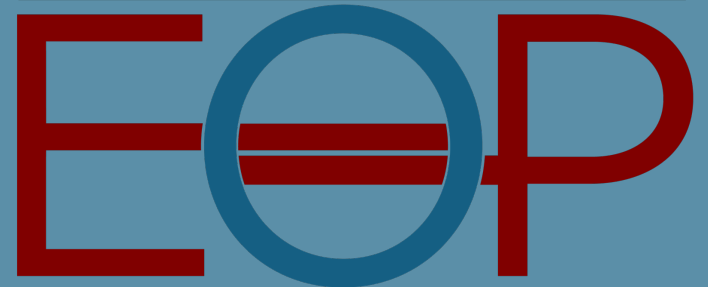


Title IX Personnel Foundational Training

2022-23AY


The University of Chicago



OFFICE OF THE PROVOST
Equal Opportunity Programs

Overview

- ▶ University Policy and Title IX
- ▶ Title IX Personnel
- ▶ Process for Resolving Formal Title IX Complaints
- ▶ Report, Outreach & Support and Resources
 - ▶ Investigation
 - ▶ Decision-Making
 - ▶ Requests for Review
- ▶ Policy on Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct
- ▶ Individuals with Reporting Obligations

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The Policy on Title IX Sexual Harassment: an Overview

Policy on Title IX Sexual Harassment

Who? Applies to all members of the University community participating in University education programs or activities

Where? On University property or **Off** University property where University exercises substantial control over the context or property owned/ controlled by recognized student organization within the **United States**.

When? No time limit for reporting.

Standard of Proof. Preponderance of the evidence.

Title IX Sexual Harassment

Including
sexual assault,
dating violence,
domestic violence,
and stalking

Retaliation

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Key Provisions under Title IX

Key Definitions under Title IX Regulations

- Title IX Sexual Harassment, including Consent and Retaliation
- Educational Program or Activity
- Supportive Measures
- Other Key Definitions:
 - Actual Knowledge
 - Officials with Authority
 - Formal Title IX Complaint

Key Definitions: Sexual Harassment

“[C]onduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

- (1) an employee of the recipient **condition the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the recipient on an individual’s participation in unwelcome sexual conduct**; or
- (2) **unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive** that it effectively denies a person equal access to the recipient’s education program or activity; or

Key Definitions: Sexual Harassment (Con't)

“[C]onduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following: . . .

(3) ‘**sexual assault**’ as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)(A)(v), ‘**dating violence**’ as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(10), ‘**domestic violence**’ as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(8), or ‘**stalking**’ as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(30).”

§106.30

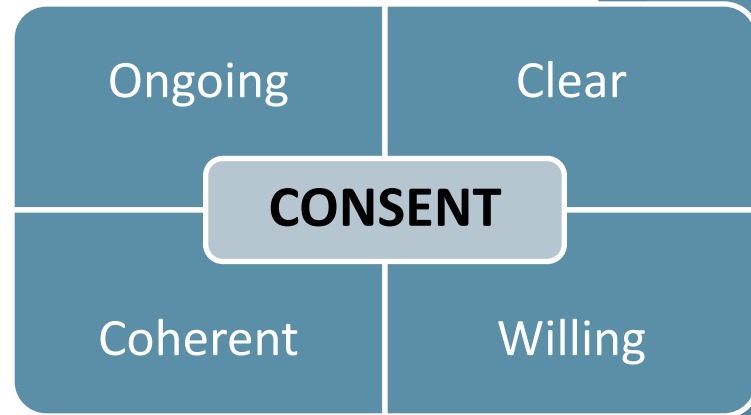
Policy: Consent

Consent.

Voluntary, active and clear agreement, communicated by words or actions to participate in specific sexual activity.

Standard: Would a sober, reasonable person in the same circumstances as the accused know/should have known that the victim did not or could not consent to the sexual activity in question?

Title IX Sexual
Harassment



Policy: Retaliation

Retaliation

**Intimidating,
threatening,
coercing, or
discriminating**



**Purpose of
interfering**



**For
participating in
protected
activity.**

- Poor job performance
- Decisions re work assignments
- Grade reduction
- Removal from student organization, academic program, or lab
- Stripping co-authorship
- Threats to engage in such activity



- Making a report or complaint
- Participating in an investigation
- Supporting a party bringing a complaint

Key Definitions: Educational Program or Activity (and scope)

“**[E]ducation program or activity**” includes locations, events, or circumstances over which the recipient exercised substantial control over both the respondent and the context in which the sexual harassment occurs, and also includes any building owned or controlled by a student organization that is officially recognized by a postsecondary institution.” §106.44(a)

Key Definitions: Educational Program or Activity (and scope) (Con't)

- ▶ **In the United States** (Title IX does not apply to study abroad) (§106.44 (a); Preamble)
- ▶ “Complainant must be **participating in, or attempting to participate in**, the recipient’s education program or activity **at the time of filing a formal complaint.**” (Preamble)
- ▶ Can include:
 - ▶ Digital/ cyber harassment,
 - ▶ Off-campus conduct that has effect on education program/ activity (Preamble)
- ▶ Fact-specific inquiry (Preamble)

Key Definitions: Supportive Measures

- ▶ “[N]on-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge to the complainant or the respondent before or after the filing of a formal complaint or where no formal complaint has been filed.” §106.30
- ▶ “[D]esigned to restore or preserve equal access to the recipient’s education program or activity **without unreasonably burdening the other party**, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or the recipient’s educational environment, or deter sexual harassment.” §106.33

Key Definitions: Supportive Measures (Con't)

“[M]ay include:

- ▶ counseling,
- ▶ extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments,
- ▶ modifications of work or class schedules,
- ▶ campus escort services,
- ▶ mutual restrictions on contact between the parties,
- ▶ changes in work or housing locations,
- ▶ leaves of absence,
- ▶ increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus, and
- ▶ other similar measures.” §106.33


What does that mean for campus community?

- Title IX definitions of sexual harassment and the scope of educational program/ activity are narrower.
- Title IX prescribes certain processes required when matter falls under Title IX (*e.g.*, is sexual harassment that occurs in context of educational program/ activity as defined by Title IX).
- The University processes for resolving Title IX complaints will adhere to procedures prescribed by law. The University will continue to receive and respond to reports and resolve complaints of behavior that falls outside regulatory definition of Title IX, as defined in behaviors prohibited under the Policy on Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct.

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Title IX Personnel

Title IX Personnel at the University of Chicago

	<i>For Reports Regarding Students</i>	<i>For Complaints Regarding Faculty, Other Academic Appointees, or Postdoctoral Researchers</i>	<i>For Complaints Regarding Staff</i>
Investigator	Disciplinary Affairs	EOP staff	EOP staff/ Employee and Labor Relations
Decision-maker	Title IX Hearing Panel	Title IX Hearing Panel	Title IX Hearing Panel
Reviewer	Dean of Students	The Provost	AVP of Human Resources

Title IX Personnel at the University of Chicago: Other Key Personnel

- ▶ Title IX Coordinator and designees
- ▶ Office of Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Support
- ▶ Confidential Resources, including
 - ▶ Sexual Assault Deans on Call (SaDoCs);
 - ▶ Perspectives (Staff and Faculty Assistance Program);
 - ▶ Student Wellness Confidential Advisor
- ▶ University of Chicago Police Department

Expectations of Title IX Personnel

- ▶ Respond to reports with compassion and sensitivity
- ▶ Understand impact of trauma/ neurobiology of trauma
- ▶ Conduct University processes for resolving Formal Title IX Complaints (including investigation, decision-making, and review, as appropriate) with fairness, impartiality, and expertise.

Process for Resolving Formal Title IX Complaints Under Policy

Reports,
Outreach &
Support &
Resources

Support and Resources: Overview

- ▶ Individuals who report sexual misconduct, dating violence, domestic violence, and/or stalking have the right to request Supportive Measures and/or reasonable accommodations.
- ▶ These are remedies not restrictions.
- ▶ Support and resources are offered to both parties and are available at any time, regardless of whether a party chooses to move forward with a complaint.

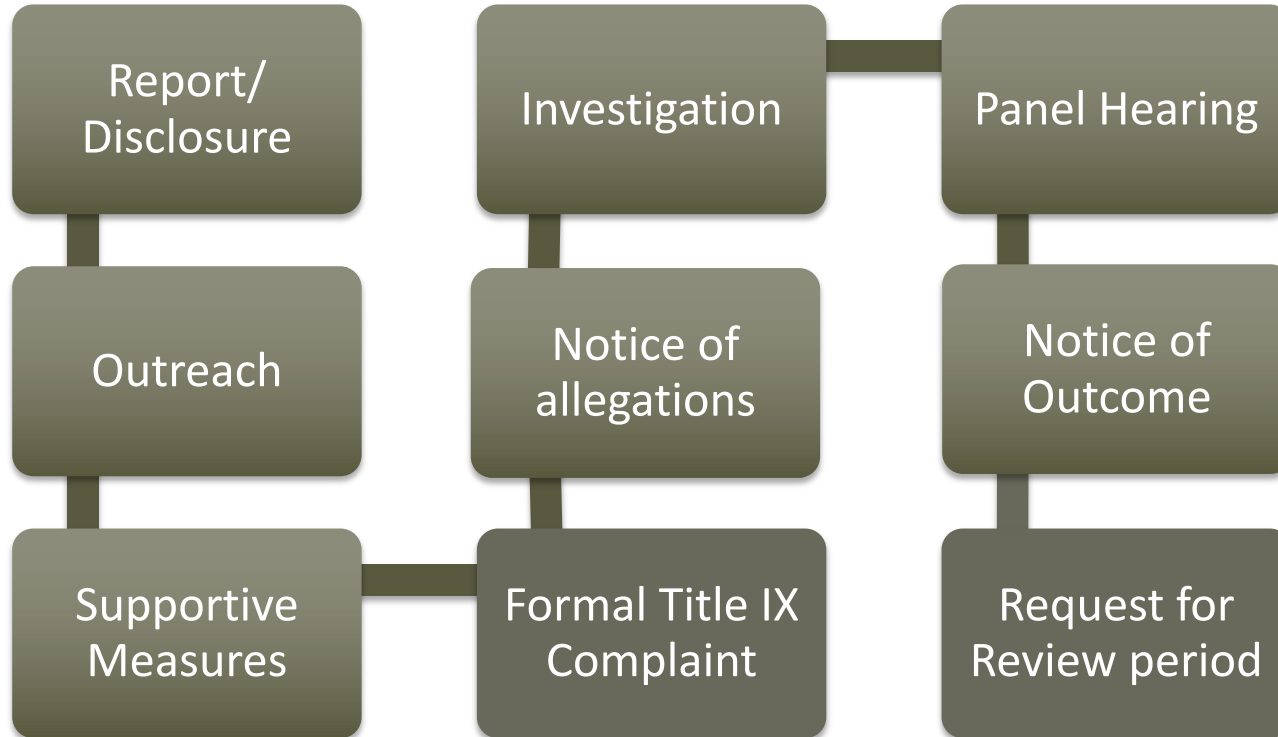
Support and Resources May Include:

- Changes to academic, living, dining, working, or transportation situations
- Obtaining and enforcing a University-issued no contact directive
- On- and off- campus referrals and resources
- Medical assistance (including information on preserving evidence)
- Legal/ law enforcement options (including assistance notifying local law enforcement)
- Assistance with accessing and navigating campus and local health and mental health services, counseling, and advocacy
- Resolution Options
- Safety planning
- Assistance in obtaining an order of protection or no contact order in State court

Process for Resolving Formal Title IX Complaints Under Policy

Investigation
and
Resolution

Policy on Title IX Sexual Harassment: Formal Resolution Process



Relevance

- ▶ **Defined.** Information is relevant when it is
 - ▶ Related or useful to the matter at hand;
 - ▶ Makes something more or less probable.
 - ▶ **Title IX Regulations** do not define relevance, noting instead that the “ordinary meaning” applies considering logic and commonsense.
- ▶ **Use.**
 - ▶ **Investigators** and **decision-makers** consider all relevant information in collecting, summarizing, and deciding responsibility, respectively.
 - ▶ Information that is irrelevant will not be collected and/or considered in decision-making.

(Ir)Relevance: Prior Sexual History

“The complainant’s and/or respondent’s sexual history with others will generally not be sought or used in determining whether sexual assault has occurred.”

Exceptions

- To determine whether consent sought and given during the incident in question;
- To explain an injury, to provide proof of a pattern, or to address an allegation.

(Ir)Relevance: Other

Title IX regulations also make the following information irrelevant (*e.g.*, not considered by decision-maker in findings/ conclusions) (Preamble):

- ▶ Information protected by a legally recognized privilege;
- ▶ Any party's medical, psychological, and similar records unless the party has given voluntary, written consent;
- ▶ Party or witness statements that have not been subjected to cross examination at a live hearing.

Party Investigation Notifications

- Updates on the status of the investigation;
- Notice that complaint dismissed, referred to informal resolution, or will proceed with hearing resolution;
- Notice of hearing;
- Notice of information to be considered by hearing panel members;
- Notice of resolution of complaint, including findings/ conclusion, and/or sanctions, including information about review process;
- Notice of whether request for review filed;
- Notice of outcome of request for review;
- Notice when decision and/or sanctions become final.

Other Investigation Notifications

- ▶ **Leadership (as appropriate)**, *e.g.*, Dean of respondent's division/ school and, as appropriate, chair at start and conclusion of investigation.
- ▶ **NSF (external)**. Where respondent is a PI/ co-PI and either found responsible for harassment/ sexual harassment or sexual assault, or placed on administrative leave or otherwise subject to administrative action as a result of sexual harassment investigation determination.

Decision-making: Resolution by Title IX Hearing Panel – Key Requirements Under Title IX

- ▶ **Live cross examination.** Parties may choose to submit, but are not required to, submit to live cross examination. The Panel cannot draw an inference about the determination regarding responsibility based solely on the party or witness's absence or refusal to answer cross-examination or other questions.
- ▶ **Advisor of Choice.** Parties may have advisor of choice; where parties do not have an advisor during hearing, the University will provide one.
- ▶ **Matters of Relevance.** Decision-maker on relevance will evaluate relevance of all questions asked at hearing.

Hearing Panel in Practice: Fair and Impartial

- ▶ What does it mean for the process to be fair and impartial?
- ▶ What types of measures, standards, and/or expectations may comprise a fair and impartial process?
- ▶ Examples include:
 - ▶ No assumptions/ prejudgment.
 - ▶ No conflict of interest.
 - ▶ No bias.
 - ▶ Equal access to information.
 - ▶ Equal access to process.

Hearing Panel in Practice: Framework

For matters involving a Student Respondent

- ▶ **Composition.** 5 Decisionmakers. There will be 2 faculty members, 1 student, 1 staff member, and 1 Decisionmaker on Relevance. The Title IX Coordinator or designee will serve ex-officio (non-voting).
- ▶ **Quorum.** 1 faculty Chair, 1 additional faculty member, and either a student or staff member constitute a three-member quorum.

Hearing Panel in Practice: Framework *For matters involving a Faculty, Other Academic Appointee, or Postdoctoral Researcher Respondent*

- ▶ **Composition.** 5 Decisionmakers. There will be 4 faculty members (one who serves as Chair), and 1 Decisionmaker on Relevance. The student ombudsperson will serve ex-officio (non-voting), and the Title IX Coordinator or designee will serve ex-officio (non-voting).
- ▶ **Quorum.** 1 faculty chair and 2 additional decision-makers constitute a three-member quorum.

Hearing Panel in Practice: Framework

For matters involving a Staff Respondent

- ▶ **Composition.** The Panel will consist of 3 Decisionmakers. There will be 2 staff members and 1 Decisionmaker on Relevance. One of the 3 Decisionmakers will serve as Chair. The Executive Director of Employee and Labor Relations or their designee, and the Title IX Coordinator or designee will serve ex-officio (non-voting).
- ▶ **Quorum.** A chair and 2 additional decision-makers will constitute a three-member quorum.

Hearing Panel in Practice: Framework (Con't)

- ▶ **Decision-making**
 - ▶ By majority vote of Panel.
 - ▶ Preponderance of the evidence standard.
- ▶ **Confidentiality** to protect integrity of Panel proceedings.
- ▶ **Advisor of choice** for each party may be present, and may conduct cross-examination, if parties/ witnesses submit to it.
- ▶ **Other logistics.**
 - ▶ Closed proceedings
 - ▶ Cell phones/ outside recording devices not permitted to be used

Hearing Panel in Practice: Tools/ Technology (for technology used at live hearing)

- ▶ **Box.** All information that may be considered by hearing bodies made available to members/ parties in advance of hearing electronically via Box.
- ▶ **Zoom.** Due to extenuating circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic, all hearings are conducted live via Zoom technology. Additional questions/ run-throughs to be coordinated by representatives from EOP and Disciplinary Affairs offices, respectively.
 - ▶ *Additional information on [Zoom training opportunities](#) available through IT Services.*

Pre-Hearing: Preparation

- ▶ Who is present at hearing?
- ▶ What information will be available to the Panel and parties ahead of time?
- ▶ How should the Panel review the information made available?
 - ▶ Gap spotting
 - ▶ Relevance to issue presented
 - ▶ Question preparation

Hearing Process

1. **Introduction** by Chair, including ground rules and framing of issue presented to the Panel under the Policy.
2. **Opening statements** by parties.
3. Panel **questions** of parties and/or witnesses, includes questions posed by parties on cross-examination of other party/ witnesses, if they choose to submit to cross-examination.
4. **Concluding statements** by parties.
5. ***Deliberations.** (*Panel only).

Hearing: Issue Presented & Scope Process

How does the issue presented inform the Hearing Panel's role?

- ▶ **Issue presented.** Defines relevant scope of the issues for consideration before the Panel, *e.g.*, tied to the
 - ✓ Complaint, and
 - ✓ Policy on Title IX Sexual Harassment, specific conduct alleged.
- ▶ Informs Panel decision-making re **relevance** of information presented (including any gaps in information) and **questioning**.
- ▶ Places parties on **notice** of issues to be considered by Panel.
- ▶ **Example.** Whether the respondent engaged in unlawful harassment of the complainant on the basis of sex.

Hearing: Information Presented

What is the Hearing Panel's role in evaluating information?

- ▶ **Review.**
- ▶ Make determinations regarding **relevance and weight**
 - Relevance
 - Direct & indirect evidence
 - Credibility
- ▶ **Identify gaps** in information in light of question presented to inform **questions**
- ▶ *The parties and the Panel have equal access to the information considered by the Panel.*

Hearing: Information Presented - Relevance

- ▶ Information is **relevant** when it is related or useful to the matter at hand and/or makes something more or less probable.
- ▶ Hearing Bodies will consider relevant information in determining responsibility and sanctions, as appropriate.

Hearing: Information Presented – Relevance (Con't)

- ▶ The following information is not relevant (meaning it will not be considered by the Hearing Bodies):
 - ▶ Prior sexual history (except to prove consent or that someone other than respondent committed alleged conduct);
 - ▶ Information protected by a legally recognized privilege;
 - ▶ Any party's medical, psychological, and similar records unless the party has given voluntary, written consent.

Hearing: Questions

What is the Hearing Panel's role in questioning?

- ▶ **Draft questions**
- ▶ **Ask questions** of parties and/ or other witnesses
- ▶ **Listen** and **use answers** to questions to inform decision-making regarding question presented (*e.g.*, whether respondent violated Policy)

Hearing Panel Role at the Hearing

Complaint/ Response + Witness Statements + Evidence

Identify Issue
Presented

Evaluate
Information
Presented

Ask
Questions

Hearing Panel Decision

*Did the Respondent violate the Policy?
If so, what sanctions, if any, may be appropriate?*

Post-Hearing: Deliberations

- ▶ Return to issue presented to identify the **key elements**.
- ▶ **Standard of proof.** Preponderance of the evidence, or “*whether, in consideration of all of the information before it, it is more likely than not that the respondent’s conduct violated the Policy.*”
- ▶ There are 2 components to **deliberation**:
 - ▶ 1) **Responsibility Finding** (*e.g.*, whether respondent violated Policy), and
 - ▶ 2) **Sanctioning** (if applicable).

Post-Hearing: Deliberations (Sanctioning)

- ▶ What can be done?
- ▶ What must be done?
- ▶ Examples of possible sanctions (non-exhaustive):
 - ▶ Warning
 - ▶ Probation
 - ▶ Loss of University privileges
 - ▶ Discretionary sanctions
 - ▶ Suspension
 - ▶ Termination of employment (*subject to statutory procedures for appointees under Statute 11.1)
- ▶ The Panel can make non-binding recommendations regardless of finding Violation or No Violation.

Post-Hearing: Notification

- ▶ **Parties.** Simultaneous written notification within 14 days of Panel determination, including information on how to request review.
- ▶ ***For complaint against faculty, other academic appointees, or postdoctoral researchers.***
 - ▶ **Dean/Director.** Provided with notification of outcome and sanctions (if any).
 - ▶ **President and Provost.** Also provided with notification of outcome and sanctions (if any).

Post-Hearing: Review and Recordkeeping

- ▶ **Final decision.** If neither party requests review, the Hearing Panel's findings and any sanction becomes final and unreviewable.
- ▶ **For resolution of complaints against faculty, other academic appointees, or postdoctoral researchers.**
 - ▶ Provost and dean/ director informed.
 - ▶ Exception. Panel recommendation of termination (if respondent is appointee under Statute 11.1) proceeds under Statute 11.4.
 - ▶ **Recordkeeping.** If respondent found to have violated Policy, copy of written notification of outcome and sanctions (if any) placed in faculty file.

Process for Resolving Formal Title IX Complaints Under Policy

Requests for
Review

Requests for Review

- ▶ **The Provost (or designee)** resolves requests for review involving complaints against faculty, other academic appointees, or postdoctoral researchers.
- ▶ **The Dean of Students (or designee)** oversees the request for review process involving complaints against students.
- ▶ **The Associate Vice President for Human Resources (or designee)** resolves requests for review involving complaints against staff.

Request for Review of Hearing Panel Decision

- ▶ **Grounds.** There are only 3 grounds for requesting review of the Panel's findings and/or sanction:
 - ▶ (1) Prescribed procedures were not followed;
 - ▶ (2) New and material information;
 - ▶ (3) Title IX Personnel conflict of interest or bias for or against complainant/ respondent, generally, or specific to matter; and/or
 - ▶ (4) the sanction is disproportionate to the violation.
- ▶ **Timeline.** Within 10 days of notification of outcome and sanctions (if any).

Request for Review Process (for matters involving a Student Respondent)

- ▶ **Dean of Students (or designee) reviews written request to determine whether to convene a Review Board, *considering*** “whether the claims presented in the request for review individually or collectively were more likely than not to have had a bearing on the University-wide Disciplinary Committee’s decision.”
- ▶ **Dean of Students (or designee) notifies parties in writing**
 - ▶ If the other party submits a request for review;
 - ▶ If the request for review meets criteria for referral to Review Board, and *if so*, provide the party with a copy of the request for review and the option to respond to it in writing.

Request for Review Process (for UWDC): University-wide Disciplinary System Review Board

- ▶ **Composition.** Dean of Students (or designee), one faculty member of UWDC (Chair), and one student member of UWDC
- ▶ **UWDC Review Board makes decision regarding request for review based on entire record.** Possible outcomes include:
 - ▶ *Regarding sanction.* Review Board may sustain, reduce, increase, strike or otherwise modify the sanctions.
 - ▶ *If new and material information.* Review Board may reconvene UWDC to consider new information.
- ▶ Parties **notified** simultaneously within 7 business days of conclusion of review process in writing.

Request for Review Process (for matters involving a faculty, other academic appointee, or postdoctoral researcher respondent)

- ▶ **Provost reviews written request**, and may seek additional information from Panel Chair or Title IX Coordinator.
- ▶ **Provost makes decision regarding request.** Possible outcomes include:
 - ▶ *Regarding finding.* Provost confirms or rejects finding on basis of at least one of grounds for review.
 - ▶ *Regarding sanction.* Provost reduces, increases, or modifies sanctions on basis of at least one of grounds for review. (*If Provost recommends termination, and respondent appointee under Statute 11.1, proceeds under Statute 11.4).
 - ▶ *If new and material information,* Provost may reconvene Panel to consider information.
- ▶ Parties **notified** simultaneously within 7 days of conclusion of review process in writing. President also notified of outcome.

Request for Review Process (for matters involving a staff respondent)

- ▶ AVP HR reviews written request, and may seek additional information from Panel Chair or Title IX Coordinator.
- ▶ AVP HR makes decision regarding request. Possible outcomes include:
 - ▶ *Regarding finding.* AVP HR confirms or rejects finding on basis of at least one of grounds for review.
 - ▶ *Regarding sanction.* AVP HR reduces, increases, or modifies sanctions on basis of at least one of grounds for review. *If new and material information*, AVP HR may reconvene Panel to consider information.
- ▶ Parties **notified** simultaneously within 7 days of conclusion of review process in writing.



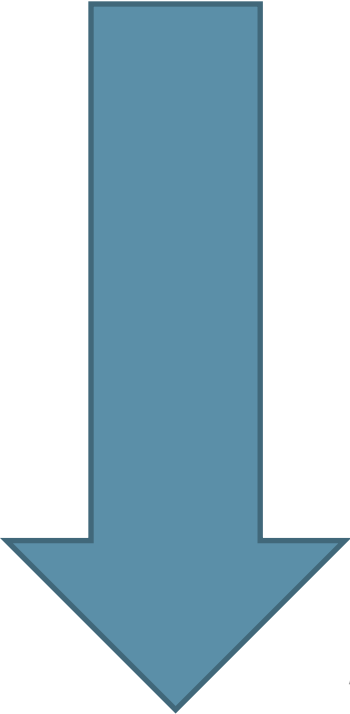
Alternative Resolution

Alternative Resolution is a
voluntary and is
separate and distinct from
the University's investigation and hearing body
processes.

Alternative Resolution: Eligibility

- ▶ **Voluntary:** both parties must agree to participate;
- ▶ **Students-only:** only available where both the complainant and respondents are students.
- ▶ **Title IX Coordinator approval** required for any Title IX Sexual Harassment matter to be resolved informally.

Alternative Resolution Process

- 
- ▶ Formal Title IX Complaint
 - ▶ Parties consent to Alternative Resolution, Title IX Coordinator reviews and approves.
 - ▶ Alternative Resolution Facilitator meets with both parties separately
 - ▶ Parties reach agreement

**Process may be discontinued at any time by Title IX Coordinator (or designee) or by either party, at which point, the complainant may request to re-engage investigation and resolution procedures by a hearing body.*

Alternative Resolution Outcome

- ▶ No disciplinary action against respondent
- ▶ Both parties sign written agreement, which is binding the violation of which could be subject to discipline
- ▶ Records kept by EOP as part of Title IX recordkeeping procedures (10 years per Policy)

The Policy on Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct: An Overview

Policy on Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct (Policy 609)

Who? Applies to all members of the University community

Where? On University property, or **Off** University property, if University program or hostile environment

When? No time limit for reporting.
Standard of Proof. Preponderance of the evidence.

Discrimination

Unlawful Harassment

Sexual Misconduct, *including* sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking

Retaliation

Policy on Harassment, Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct: Discrimination

Discrimination

- Adverse treatment on the basis of a protected class
- Admission, employment, program participation
- Protected classes include: race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, age, status as an individual with a disability, protected veteran status, genetic information, or other protected classes under the law.

Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct : Unlawful Harassment

- Verbal or physical conduct on the basis of a protected class
- Standard: *so severe* or *pervasive* that it 1) unreasonable interferes with work or academic experience, or 2) creates a hostile environment.
 - Behavior must be objectively unreasonable.

Unlawful Harassment

Policy on Harassment, Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct : Sexual Misconduct

Sexual Misconduct

Sexual assault.

An act of sexual penetration without consent

Sexual abuse.

An act of sexual conduct without consent

Dating violence.

Use/ threat physical abuse, mental or emotional abuse, or sexual violence by person who is in a romantic/ intimate relationship with victim

Domestic violence.

Harassment, interference with personal liberty, intimidation of dependent, physical abuse, or willful deprivation by person who is/ was family or household member to victim

Stalking.

Course of conduct directed at specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for their safety/ safety third person, or to suffer emotional distress.

Policy on Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct: For Example

1. Making comments about a colleague's appearance; sexual innuendos or humor;
2. Failing to implement approved accommodations for student with disability;
3. Changing postdoctoral researcher's authorship status after they reported workplace concerns;
4. Providing opportunities for advancement to select faculty or staff;
5. Bullying, name-calling, and threatening colleagues; etc.



Individuals with Reporting Obligations

Individuals with Reporting Obligations

Must report instances of sexual harassment (including Title IX Sexual Harassment), sexual assault, sexual abuse dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking they become aware of to the Title IX Coordinator. This obligation is distinct from Officials with Authority.

Individuals with Reporting Obligations

- ▶ **Who?** Any faculty member or other academic appointee and other University employees (except confidential resources)
- ▶ **What?** Listen, Support, Refer, Report
 - *Privacy.* Cannot guarantee confidentiality, but can promise privacy.
 - Do not consult with colleagues; do not investigate.
- ▶ **How?** Online (TIXRR.uchicago.edu) or by phone/ email to Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Title IX Coordinator.

Neurobiology of Trauma

Our brain is trained for survival.

- ▶ **Amygdala** is the brain's earliest form of memory. It creates unconscious mental models for safety and danger, *e.g.*, smiling/shaking someone's hand; stubbing your toe; **fight/flight/freeze response**
- ▶ When faced with a perceived threat, your brain has **two options**:
 - ▶ Sympathetic Nervous System Response (SNSR)
 - ▶ Neocortex activated

Neurobiology of Trauma (Con't)

When faced with a perceived attack, the brain's alarm system goes off, **causing the SNSR to activate:**

- ▶ Amygdala (quick unconscious behavior/decisions, involuntary, elicits fear/terror)
- ▶ Sends Hypothalamic, Pituitary Glands and Adrenal Glands (HPA) into attack mode
- ▶ Subsequent release of 4 hormones
 - ▶ Catecholamine: primes for flight or fight
 - ▶ Cortisol: make energy available for flight or flee
 - ▶ Opioids: prevent pain
 - ▶ Oxytocin: makes positive feelings to counter the terror

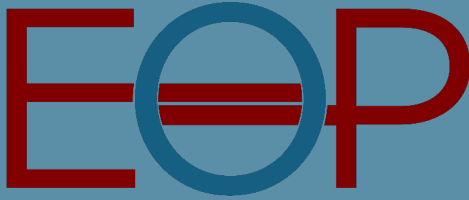
Neurobiology of Trauma: What are the possible bodily responses?

Different levels of hormones cause different responses:

- ▶ *High catecholamine/high cortisol*: **fight or flight**
- ▶ *High catecholamine but low cortisol*: **freezing**; including tonic immobility
- ▶ *High Oxytocin*: **uncontrolled bouts of laughter**
- ▶ *High Opioids*: **eerily calm, sleepy**
- ▶ Other responses might include: tearing up, crying, swearing, discussing other topics, sitting calmly, sleeping a lot or not at all, using alcohol...
- ▶ Other feelings might include: numb, shocked, afraid, lucky, dirty, sad, confused, vengeful, degraded, ashamed...

Neurobiology of Trauma: What are the effects?

- ▶ Survival hormones that are released by amygdala during attack creates a traffic jam of activity
 - ▶ ...To the prefrontal cortex causes damage in connections to the hippocampus which is where the brain stores memories
 - ▶ Disrupts the other brain response: thalamus/frontal cortex “developed brain” hippocampus (executive processes happen, “rational decision making”, comparison to prior memories, try to understand and make meaning and then respond).
- ▶ A MINIMUM of 4 days to clear out the amygdala’s response



OFFICE OF THE PROVOST
Equal Opportunity Programs

Contact Us: UChicago CARES

The Center for Awareness, Resolution, Education & Support

*working to prevent and respond to harassment,
discrimination and sexual misconduct*

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