sexual harassment itself is not a “prior statement” that must be excluded if the maker of the statement does not submit to cross-examination about that statement. In other words, a prior statement would not include a document, audio recording, audiovisual reading, and digital media, including but not limited to text messages, emails, and social media postings, that constitute the conduct alleged to have been the act of sexual harassment under the formal complaint. See, OCR Blog (May 22, 2020), available at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/blog/20200522.html>
- The College will not threaten, coerce, intimidate or discriminate against the party in an attempt to secure the party’s participation.
- If a party does not submit to cross-examination, the decision-maker cannot rely on any prior statements made by that party in reaching a determination regarding responsibility, but may reach a determination regarding responsibility based on evidence that does not constitute a “statement” by that party.
- The decision-maker cannot draw an inference about the determination regarding responsibility based solely on a party’s absence from the live hearing or refusal to answer cross examination or other questions.

The Hearing Officer

- The Hearing Officer will be an individual who has received training on topics including how to serve impartially, issues of relevance, including how to apply the rape shield protections provided for complainants, and any technology to be used at the hearing.
- The Hearing Officer will not have any bias for or against either party or any other conflict of interest.

Neither the Title IX Coordinator, the Investigator, nor any parties' advisor can serve as the Hearing Officer

Advisor of choice

- The parties have the right to select an advisor of their choice, who may be, but does not have to be, an attorney.
- The parties are not permitted to conduct cross-examination; it must be conducted by the advisor. As a result, if a party does not select an advisor, the institution will select an advisor to serve in this role for the limited purpose of conducting the cross-examination at no fee or charge to the party.
- The advisor is not prohibited from having a conflict of interest or bias in favor of or against complainants or respondents generally, or in favor or against the parties to the particular case.
- The advisor is not prohibited from being a witness in the matter.
- If a party does not attend the live hearing, the party's advisor may appear and conduct cross-examination on their behalf.
- If neither a party nor their advisor appear at the hearing, the College will provide an advisor to appear on behalf of the non-appearing party.

Witnesses

- Witnesses cannot be compelled to participate in the live hearing, and have the right not to participate in the hearing free from retaliation.
- If a witness does not submit to cross-examination, as described below, the decision-maker cannot rely on any statements made by that witness in reaching a determination regarding responsibility, including any statement relayed by the absent witness to a witness or party who testifies at the live hearing.

Hearing Procedures

For all live hearings conducted under this Title IX Grievance Process, the procedure will be as follows:

- The Hearing Officer will begin the hearing by establishing the rules and expectations for the hearing;
- Each party will have an opportunity to give an opening statement. The statement will be presented by the party, not the party's advisor;

- The Hearing Officer will ask questions of the Parties;
- After the Hearing Office questions a party, the other party's advisor will have an opportunity to cross-examine;
- The Hearing Officer will ask questions of each witness;
- After the Hearing Officer questions each witness, the parties' advisors will be given the opportunity to cross-examine that witness. The advisor of the party who suggested the witness will cross-examine that witness last.
- The Hearing Officer will have the authority to stop the proceedings at any time, including to ask additional follow-up questions during cross-examination, to enforce the rules of decorum, or for any other reason.
- Should a Party or the Party's Advisor choose not to cross-examine a Party or Witness, the Party shall affirmatively waive cross-examination through a written or oral statement to the Hearing Officer. A Party's waiver of cross-examination does not eliminate the ability of the Hearing Officer to use statements made by the Party.
- The Hearing Officer may not consider the statements of any witness, including a party, who does not submit to cross-examination, even where such statements are contained in other evidence (i.e. emails, text messages, social media postings, etc.). Evidence that does not constitute a "statement" may be considered regardless of whether the witness is subjected to cross-examination. A verbal or written statement constituting part or all of the sexual harassment itself is not a "prior statement" that must be excluded if the maker of the statement does not submit to cross-examination about that statement. In other words, a prior statement would not include a document, audio recording, audiovisual reading, and digital media, including but not limited to text messages, emails, and social media postings, that constitute the conduct alleged to have been the act of sexual harassment under the formal complaint.
- The College will not threaten, coerce, intimidate or discriminate against any party in an attempt to secure the party's participation.
- Witnesses cannot be compelled to participate in the live hearing and have the right not to participate in the hearing free from retaliation.
- The decision-maker cannot draw an inference about the determination regarding responsibility based solely on a party's absence from the live hearing or refusal to answer cross examination or other questions.
- Prior to the conclusion of the hearing, the parties may each make an impact statement.

Live Cross-Examination Procedure

Each party's advisor will conduct live cross-examination of the other party or parties and witnesses. During this live-cross examination the advisor will ask the other party or parties and witnesses relevant questions and follow-up questions, including those challenging credibility directly, orally, and in real time.

Before any cross-examination question is answered, Hearing Officer will determine if the question is relevant. Cross-examination questions that are duplicative of those already asked, including by the Hearing Officer may be deemed irrelevant if they have been asked and answered.

Review of {Transcript/Recording}

The {recording/transcript} of the hearing will be available for review by the parties within {7 business days}, unless there are any extenuating circumstances. The {recording/transcript} of the hearing will not be provided to parties or advisors of choice.

Determination Regarding Responsibility

Standard of Proof

The College uses the preponderance of the evidence standard. This means that the investigation and hearing determines whether it is more likely than not that a violation of the Policy occurred.

General Considerations for Evaluating Testimony and Evidence

While the opportunity for cross-examination is required in all Title IX hearings, determinations regarding responsibility may be based in part, or entirely, on documentary, audiovisual, and digital evidence, as warranted in the reasoned judgment of the Decision-maker.

Decision-makers shall not draw inferences regarding a party or witness' credibility based on the party or witness' status as a complainant, respondent, or witness, nor shall it base its judgments in stereotypes about how a party or witness would or should act under the circumstances.

Generally, credibility judgments should rest on the demeanor of the party or witness, the plausibility of their testimony, the consistency of their testimony, and its reliability in light of corroborating or conflicting testimony or evidence.

The weight given to any evidence will not vary based upon whether it is inculpatory or exculpatory (i.e. tending to prove or disprove the allegations)

Unless barred by the cross-examination requirements, a witness's testimony regarding indirect knowledge of the facts at issue will be considered but will generally be accorded less weight than testimony regarding direct knowledge of specific facts that occurred.

Title IX regulations require that the College allow parties to call “expert witnesses” for direct and cross examination. The College does not provide for expert witnesses in other proceedings. While the expert witness will be allowed to testify and be cross-examined, the Hearing Officer will afford greater weight to the testimony of fact witnesses than to the non-factual testimony of the expert or to the expert’s testimony that is not directed to the specific facts of the case.

Where a party or witness’s conduct or statements demonstrate that the party or witness is engaging in retaliatory conduct, including but not limited to witness tampering and intimidation, the Hearing Officer may draw an adverse inference as to that party or witness’s credibility.

Components of the Determination Regarding Responsibility

The Hearing Officer will issue a written determination simultaneously to all parties through their institutional email account, or other reasonable means as necessary. Absent extenuating circumstances, the Determination will be issued within ten business days of the completion of the Hearing. The Determination will include:

1. Identification of the allegations potentially constituting covered sexual harassment;
2. A description of the procedural steps taken from the receipt of the formal complaint through the determination, including any notifications to the parties, interviews with parties and witnesses, site visits, methods used to gather other evidence, and hearings held;
3. Findings of fact supporting the determination;
4. Conclusions regarding which section of this policy, if any, the respondent has or has not violated.
5. For each allegation:
 - a. A statement of, and rationale for, a determination regarding responsibility;
 - b. A statement of, and rationale for, any disciplinary sanctions the recipient imposes on the respondent; and
 - c. A statement of, and rationale for, whether remedies designed to restore or preserve equal access to the recipient’s education program or activity will be provided by the recipient to the complainant; and
6. The recipient’s procedures and the permitted reasons for the complainant and respondent to appeal (described below in “Appeals”).

Timeline of Determination Regarding Responsibility

If there are no extenuating circumstances, the determination regarding responsibility will be issued by the College within {ten (10) business days} of the completion of the hearing.

Finality

The determination regarding responsibility becomes final either on the date that the institution provides the parties with the written determination of the result of the appeal, if an appeal is filed consistent with the procedures and timeline outlined in “Appeals” below, or if an appeal is not filed, the date on which the opportunity to appeal expires.

Appeals

If a Respondent or Complainant does not accept the findings of the Hearing Officer, the party may request an appeal through the following procedures. The request for appeal must be submitted within five (5) Business Days of receipt of the Hearing Officer’s decision.

Appeals are not intended to be full re-hearings or the basis for a new investigation of the Complaint. The Appeals Officer may accept or modify the original decision. Appeals are confined to a review of the written documentation or record of the original hearing, and pertinent documentation regarding the grounds for appeal. The Appeal Officer’s decision to deny a requested outcome on appeal is final.

The ONLY grounds for appeal are as follows:

- Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;
- New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time of the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal that could have affected the outcome of the matter;
- The Title IX Coordinator, Investigator(s), or Hearing Officer had a conflict of interest or bias for or against an individual party, or for or against complainants or respondents in general, that affected the outcome of the matter.

Any party who files an appeal must do so in writing to the Title IX Coordinator. The request for appeal will then be forwarded to an appointed Appeals Officer for review. The non-appealing party will be given an opportunity to review the written appeal and submit a written response not to exceed ten (10) pages within five (5) business days. In cases of alleged Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence or Stalking involving a Student in New York, the appeal will be reviewed by a panel of three (3) persons. The appeal panel's determination need not be unanimous but, at least two of the panel members must agree on the outcome.

If the Appeals Officer/Panel determines that a procedural error occurred, they may return the original Complaint to the Hearing Officer with instructions to reconvene to remedy the error. The results of a reconvened hearing cannot be appealed.

In rare cases, where the error cannot be remedied by the original Hearing Officer (as in cases of bias), the Appeals Officer may order a new Hearing with a new Hearing Officer appointed by the Title IX Coordinator as appropriate. The results of a new hearing with a new Hearing Officer can be appealed once on the grounds for appeal listed above.

The Appeals Officer/Panel may in their discretion suspend any sanctions imposed by the Hearing Officer during the pendency of the appeal and/or any new Hearing of the original Complaint.

The Appeals Officer/Panel will render a written decision on the appeal to all parties within twenty-one (21) Business Days from receipt of the request for appeal. The decision on appeal, which will include the rationale for the decision, will be delivered to the parties simultaneously via their institutional email account or other reasonable means.

In cases of Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence or Stalking, if neither party submits a written appeal within five (5) Business Days of receipt of the Hearing Officer's decisions, the Title IX Coordinator, as appropriate, will provide the parties with written notification that the Hearing Officer's decision is final. In cases involving all other kinds of alleged Title IX Sexual Harassment, the decision will be deemed final upon expiration of the period of time to appeal and no written notice will be provided.

Retaliation

The College will keep the identity of any individual who has made a report or complaint of sex discrimination confidential, including the identity of any individual who has made a report or filed a Formal Complaint of sexual harassment under this Title IX Grievance Policy, any Complainant, any individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of sex discrimination, any Respondent, and any witness, except as permitted by the FERPA statute, 20 U.S.C. 1232g, or FERPA regulations, 34 CFR part 99, or as required by law, or to carry out the purposes of 34

CFR part 106, including the conduct of any investigation, hearing, or judicial proceeding under this Title IX Grievance Policy.

No person may intimidate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 or its implementing regulations.

No person may intimidate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any individual because the individual has made a report or complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation, proceeding or hearing under this Title IX Grievance Policy.

Any intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination, for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX or its implementing regulations constitutes retaliation. This includes any charges filed against an individual for code of conduct violations that do not involve sex discrimination or sexual harassment, but that arise from the same facts or circumstances as a report or complaint of sex discrimination or a report or Formal Complaint of sexual harassment.

Complaints alleging retaliation may be filed according to the Policy Against Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct.

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