

**MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY**

**RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND  
TITLE IX POLICY**

**August 25, 2025**

**Table of Contents**

- I. INSTITUTIONAL VALUES .....4
- II. PURPOSE AND APPLICATION .....4
- III. PROHIBITED CONDUCT .....5
  - A. RVSM Sexual Harassment.....5
  - B. Sexual Assault .....7
  - C. Relationship Violence: .....8
  - D. RVSM Stalking.....9
  - E. RVSM Retaliation.....10
- IV. CONSENT .....11
- V. REPORTING .....12
  - A. Report a Crime to the Police.....12
  - B. Report to the Office for Civil Rights .....13
- VI. REPORTING OBLIGATIONS FOR RESPONSIBLE EMPLOYEES .....13
- VII. LIMITED DRUG AND ALCOHOL-RELATED IMMUNITY FOR STUDENTS.....13
- VIII. SIMULTANEOUS INVESTIGATIONS .....14
- IX. PRIVACY OF INFORMATION.....14
- X. INTERIM AND SUPPORTIVE MEASURES.....14
  - A. Supportive Measures.....14
  - B. Emergency Removal of Students .....15
  - C. Administrative Leave of Employees .....15
  - D. Other Interim Measures.....15
  - E. Violation of Interim Measures.....15
- XI. ADVISORS OR SUPPORT PERSONS.....15
- XII. INITIAL ASSESSMENT .....16
  - A. Notification of Supportive Measures and Formal Complaint Process.....16
  - B. Preliminary Review.....16
  - C. Closure .....16
  - D. Formal Complaint.....17
  - E. Coverage Determinations.....18
  - F. Dismissal Determinations.....19
  - G. Referrals of Other Forms of Prohibited Conduct .....20
- XIII. FORMAL GRIEVANCE PROCESS .....20
  - A. Overview of Standards and Process .....20
  - B. Investigation .....22
  - C. Hearing.....24
  - D. Decision Regarding Responsibility.....25
  - E. Appeals.....26
  - F. Sanctions, Discipline, and Remedies.....26
  - G. New Evidence Discovered After Time of Appeal.....27
- XIV. ADAPTABLE RESOLUTION.....28
  - A. Availability of Adaptable Resolution.....28
  - B. Initiation of Adaptable Resolution Process .....28
- XV. TRAINING.....29

XVI. COMPLAINTS OR GRIEVANCES RELATED TO MSU HEALTH CARE ..... 29  
XVII. OPTIONS FOR EXTERNAL RESOLUTION OF COMPLAINTS ..... 30  
XVIII. DOCUMENTATION ..... 31  
XIX. NOTICE TO THE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES ..... 31  
XX. FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS ..... 32

## **I. INSTITUTIONAL VALUES**

Michigan State University (“MSU” or the “University”) strives to provide an academic and work environment that fosters the values of safety; mutual respect; dignity; equity; responsibility; and clear and timely communication. Relationship violence, sexual misconduct, and stalking are in direct conflict with our institution’s values and policies and present barriers to fulfilling the University’s missions.

The University’s commitment to preventing and responding to relationship violence, sexual misconduct, and stalking applies to admissions, employment, and access to and treatment in University programs and activities.

Additionally, the University complies with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. § 1681 et seq. (“Title IX”), which prohibits discrimination based on sex in education programs or activities; Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act (“ACA”), which prohibits sex discrimination in applicable health programs or activities; and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits sexual harassment in employment; as well as other federal and state laws (including the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act).

## **II. PURPOSE AND APPLICATION**

All faculty, staff, academic staff, students (including graduate students and professional students) volunteers, and other members of the MSU community are expected to comply with the provisions in this Policy. This Policy:

- Defines relationship violence (dating violence and domestic violence), sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment and sexual assault), stalking, and retaliation prohibited by the University and Title IX. (Section III).
- Provides contact information for confidential and other resources available to all individuals. (Section V).
- Explains equitable supportive measures that may be offered to all parties. (Section X).
- Explains the process for responding to and addressing reports and formal complaints of prohibited conduct, including retaliation. (Section XII).
- Sets expectations for University faculty, staff, and academic staff on reporting conduct. (Section VI).

This Policy provides a fair process whether or not reported conduct is specifically prohibited or covered by Title IX and highlights divergences in coverage, definitions of prohibited conduct, and procedures. Additionally, specific Title IX definitions of prohibited conduct are set forth in text boxes.

Discrimination that does not also involve harassment based upon sex (actual or perceived), gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, and sexual identity will be reviewed under the University’s Anti-Discrimination Policy.

Reports (verbal, in-person, in-writing, electronic, or other means) of conduct prohibited by this Policy are reviewed by the University's Office for Civil Rights and Title IX Education and Compliance (OCR) under the direction of the Title IX Coordinator.<sup>1</sup>

### III. PROHIBITED CONDUCT

The following section sets forth conduct that is strictly prohibited by the University. The University prohibits sexual harassment as defined by Title IX as well as relationship violence, sexual misconduct, and stalking as defined by the University.

- "RVSM": This Policy uses the acronym "RVSM" to include "relationship violence" (a broad term encompassing domestic violence and dating violence); "sexual misconduct" (a term that includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, and sexual exploitation); and stalking.
- Title IX: Additionally, the University prohibits sexual harassment (which includes sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking) as defined by the Title IX regulations.

**A. RVSM Sexual Harassment:** Form of discrimination that includes verbal, written, or physical behavior, directed at someone because of that person's sex (actual or perceived), gender, gender identity, gender expression, actual or perceived sexual orientation, sexual identity, or based on gender stereotypes, when that behavior is unwelcome and meets any of the following criteria:

- Submission or consent to the behavior is reasonably believed to carry consequences, positive or negative, for the individual's education, employment, University living environment, or participation in a University activity or program. This can also be referred to as "quid pro quo". Examples of this type of sexual harassment include:
  - Pressuring an individual to engage in sexual behavior for some educational or employment benefit;
  - Making a real or implied threat that rejecting sexual behavior will carry a negative consequence for the individual.
- The unwelcome behavior is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it causes an unreasonable interference with the individual's work or educational performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, or demeaning environment for employment, education, University living, or participation in a University activity or program. This can be referred to as "hostile environment". Examples of this type of sexual harassment include but are not limited to:
  - Unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors;
  - Unwelcome commentary, including but not limited to drawings, written statements, social media posts, or verbal statements, about an individual's body, genitals or sexual activities;
  - Unwelcome teasing, joking, or flirting based on actual or perceived gender identity, gender expression, or sexual identity/orientation; and
  - Verbal abuse of a sexual nature or based upon gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual identity, sexual orientation, or gender stereotypes.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Title IX Coordinator and others mentioned in this Policy may delegate their authority by naming a designee.

Behaviors or communications may be verbal or nonverbal, written, or electronic. Such conduct does not need to be directed at or to a specific individual in order to constitute sexual harassment but may consist of generalized unwelcome and inappropriate behaviors or communications based on sex, gender identity, sexual identity, gender expression, actual or perceived sexual orientation, or gender stereotypes.

Determination of whether reported conduct constitutes sexual harassment requires consideration of all the circumstances, including the context in which the reported incidents occurred. Sexual harassment is often a pattern of offensive behaviors. A single incident may also constitute sexual harassment, depending on the severity of the conduct and on factors such as the degree to which the conduct affected the educational experience, the employee's work or academic environment, or patient care; the type of conduct; and the relationship between the respondent and the claimant.

A person's subjective belief alone that behavior is offensive does not necessarily mean that the conduct rises to the level of a policy violation. The behavior must also be objectively offensive.

Sexual harassment may also be prohibited by Title IX.

**Title IX Sexual Harassment** means conduct **on the basis of sex** that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. An employee of the University conditioning a provision of aid, benefit, or service of the University on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct.
2. Unwelcome conduct that is so severe, pervasive, **and** objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the University's education, program, or activity as determined by a reasonable person standard.
3. Other "sexual offenses" defined in the following statutes and described in this Policy: "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). These other sexual offenses under Title IX are defined in more detail below.

**B. Sexual Assault:** Sexual Assault is a broad term that includes the following prohibited conduct.<sup>2</sup>

1. **RVSM Non-Consensual Sexual Contact:** The intentional touching of intimate body parts of another person in a sexual manner without consent, causing another to touch intimate body parts without consent, or the disrobing or exposing of another without consent. Intimate body parts include but are not limited to, the mouth, neck, buttocks, anus, groin, genitalia, or breast; however, sexual contact can occur with any part of the body.

---

<sup>2</sup> The below definitions are inclusive of and expand on the definitions outlined in the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and Clery Act regulations ([Appendix A to Subpart D of 34 CFR Part 668.46](#)).

This conduct may also be prohibited by Title IX as **non-consensual sexual contact**.<sup>3</sup>

Under Title IX, **non-consensual sexual contact** means the intentional touching of the clothed or unclothed body parts without consent of the claimant for the purpose of sexual degradation, sexual gratification, or sexual humiliation; or the forced touching by the claimant of the respondent's clothed or unclothed body parts, without consent of the claimant for the purpose of sexual degradation, sexual gratification, or sexual humiliation.

- 2. RVSM Non-Consensual Sexual Penetration (Attempted or Actual):** Non-consensual penetration or attempted penetration of a genital, anal, or oral opening of another person by use of an object, instrument, digit, or other body part. An "object" or "instrument" means anything other than a respondent's genitalia or other body part. This includes forcing an individual to use an object, instrument, or digit to penetrate another individual as well as oral penetration by a sex organ of another person.

This conduct may also be prohibited by Title IX as **non-consensual sexual penetration**.<sup>4</sup>

Under Title IX, **non-consensual sexual penetration** means penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, or by a sex-related object, without the consent of the claimant, including instances where the claimant is incapable of giving consent.

- 3. Incest:** Sexual intercourse between persons who are related to each other within the degrees wherein marriage is prohibited bylaw.

This conduct is also prohibited by Title IX.

Under Title IX, **incest** means sexual intercourse between persons who are related to each other within the degrees wherein marriage is prohibited by law.

- 4. Statutory Rape:** Sexual intercourse, where there is no force or coercion, with a person who is under the statutory age of consent under state law.

This conduct may also be prohibited by Title IX.

---

<sup>3</sup> For ease of understanding, this Policy uses the term "non-consensual sexual contact" instead of the term used in the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (NIBRS) program, which is Criminal Sexual Contact, or the term used in VAWA, which is Fondling.

<sup>4</sup> For ease of understanding, this Policy uses the term "non-consensual penetration" instead of the term used in the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (NIBRS) program and VAWA, which is Rape.

Under Title IX, **statutory rape** means sexual intercourse, where there is no force or coercion, with a person who is under the statutory age of consent under state law .

**C. RVSM Sexual Exploitation: Intentionally engaging in any of the following:**

- In situations where an individual has a legitimate expectation of privacy, actual or attempted surreptitiously observing or attempting to observe another individual's nudity or sexual activity or allowing another to observe consensual sexual activity without the knowledge and consent of all parties involved, or in which the person observed or induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age.
- In situations where an individual has a legitimate expectation of privacy, the non-consensual actual or attempted recording, sharing, or streaming of images, photography, video, or audio recordings of sexual activity or nudity, or distribution of such without the knowledge and consent of all parties involved, or in which the person recorded, viewed, or induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age.
- Actual or attempted exposing of one's genitals or inducing another to expose their genitals in non-consensual circumstances, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age.
- Inducing incapacitation or attempting to induce incapacitation for the purpose of making another person vulnerable to non-consensual sexual activity.
- Actual or attempted masturbation in public, whether or not genitals are exposed.
- Knowingly exposing, or knowingly attempting to expose, another individual to a sexually transmitted infection or virus without their knowledge.
- The actual or attempted recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a sex act induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age.

**D. Relationship Violence: Relationship Violence is a broad term that encompasses domestic violence and dating violence.**

1. **RVSM Domestic Violence:** An act of violence (actual or an attempt to cause physical injury to another) or threat to cause violence to another, committed by an individual who is a current or former spouse or intimate partner of an individual, a person with whom the individual shares a child in common, a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabited with the individual as a spouse or intimate partner.

This conduct may also be prohibited under Title IX.

Under Title IX, **domestic violence** means assault or assault and battery to another person, on the basis of sex, 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 the domestic or family violence laws under state law, 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 the state.

2. **RVSM Dating Violence:** Violence (actual or an attempt to cause physical injury to another) or threat to cause violence committed by a person: (1) who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and (2) where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors: (i) The length of the relationship. (ii) The type of relationship. (iii) The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.

This conduct may also be prohibited by Title IX.

Under Title IX, **dating violence** means assault or assault and battery committed by a person: (1) who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and (2) where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors: (i) The length of the relationship. (ii) The type of relationship. (iii) The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.

- E. **RVSM Stalking:** Engaging in a course of conduct that is directed at a specific person or persons that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear for themselves or for the safety of others, or to suffer substantial emotional distress.

Stalking includes cyberstalking, which utilizes electronic formats such as the internet, social networks, social media apps, blogs, texts, cell phones and other devices. Stalking may include behavior that occurs outside the context of a relationship.

- A "course of conduct" means two or more acts directed at a specific person or persons. In the context of stalking, this can include, but is not limited to, acts in which the respondent directly, indirectly, or through third parties, by any action, method, device, or means, follows, monitors, observes, surveils, threatens, or communicates to or about a person, or interferes with a person's property.
- "Substantial emotional distress" means significant mental suffering or anguish that may, but does not necessarily, require medical treatment or professional counseling.
- The term "reasonable person" is a legal term that the courts have generally defined as a prudent, hypothetical person with ordinary sensitivities who embodies a communal ideal of reasonable behavior.

This conduct may also be prohibited by Title IX.

Under Title IX, **stalking** means engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person, on the basis of sex, that would cause a reasonable person to: (1) fear for their safety or the safety of others; or (2) suffer substantial emotional distress.

**F. RVSM Retaliation:** An act or attempted act taken because of a person's participation (or expectation of participation) in a protected activity that would discourage a reasonable person from engaging in protected activity. Protected activity includes a person's good faith:

- opposition to prohibited conduct
- report of prohibited conduct to the University; or,
- participation (or reasonable expectation of participation) in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, hearing, or supportive measure under this Policy.

This conduct may also be prohibited by Title IX.

Under Title IX, intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination, including charges against an individual for code of conduct violations that do not involve sex discrimination or sexual harassment, but arise out of the same facts or circumstances as a report or complaint of sex discrimination, or a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment, for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX or 34 C.F.R. Part 106 constitutes **retaliation**.

Neither the University nor any other person may intimidate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX or this Policy, or because the individual has made a report or complaint, provided information, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under this Policy.

The exercise of rights protected under the First Amendment does not constitute prohibited retaliation.

Charging an individual with a violation under a separate policy for making a materially false statement in bad faith in the course of a grievance proceeding under this Policy does not constitute prohibited retaliation, provided, however, that a determination regarding responsibility, alone, is not sufficient to conclude that any party made a materially false statement in bad faith.

#### IV. CONSENT

This Policy defines consent as the voluntary, willful, and unambiguous agreement to engage in a specific sexual activity during a sexual encounter.

- Consent must be clear and communicated through mutually understandable words or actions that indicate a willingness to participate in the sexual act.
- Consent cannot be gained by ignoring or acting in spite of the objections of another.
- Consent can be withdrawn at any time and for any reason.
- Assumptions about consent or willingness to engage in sexual activity should never be made.
- Consent cannot be inferred from:
  - Silence, passivity, or lack of resistance alone;
  - A current or previous dating or sexual relationship (or the existence of such a relationship with anyone else);
  - Attire;
  - The spending of money;
  - Stereotypes;
  - Consent given to another person (*i.e.*, consent to engage in sexual activity with one person does not imply consent to engage in sexual activity with another person); or
  - Consent previously given (*i.e.*, consenting to one sexual act does not imply consent to another sexual act).
- Consent cannot be obtained using physical force, violence, duress, intimidation, coercion or the threat-- expressed or implied-- of bodily injury. Whether a party used such methods to obtain consent will be determined by reference to the perception of a reasonable person found in the same or similar circumstances.
- Consent may never be given by:
  - Individuals under the state age of consent;<sup>5</sup>
  - Mentally disabled persons, if their disability was reasonably knowable to a sexual partner who is not mentally disabled; or
  - Persons who are incapacitated (whether as a result of drugs, alcohol or otherwise), unconscious, asleep or otherwise physically helpless or mentally or physically unable to make informed, rational judgments.
    - The relevant inquiry in determining responsibility is whether the respondent knew or should have known that the claimant was incapacitated when viewed from the position of a sober, reasonable person.

---

<sup>5</sup> Under Michigan law, consent to sexual contact of any kind cannot be given by someone who is under the age of thirteen (13). Consent cannot be given by someone who is under the age of sixteen (16) in certain circumstances. Consent to sexual penetration with an authority figure cannot be given by someone who is under the age of eighteen (18). An “authority figure” is someone who is charged with control or supervision of a minor or someone who maintains a dominant role which places the minor in a position of special vulnerability. For example, a teacher is in a position of authority over a student; a doctor, nurse, or other health care professional is in a position of authority over a patient; and a psychologist is in a position of authority over a client.

## V. REPORTING

Those impacted by relationship violence, sexual misconduct, or stalking may: 1) reach out to a confidential resource (listed below) to learn about options; 2) report to local police or the Michigan State University Department of Police and Public Safety (MSU DPPS); and/or 3) report to the Title IX Coordinator through the Office for Civil Rights (OCR). Those impacted may choose to report to law enforcement, to the University, to both, or to neither as the individual may choose.

**To discuss options, the formal complaint process, resources, and supportive or interim measures in a confidential setting, contact:**

- **MSU Center for Survivors, (<https://centerforsurvivors.msu.edu/>)**
- **MSU Safe Place (<http://safeplace.msu.edu>)**
- **MSU Employee Assistance Program (<http://eap.msu.edu>)**
- **University Ombudsperson (<https://ombud.msu.edu/>)**
- **MSU Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS) (<http://caps.msu.edu/>)**
- **MSU Sexual Assault Health Care Program (<https://centerforsurvivors.msu.edu/msu-sexual-assault-healthcare-program/>)**

A conversation or contact with a confidential resource generally will not result in a report to the University.

Anyone who becomes aware of prohibited conduct is encouraged to immediately report to the MSU DPPS and to the Title IX Coordinator through OCR. Reporting obligations for employees under the Mandatory Reporting for Relationship Violence, Sexual Misconduct, and Stalking Policy are described briefly in Section VI.

Reports may be submitted in person, by mail, by telephone, or by electronic mail, using the links and contact information listed below. Reports may be made at any time (including during non-business hours) by using the telephone number, email, online reporting form, or by mail to the OCR address, listed below. Please visit OCR's website for additional details regarding time and hours for reporting: [civilrights.msu.edu](http://civilrights.msu.edu).

### A. Report a Crime to the Police

MSU Department of Police and Public Safety  
1120 Red Cedar Road  
East Lansing, MI 48824  
(517) 355-2221  
Emergencies: 911

The MSU DPPS can help to determine jurisdiction and connect persons with appropriate law enforcement agencies if the reported conduct did not occur on campus.

## **B. Report to the Office for Civil Rights**

### **Office for Civil Rights and Title IX Education and Compliance<sup>6</sup>**

408 W. Circle Dr., Suite 5, Olds Hall

East Lansing MI 48824

(517) 353-3922

[ocr.isr@msu.edu](mailto:ocr.isr@msu.edu)

Reporting Form<sup>7</sup>: <https://msu.publicincidentreporting.com/>

Reports may also be submitted directly to the Title IX Coordinator.

### **Title IX Coordinator**

Laura Rugless, JD

Office for Civil Rights and Title IX Education and Compliance

408 W. Circle Dr. Suite 105, Olds Hall

East Lansing MI 48824

(517) 353-3922

[OCR.laurarugless@msu.edu](mailto:OCR.laurarugless@msu.edu)

## **VI. REPORTING OBLIGATIONS FOR RESPONSIBLE EMPLOYEES**

University faculty, staff, academic staff, and volunteers, unless specifically exempted under the Mandatory Reporting for Relationship Violence, Sexual Misconduct and Stalking Policy (RVSM Mandatory Reporting Policy) , must promptly report incidents of prohibited conduct that they observe or learn about in their professional capacity or in the context of their work and that occurred at a University-sponsored event or on University property or involves a University community member (student, employee, MSU Health Care patient, or other individuals) with respect to conduct that may have occurred while they were a University community member.

The RVSM Mandatory Reporting Policy sets forth the specific reporting obligations for employees and volunteers and can be found [here](#). In accordance with University policies and applicable union collective bargaining agreements, failure to report as required may result in corrective or disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

## **VII. LIMITED DRUG AND ALCOHOL-RELATED IMMUNITY FOR STUDENTS**

The University considers the reporting and adjudication of allegations under this Policy to be of paramount importance. While the University does not condone underage drinking or illegal use of controlled substances, students who report – or participate in an OCR investigation of – prohibited conduct will not be disciplined by the University for a violation of the University’s drug and alcohol possession or consumption policies that may have occurred in connection with the reported incident.

---

<sup>6</sup> The Title IX Coordinator oversees implementation of this Policy. Reports submitted to OCR result in receipt of the report by the Title IX Coordinator.

<sup>7</sup> The reporting form is not considered a formal complaint under this Policy.

Students are also protected by a Michigan law that provides amnesty for alcohol-related crimes if an underage individual, after consuming alcohol, presents (or accompanies an underage person presenting) at a health facility or agency for treatment or observation as a result of sexual assault.

### **VIII. SIMULTANEOUS INVESTIGATIONS**

Conduct that may be investigated for violating this Policy (relationship violence, sexual misconduct, and stalking) may also constitute a crime. This Policy and the grievance process set forth herein are not a substitute for criminal or civil legal action. Therefore, the University encourages individuals to promptly report alleged criminal conduct to the MSU DPPS or a local law enforcement agency.

The Title IX Coordinator and OCR staff are required to inform the MSU DPPS of all reports they receive regarding relationship violence, sexual violence, and stalking. OCR's notification does not obligate the claimant to communicate with the police or to participate in a law enforcement investigation.

The MSU DPPS is required to notify OCR of all reported incidents of relationship violence, sexual misconduct, and stalking. The MSU DPPS shares information about ongoing investigations with OCR to the extent that sharing such information will not interfere with law enforcement proceedings.

If a criminal complaint is filed in addition to a formal complaint with OCR, OCR will not wait for the conclusion of any criminal investigation or proceedings before commencing its own investigation; however, OCR's investigation may be delayed temporarily while the criminal investigators are gathering evidence. In the event of such a delay, the University may take interim measures and will offer to provide supportive measures to all parties.

### **IX. PRIVACY OF INFORMATION**

The University will seek to protect the privacy of parties in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The University will keep private the identity of any individual who has made a report or formal complaint of prohibited conduct under this Policy; the identity of any claimant; the identity of any respondent; and the identity of any witness. The privacy of information exceptions include disclosures that may be permitted by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) statute or regulations, are required by law, and/or are necessary to carry out the purposes of this Policy (including unit and HR notifications, providing supportive measures, interim measures, any initial assessment, investigation, hearing, and/or appeal). Reports, including the identities of the parties and the reported conduct, may be referred to other units for consideration under additional University policies.

Additionally, as required by an agreement with the U.S. Department of Education, summaries of all final RVSM and Title IX investigation reports and final determinations involving employee respondents are included in the respondent's personnel file.

### **X. INTERIM AND SUPPORTIVE MEASURES**

**A. Supportive Measures:** The University offers non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge to a claimant or a respondent before or after the filing of a formal complaint or where no formal

complaint has been filed, and regardless of whether the claimant chooses to speak with MSU DPPS or other law enforcement.

Supportive measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to MSU's education programs or activities, including but not limited to protecting the safety of all parties or the University's educational or employment environment or to deter conduct prohibited under this policy. Supportive measures will not unreasonably burden the other party.

Supportive measures may include referrals to counseling; extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments; modifications of work or class schedules; mutual no contact directives; ASMSU Safe Ride services; changes in work or housing locations; leaves of absence; increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus; and other similar measures.

To the extent possible, the University will not disclose the provision of supportive measures to a claimant or respondent unless necessary to provide the supportive measures.

- B. Emergency Removal of Students:** The University may remove any student from its program or activity on an emergency basis if there is an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any students or other individuals arising from allegations under this Policy. Prior to removal, the University must undertake an individualized safety and risk analysis, and, where such analysis determines a credible safety risk exists, provide the party with notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal.

Additional information regarding emergency removal procedures and the appeal process may be found at <https://civilrights.msu.edu/policies/index.html>.

- C. Administrative Leave of Employees:** The University may place non-student employees on administrative leave prior to or following the filing of formal complaint and through final resolution of the formal grievance process. More information regarding administrative leave of faculty and academic staff may be found at [https://hr.msu.edu/policies-procedures/faculty-academic-staff/faculty-handbook/tenure\\_discipline\\_dismissal.html](https://hr.msu.edu/policies-procedures/faculty-academic-staff/faculty-handbook/tenure_discipline_dismissal.html). For information regarding staff, please contact the MSU Office of Employee Relations.

- D. Other Interim Measures:** Other interim measures may be available on a case-by-case basis. Any interim employment action will be taken consistent with the University's rights as an employer.

- E. Violation of Interim Measures:** Parties who fail to abide by interim measures may be subject to discipline.

## **XI. ADVISORS OR SUPPORT PERSONS**

Claimants and respondents may each have one advisor and one support person of their respective choice present at any meeting related to this Policy. The advisor and support person should not be a witness or otherwise have any conflicting role in the process.<sup>8</sup> A witness may have an advisor or support person at any meeting related to this Policy. An advisor may be an attorney.

---

<sup>8</sup> Under Title IX, a party is not precluded from selecting an advisor who may also be a witness or serve in a conflicting role.

If a party has an advisor and/or a support person during an investigation, the advisor and support person generally provide advisement and support.

If a hearing is conducted, parties must have an advisor to conduct questioning of the other party and/or witnesses, as parties may never personally question each other. If a party does not have their own advisor for a hearing, the University will provide the party (at no fee or charge) with an advisor of its choice, for the purpose of conducting questioning. A claimant or respondent may request a University-provided advisor through the Office for Civil Rights.

An advisor or support person who is verbally abusive; disruptive to the investigative or hearing process; or persists in trying to substantively interfere with the University process after a warning to cease and desist may be asked to leave and may be precluded from attendance at future meetings or conferences.

## **XII. INITIAL ASSESSMENT**

Upon receipt of a report (verbal, in-person, electronic, in writing, or other means), OCR will conduct an initial assessment, which will include outreach to the claimant and determination of whether a Campus Security Authority report is required under the Clery Act.<sup>9</sup>

**A. Notification of Supportive Measures and Formal Complaint Process:** OCR, on behalf of the Title IX Coordinator, will promptly notify the claimant in writing about the availability of supportive measures, confidential resources, and other resources<sup>10</sup> with or without the filing of a formal complaint; the availability of University-provided advisors; the process for filing a formal complaint; and the opportunity to meet with OCR to discuss options.

Meeting with OCR to discuss options does not obligate a claimant to file a formal complaint, nor does a formal complaint need to be filed prior to meeting with OCR.

The University will consider the claimant's wishes with respect to supportive measures.

**B. Preliminary Review:** OCR may gather information to determine coverage under this Policy and whether closure is appropriate.

**C. Closure:** A report may move to closure if (1) a claimant cannot be identified; (2) specific circumstances prevent gathering information sufficient to reach a determination as to whether

---

<sup>9</sup> The Clery Act requires the University to annually disclose campus crime statistics, including reported incidents of domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and sexual assaults that meet the definition of forcible and non-forcible sex offenses under federal law. The Clery Act also requires the University to issue "timely warnings" to the campus community when a Clery Act crime (1) occurs on campus, in or on certain non-campus buildings or property (as defined by law), or on public property immediately adjacent to and accessible from campus and (2) poses a serious or continuing threat to students and employees. Timely warnings and statistical disclosures do not contain any personally identifying information about claimants.

<sup>10</sup> The University provides written information about rights and resources as required by the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 and its implementing regulations.

the reported conduct is covered under this Policy, which may include a claimant's declining to file a formal complaint or not responding to OCR's outreach; or (3) the report is not covered under the criteria for a formal grievance process, described below.

Notwithstanding, a claimant or the Title IX Coordinator may file a formal complaint after a report has been moved to closure. At such point in time, OCR will re-open the report.

Supportive measures may remain available to the parties even if the matter moves to closure.

OCR may refer reports, including information contained in a report, to another unit on campus if appropriate for consideration under other University policies and laws. Other units include Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs, Office for Employee Relations, and the Office of Student Support and Accountability.

- D. Formal Complaint:** The formal grievance process is initiated only when a formal complaint is signed and filed by the claimant or the Title IX Coordinator.
- 1. Content:** The formal complaint is a document that alleges prohibited conduct against the respondent(s) and requests that the University investigate the allegation(s). A claimant or Title IX Coordinator may file a formal complaint by completing and signing the MSU formal complaint template (in writing or electronically) and submitting it to OCR, but is not required to use the template. The formal complaint begins the formal grievance process; additional information may be gathered and considered during the formal grievance process.
  - 2. Anonymity:** A claimant cannot be anonymous once a formal complaint is signed.
  - 3. Consolidation or Separation:** The University may consolidate or separate formal complaints involving more than one claimant or more than one respondent, or if evidence relevant to one incident might be relevant to the others, including where the allegations of prohibited conduct arise out of the same facts or circumstances. When consolidated, complaints proceed through the formal grievance process jointly, but determinations regarding responsibility will be made as to each party and allegation.<sup>11</sup>
  - 4. Formal Complaint Required (Employee Respondents):** The Title IX Coordinator must consider filing a formal complaint if the University knows or reasonably should know that an employee, including faculty, staff, or academic staff, is alleged to have engaged in any prohibited conduct set forth in this Policy.<sup>12</sup> The University will exercise reasonable care to prevent and promptly correct any prohibited conduct. The Title IX Coordinator or designee

---

<sup>11</sup> The University may also investigate and resolve potential violations of the Anti-Discrimination Policy jointly with complaints under this Policy, in accordance with the formal grievance process outlined in this Policy.

<sup>12</sup> In compliance with current Michigan law, if more than one allegation has been made against an employee that resulted in a finding of no misconduct, the Title IX Coordinator will take all appropriate steps to ensure the matter is being investigated thoroughly, including hiring an outside investigator for future cases involving that employee. State School Aid Act of 1979, Section 388.1841(b)(2)(e).

may also refer the report to the respondent's unit and to Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs or the Office of Employee Relations, as appropriate.

**E. Coverage Determinations:** If a formal complaint is signed by a claimant or the Title IX Coordinator and the information available indicates that the formal complaint meets either the University RVSM coverage criteria and/or the Title IX coverage criteria, the University will proceed with the formal grievance process. If the conduct meets both the University RVSM coverage and the Title IX coverage, Title IX regulations require that the formal grievance process include all of the procedural requirements specific to the Title IX regulations, as set forth in this Policy. If at any point, the University determines that there is no Title IX coverage, but there is University RVSM coverage, the matter will continue as an RVSM coverage matter.

**1. University RVSM Coverage:** If the conduct in the formal complaint is University RVSM prohibited conduct (Section III) and the following criteria are met, the University will proceed under the formal grievance process.

- a. **Claimant**<sup>13</sup> is an individual who is reported to have been subjected to conduct prohibited by this Policy.
- b. **Respondent** is an individual who has been reported to have engaged in prohibited conduct.
- c. The reported conduct occurred or is occurring:
  - i. On campus;
  - ii. Off-campus in a University-sponsored program or activity, including but not limited to cooperative extension, intercollegiate athletics, lifelong education, any regularly scheduled classes; and locations including buildings owned or controlled by student organizations officially registered with University Student Affairs and Services. This includes fraternities and sororities registered with University Student Affairs and Services.
  - iii. Off-campus in a program or activity sponsored by a student governing body, including their constituent groups, or registered student organization; or
  - iv. Off-campus and outside of a University-sponsored program or activity but the conduct has continuing adverse effects on the campus or on a University-sponsored program or activity.<sup>14</sup>

**2. Coverage Under Title IX:** If the conduct in the complaint is prohibited conduct as defined by Title IX (Section III) and the following criteria are met, the formal grievance process will include all of the procedural requirements specific to Title IX:

---

<sup>13</sup> Title IX refers to a claimant as a complainant. For purposes of this policy, claimant and complainant are synonymous.

<sup>14</sup> Prohibited conduct may have a "continuing adverse effect" if it causes or threatens to cause a substantial negative impact on the safety of the University community or the functions, services, or property of the University. This would include, but is not limited to, causing an unreasonable interference with the educational or work environment of a member or members of the University community or on the campus generally.

- a. **Claimant** is (a) an individual who is reported to have been subjected to Title IX Sexual Harassment (as defined above) in the United States; (b) is a student, employee or third party (including patients); and (c) is participating in, or attempting to participate in, the institution's education program or activity at the time of filing a formal complaint.
- b. **Respondent** is an individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment prohibited by Title IX (Title IX Sexual Harassment, as defined above).
- c. The conduct occurred or is occurring in the context of a **University education program or activity**, including:
  - i. Locations, events, or circumstances in which the University exercises substantial control over both the respondent and the context in which the reported Title IX Sexual Harassment occurred or is occurring.
  - ii. Locations include buildings owned or controlled by student organizations officially registered with University Student Affairs and Services (officially recognized student organizations). This includes fraternities and sororities registered with University Student Affairs and Services.

**F. Dismissal Determinations:** The University may dismiss all or part of a formal complaint at any time prior to the completion of the formal grievance process for any of the reasons set forth below. The Title IX Coordinator generally evaluates for dismissal after receipt of a complaint, and, if applicable, upon completion of the investigation (prior to a final investigation report or a hearing).

If a formal complaint is dismissed under Title IX or RVSM, claimant and respondent shall receive notice of the dismissal, including notation as to the reason for the dismissal and an explanation of their rights to appeal to the University Equity Review Officer or designee within five (5) business days of the notice of dismissal.<sup>15</sup>

### 1. Title IX Formal Complaint Dismissal

- a. The formal complaint must be dismissed under Title IX if the conduct alleged does not meet all of the coverage requirements in Section XII.E.2 and/or the allegations would not, even if proven, meet the definition of Title IX Sexual Harassment.
- b. The formal complaint may be dismissed if (i) the claimant requests that the complaint be withdrawn, or for Title IX Coordinator signed complaints, the Title IX Coordinator withdraws the complaint, or (ii) specific circumstances prevent gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination.
- c. Appeal: Parties can submit an appeal to the Equity Review Officer within five (5) business days.

---

<sup>15</sup> The bases for appeal of a dismissal of a formal complaint are the same as those listed in Section XIII.E related to appeal of a determination of responsibility.

References to "days" in this policy means business days.

## 2. University RVSM Formal Complaint Dismissal

- a. The formal complaint must be dismissed if the conduct alleged does not meet all of the coverage requirements in Section XII.E.1 and/or the allegations would not, even if proven, meet a definition of prohibited conduct.
- b. The formal complaint may be dismissed if (i) the claimant requests that the complaint be withdrawn, or for Title IX Coordinator signed complaints, the Title IX Coordinator withdraws the complaint; (ii) neither claimant nor respondent are affiliated with the University at the time of the filing of the formal complaint; or (iii) specific circumstances prevent gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination.
- c. Appeal: Parties can submit an appeal to the Equity Review Officer within five (5) business days.

**G. Referrals of Other Forms of Prohibited Conduct:** If a report also implicates other forms of conduct prohibited by the University beyond conduct prohibited by this Policy, the conduct may be referred to the appropriate University office during or after the allegations set forth in the formal complaint are resolved, except those circumstances covered under limited immunity and as long as such referral does not constitute retaliation as prohibited by this Policy.

## XIII. FORMAL GRIEVANCE PROCESS

The major stages of the formal grievance process are: 1) the investigation; 2) the hearing; 3) the decision; and 4) the appeal. If a respondent is found to be responsible for violating this Policy, the sanction will be included in the decision and may be referred to the appropriate process for discipline or corrective action.

### A. Overview of Standards and Process

1. **Timeframe for Completion of Formal Grievance Process; Extension for Good Cause:** An investigation after the filing of a formal complaint will, in most cases, be completed within ninety (90) business days. Following the investigation, a written decision will be provided within sixty (60) business days if the findings are made by a Resolution Officer (i.e., a hearing is held) or within twenty (20) business days if the findings are made by an Investigator (i.e., no hearing is held). These time periods may be temporarily extended for good cause at the discretion of the University's Title IX Coordinator, if deemed necessary to conduct a thorough investigation, to protect the rights of all parties, or for other reasonable considerations, including absence of a party, a party's advisor, or a witness; or the need for language assistance or accommodation of disabilities. Parties will be sent written notice of any delay or extension, including the reason for the delay or extension.
2. **Equitable Treatment:** All procedures, rules, and practices adopted as part of the formal grievance process will apply equally to both parties. Parties will receive identical copies of all investigation reports and written decisions.

3. **Presumption of Non-Responsibility and Standard of Evidence:** A respondent is presumed to be not responsible for the reported conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the applicable formal grievance process. The presumption may be overcome only where a preponderance of the evidence supports a finding that the respondent is responsible for violating this Policy.
4. **Standard of Proof:** The standard of proof is “preponderance of evidence.” “Preponderance of the evidence standard” means that the respondent will be found responsible if, based upon all relevant evidence, it is “more likely true than not” that respondent is responsible for the reported conduct. If the evidence on a particular allegation is equally balanced, then that allegation is not “more likely true than not.”
5. **Relevance:** Evidence is considered relevant if it has a tendency to make a fact more or less probable than it would be without the evidence, and the fact is of consequence in making a determination regarding responsibility.
6. **No Conflicts of Interest:** The University does not allow conflicts of interest or bias for or against claimants or respondents generally or an individual claimant or respondent by its Title IX Coordinator(s), investigators, Resolution Officers, or other persons making decisions regarding allegations under this Policy, grievance process, or related practices or protocols. A conflict of interest exists when an individual’s knowledge of the matter or personal or professional relationship with a claimant, respondent, or witness would preclude the individual from being able to investigate or decide the case fairly and impartially. Any concern regarding bias or conflict of interest should be submitted to the Title IX Coordinator immediately.<sup>16</sup>
7. **Burden of Gathering Evidence:** The burden of proof and the burden of gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination regarding responsibility rests on the University and not on the parties. Notwithstanding, the University cannot access, consider, disclose, or otherwise use a party’s records that are made or maintained by a nurse practitioner, physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional acting in the professional’s or paraprofessional’s capacity, or assisting in that capacity, and which are made and maintained in connection with the provision of treatment to the party, unless the University obtains that party’s voluntary, written consent to do so.
8. **Experts:** Parties may propose medical or scientific experts. The Title IX Coordinator will determine whether an expert is needed and shall not utilize medical or scientific experts that have an actual or apparent conflict of interest or bias for or against claimants or respondents generally or an individual claimant or respondent. Any expert witness determined to have an actual or apparent conflict of interest shall be prohibited from

---

<sup>16</sup> Any individual employed in OCR who previously provided legal representation to the University on any matter involving Title IX will recuse themselves from any Title IX matter that was pending with the University while they were providing legal representation to the University, if any of the following are true: 1) the individual previously provided legal advice on or relating to the Title IX matter; 2) the individual exercised oversight over the Title IX matter; or 3) the Title IX matter involves one or more of the same parties as a Title IX matter over which the individual previously exercised oversight or on which the individual provided legal advice.

serving as an expert witness or otherwise participating in the investigation or grievance process of the matter for which the conflict exists absent a waiver by all parties. Any party seeking to utilize an expert witness or introduce an expert report into evidence, shall notify the Title IX Coordinator in writing prior to the finalized Investigation Report being sent to the Resolution Office. If a decision maker relies on an expert, the expert will be identified in any final written report or decision and will reflect that the Title IX Coordinator determined that the expert did not have a conflict of interest.

9. **Permissive Discussions:** This Policy does not restrict the ability of any party to discuss the allegations under investigation or to gather and present relevant evidence or present witnesses. However, parties are prohibited from discussing or disseminating the allegations in a manner that constitutes retaliation or violates FERPA. Employees may not disclose FERPA-protected information regarding students. In addition, parties should consider whether discussing allegations with a witness or another party would negatively impact a determination of the credibility of the witness or party.
  10. **Evidentiary Decisions:** There are limited circumstances in which prior or subsequent conduct or prior sexual history may be relied upon as evidence.
    - a. **Prior or Subsequent Conduct:** Prior or subsequent conduct of the respondent may be considered in determining pattern, knowledge, intent, motive or absence of mistake. For example, evidence of a pattern may be deemed relevant if the prior or subsequent conduct is substantially similar to the conduct under investigation.
    - b. **Prior Sexual History:** Questions or evidence about a claimant's sexual history, sexual identity, and prior sexual experiences are prohibited. Questions and evidence about a claimant's prior sexual behavior are prohibited subject to two exceptions: i) if offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the reported prohibited behavior; or ii) if the question or evidence concerns sexual behavior between the claimant and the respondent and is offered to prove consent for the reported prohibited conduct.
- B. Investigation:** The investigation is a neutral fact gathering process. The investigation shall be fair and impartial and not rely upon stereotypes.
1. **Notice of Investigation:** Upon receipt of a formal complaint and within five (5) business days, OCR will notify the claimant(s) and the respondent(s), in writing, of the initiation of an investigation. In the notice of investigation, OCR will identify the parties; specify the date, time, location, and nature of the reported prohibited conduct, if known; identify potential policy violations; identify the investigator; explain the availability of supportive measures, confidential resources, and the right to an advisor of a party's choosing (including the availability of University provided advisors); and an instruction to the parties to preserve any potentially relevant evidence. If new evidence is gathered during the investigation phase that changes the date, location or potential Policy violation as communicated in the initial notice of investigation, the notice of investigation will be updated, and the parties will be offered an additional opportunity to respond.

2. **Meeting Notifications:** The investigator will notify and seek to meet separately with the parties and third-party witnesses. OCR will provide written notice of the date, time, location, participants, and purpose of all investigative interviews, or other meetings, with sufficient time for the party to prepare to participate in a meaningful way. Sufficient time is determined on a case-by-case basis but generally is considered to be five (5) business days.
3. **Evidence Gathering:** The investigator will gather relevant and available information including, without limitation, electronic or other records of communications between the parties or witnesses, photographs, and/or medical records (subject to the voluntary, written consent of the applicable party).

Individuals involved in a report of prohibited conduct should preserve evidence to the extent possible. The MSU DPPS, Center for Survivors, and Safe Place can advise on or assist with the preservation of evidence.

Both claimant(s) and respondent(s) will have an equal opportunity to identify potential witnesses and provide any evidence or other information relevant to the investigation. OCR will review and determine the relevance of any provided information and evidence and may determine in its discretion that certain witnesses or other provided information is irrelevant, duplicative or would not lead to relevant information. Evidence of a party's character will not generally be considered relevant.

4. **Status Updates:** The parties will receive regular, bi-weekly updates regarding the status of the investigation.
5. **Witness Statements:** Witness statements may be considered as evidence as permitted by this Policy. Witnesses will be provided an opportunity to review the investigator's summary of their interview.
6. **Review of Evidence and Draft Investigation Report:** At the end of the investigation, the investigator will give each of the parties an equal opportunity to inspect and review *all* evidence (inculpatory and exculpatory) that *directly relates* to the allegations in the formal complaint. The investigator will also provide the parties with the same draft investigation report. Each party will have ten (10) business days to respond in writing to the evidence and the draft investigation report, including submitting written, relevant questions that a party wants asked of any party or witness. The investigator will consider the written responses.
7. **Final Investigation Report and Review Period:** Following the parties' review of the evidence and draft investigation report, the investigator will prepare a final written investigation report fairly summarizing the investigation and relevant evidence directly related to the allegations. OCR will send the same final investigation report and *relevant* evidence to the parties and their respective advisors.<sup>17</sup>
8. **Investigator Finding:** The OCR investigator will include the decision regarding responsibility (see Section XIII.D) in the investigation report if there is no Title IX coverage; the

---

<sup>17</sup> Investigators may redact portions of a relevant document that are not directly related to the allegations in the formal complaint and/or that may constitute attorney-client or other legally-recognized privilege.

investigation into prohibited conduct has concluded; and credibility is not at issue or material to the outcome of the formal complaint. In matters involving non-students (i.e., where neither Claimant or Respondent is a student), the OCR investigator will include the decision regarding responsibility in the investigation report if the only prohibited conduct alleged under this Policy is retaliation, regardless of whether there is Title IX coverage or whether credibility is at issue or material to the outcome of the formal complaint.

**9. Hearing Eligibility:**

- a. For investigations involving non-students where the only prohibited conduct alleged is retaliation the investigator will determine whether a party is responsible for violating this policy (see Section XIII.B.8). For all other investigations, if the reported conduct falls within Title IX or if credibility is at issue and material to the outcome of the formal complaint, the investigator will not determine whether a party is responsible for violating this Policy. The investigator must forward the matter to the Resolution Office for a hearing and final determination as to whether a party is responsible for violating this Policy.
  - b. Parties and advisors will have ten (10) business days to review and respond in writing to the final investigation report and evidence, including by providing appropriate context and correction, as well as arguments about whether all of the evidence is relevant, the investigator reached a wrong conclusion about the relevance of evidence, or whether relevant evidence has been omitted.
  - c. Parties' responses to the final investigation report should be provided directly to the Resolution Office. The Resolution Office will make all responses available to all parties.
- C. Hearing:** After the investigation report is distributed to the parties and where the case is eligible for a hearing (Section XIII.B.9 above), the case proceeds to the Resolution Office for a live hearing. The Resolution Office has been designated by the Title IX Coordinator to implement the formal hearing process.
- 1. Resolution Officer:** The Resolution Officer conducts the hearing and will determine whether the respondent is responsible for violating this Policy. The Resolution Officer will be designated by the Title IX Coordinator and cannot be the same person as the Title IX Coordinator or the investigator(s).
  - 2. Hearing Decorum:** The Resolution Officer is responsible for conducting an orderly, fair, and respectful hearing. The Resolution Officer has broad authority and discretion to respond to disruptive or harassing behaviors, including adjourning the hearing or excluding disruptive persons.
  - 3. Notice:** The Resolution Office will provide, to a party whose participation is invited or expected, written notice of the date, time, location, participants, and purpose of the hearing, or other meetings, with sufficient time for the party to prepare to participate in a meaningful way.
  - 4. Recusal:** A party may ask that the assigned Resolution Officer be recused for cause, conflict of interest, or bias. The Director for the Resolution Office, in consultation with the Title IX

Coordinator, will decide whether the Resolution Officer should be recused. Requests for recusal must be submitted in writing prior to the pre-hearing conference.

5. **Questioning:** At the hearing, each party's advisor will be permitted to ask the other party and any witnesses all relevant questions and follow-up questions, including those challenging credibility.
  6. **Cross-examination:** Cross-examination will be conducted directly, orally, and in real time by the party's advisor of choice and never by a party personally. Claimants and respondents will not be located in the same room for a hearing. Hearings are conducted virtually with technology that provides for simultaneous audio and visual participation.
  7. **Recording:** The University will create a video recording of the hearing and make it available to the parties for inspection and review. Hearings are closed to the public.
  8. **Evidentiary Decisions:** The Resolution Officer makes evidentiary decisions and has discretion to determine relevancy and/or redundancy of the questions and evidence. The Resolution Officer retains the right to exclude questions or evidence that are irrelevant or redundant. Relevant questions regarding credibility are permitted. Before a claimant, respondent, or witness answers a cross-examination or other question, the Resolution Officer must first determine whether the question is relevant and explain any decision to exclude a question as not relevant.
  9. **Advisor and Support Persons:** Parties may ask questions of the other party and/or witnesses only through an advisor. Parties may have an advisor of their choosing at the hearing. If a party does not have an advisor for a hearing, the University will provide an advisor of the University's choice without fee or charge to the party. Parties may also have a support person present during the hearing subject to FERPA restrictions. Advisors and support persons (if permitted) are required to abide by the rules of decorum.
  10. **Failure to Appear or Submit to Cross-Examination:** Participation in the hearing is voluntary and the University cannot compel a party or witness to participate. No inferences or assumptions will be drawn with regard to a party's decision not to provide a statement, be interviewed, or submit to cross-examination. However, failure to answer questions at the hearing will impact the information the Resolution Officer may consider.
- D. Decision Regarding Responsibility:** At the conclusion of the investigation and hearing (where applicable), the decision-maker (the Resolution Officer or Investigator) shall evaluate the evidence and decide, based on a preponderance of the evidence, whether the respondent is responsible for violating this Policy. The decision-maker will provide the parties and their advisors a date upon which they will receive the written decision.
1. **Objective Evaluation of the Evidence:** The decision-maker will objectively evaluate all relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence—including both inculpatory and exculpatory evidence. When relevant to the allegations directly under investigation, this may include an evaluation of the credibility of the information gathered. Credibility determinations are fact-specific inquiries based upon the relevant evidence before the decision maker and may not be based on a person's status as a claimant, respondent, or

witness. Credibility and honesty are not identical and determinations about the credibility of information are not judgments about an individual's personal character or honesty. Factors such as plausibility, reliability, consistency, corroboration, and neutrality may inform an evaluation of credibility, however the evaluation need not be limited to these factors alone.

2. **Written Decision:** The decision-maker shall explain in writing the reasons for determinations regarding responsibility, including findings of fact, any credibility determinations, and conclusions about whether it "is more likely true than not" that respondent is responsible for the reported conduct, and the rationale for the results as to each allegation. The written decision should also include a clear explanation of the weight afforded to the evidence in reaching a determination about what a preponderance of the evidence may support. The procedural steps in the investigation will also appear in the written decision so that both parties have a thorough understanding of the investigative process that led to the determination regarding responsibility. Where applicable, the decision will also include whether remedies will be provided to the claimant(s) and any disciplinary sanctions.
  3. **Simultaneous Notification of Decision:** The Resolution Office will provide the written decision to the parties simultaneously. The parties will also be informed in writing of the right to appeal and the appeal procedures.
- E. **Appeals:** Claimant(s) and respondent(s) may file a written appeal regarding the determination of responsibility with the University's Equity Review Officer within ten (10) business days from the date that a written decision is issued on any of the following bases:
1. Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;
  2. New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal was made, that could affect the outcome of the matter;
  3. The Title IX Coordinator, investigator(s), or decision-maker(s) had a conflict of interest or bias for or against claimants or respondents generally or the individual claimant or respondent that affected the outcome of the matter; and/or
  4. The written decision was arbitrary and capricious.

If an appeal is filed, the other part(ies) will have ten (10) business days to respond to the appeal in writing. The Investigator and/or the Resolution Officer may also submit a written response to the appeal. The Equity Review Officer will review the appeal and any response(s) and issue a written decision within eighteen (18) business days of receiving the appeal documents, including any responses. The appeal decision will be issued simultaneously to all parties.

The Equity Review Officer is a neutral individual appointed by the Vice President and Title IX Coordinator to adjudicate appeals under this process. The Equity Review Officer assigned to an appeal will not be the decision-maker that reached the determination regarding responsibility, the investigator(s), or the Title IX Coordinator.

- F. **Sanctions, Discipline, and Remedies:** If a respondent is found responsible for violation of this Policy, the decision-maker (Resolution Officer or investigator) will include a sanction in the

decision. If an appeal is filed, the implementation of a sanction or discipline may be delayed until the decision regarding responsibility becomes final.<sup>18</sup>

1. **Student respondent:** If a student is found responsible for violating the Policy, the Director for the Resolution Office will determine the appropriate sanction(s) after consultation with the decision-maker and consideration of sanctioning factors. If either party (claimant or respondent) wishes to challenge the sanction(s), they may do so by submitting an appeal to the Equity Review Officer within ten (10) business days after the decision regarding responsibility is issued. The Equity Review Officer may modify a sanction if they determine that the sanction is clearly inappropriate or incommensurate with the seriousness of the conduct.
2. **Faculty, Academic Staff, Staff, or Other respondent:** If a non-student is found responsible for violating the Policy, the sanction will be referral to the appropriate process for discipline or corrective action facilitated by the Office of Employee Relations, Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs and/or unit leadership to determine the appropriate personnel action or other corrective measure in coordination with the Title IX Coordinator. Remedies, sanctions, and discipline as to faculty, staff, and academic staff will be determined and implemented consistent with the University's rights as an employer and applicable collective bargaining agreements.

Institutional discipline for a finding of responsibility may be informed by the nature and the gravity of the misconduct. It may include, but is not limited to: warning, restitution, probation, suspension, dismissal, discharge, change of residence, disenrollment from a course, restriction on enrollment, termination of employment, no contact directives, trespass from campus, prohibition of participation in University programs or activities (which may include graduation), and/or other educational and employment discipline deemed appropriate.

Staff, academic staff, and faculty may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

The responsible unit (e.g., Office of Student Support and Accountability, Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs, Office of Employee Relations) is required to provide the Resolution Office with written notification of the discipline, sanction(s), or corrective actions and confirmation of timely implementation.

Under Title IX, remedies are designed to restore or preserve a claimant's equal access to the University's education programs or activities and may include counseling, academic accommodations, academic support, or employment accommodations. Other remedies may include targeted or broad-based educational programming or training. The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for effective implementation of remedies.

- G. **New Evidence Discovered After Time of Appeal:** If new, previously unavailable evidence is discovered after an investigation has concluded, a final determination regarding responsibility

---

<sup>18</sup> The determination regarding responsibility becomes final either on the date that the determination of the result of the appeal is sent to the parties, if an appeal is filed; or if an appeal is not filed, the date on which an appeal would no longer be considered timely.

has been made, and the time to appeal has expired, and the evidence is substantive and material to the case, OCR must re-open the formal grievance process. Any individual may submit newly discovered evidence to OCR, along with a statement explaining why the evidence was previously unavailable despite reasonable diligence to identify relevant evidence earlier. OCR will decide whether the evidence was previously unavailable and is substantive and material to the case. If so, OCR will re-open the matter.

#### **XIV. ADAPTABLE RESOLUTION**

Adaptable Resolution is a voluntary, non-disciplinary process that allows parties to resolve matters over which OCR has jurisdiction outside of the formal grievance process. Adaptable Resolution is designed to stop the prohibited conduct, prevent its recurrence, and remedy its effects in a manner that meets the needs of the impacted party or parties while maintaining safety of the campus community. Adaptable Resolution may take multiple forms and is based upon the parties' needs and may include an educational meeting with the Respondent. The parties may be accompanied by an advisor at any meetings related to the Adaptable Resolution process. The University will strive to complete the Adaptable Resolution process within 90 days from the date the parties agree to an Adaptable Resolution process. The Adaptable Resolution process may only be initiated after a formal complaint has been filed.

**A. Availability of Adaptable Resolution:** After a formal complaint has been filed, either party may request an Adaptable Resolution process, or ISR may suggest it to parties in some instances. Adaptable Resolution is not permitted in cases where an employee is alleged to have engaged in prohibited conduct against a student. Adaptable Resolution also is generally not used when the concerns involve allegations of sexual assault, relationship violence, or where there are potential risks to the physical safety of a member of the community. Where Adaptable Resolution has otherwise been requested, ISR will determine whether it is appropriate considering:

- The safety of the parties and the campus community;
- Each party's interest in participating in Adaptable Resolution;
- The parties' opportunities to freely choose among resolution options;
- Whether the University has a legal obligation to investigate the matter, and if so, whether the University has, or has means to obtain, sufficient information about the alleged conduct to carry out an investigative process (including consideration of the Claimant's willingness to participate in the process);
- The availability of resources to facilitate the requested Adaptable Resolution;
- Any legal parameters that may prevent the University from addressing a respondent's conduct directly with a respondent;
- Prior or subsequent conduct of the respondent.

Adaptable Resolution must be approved by the Title IX Coordinator, or designee.

**B. Initiation of Adaptable Resolution Process:** The Adaptable Resolution process is voluntary, and all parties must consent in writing to initiate it. Where the parties agree, and ISR determines Adaptable Resolution is appropriate, ISR will provide the parties written notice of the initiation of the Adaptable Resolution process. The written notice will disclose the allegations, the requirements of the adaptable resolution process, and any consequences resulting from participating in the process, including the records that will be maintained or can be shared. The

notice also will inform the parties that either party or ISR can elect to end the Adaptable Resolution process at any time before an agreement is implemented. In discontinuing an Adaptable Resolution process, the formal complaint may continue through the formal grievance process or may be dismissed (See Section XII.F). However, information gathered and utilized in the Adaptable Resolution process generally may not be used in other University processes, including the formal grievance process.

## **XV. TRAINING**

The Title IX Coordinator, the Deputy Title IX Coordinators, Investigators, Resolution Officers, Equity Review Officers, and other decision-makers, shall have received annual training, including education on the definition of prohibited conduct (including Title IX Sexual Harassment); issues related to dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking; the scope of the University's education programs and activities; how to conduct an investigation and grievance process, including hearings and appeals processes, that protect the safety of claimants and promote accountability, as applicable; and how to serve impartially, including by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest, and bias; the standard of review; evaluating evidence in a fair and impartial manner; cultural awareness; technology to be used at a live hearing; issues of relevance of questions and evidence, including when questions and evidence about the claimant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant. Training on the investigation of complaints is offered jointly to MSU DPPS.

Training materials are maintained for a period of seven years and are publicly available on the website for MSU's Office for Civil Rights and Title IX Education and Compliance.

## **XVI. COMPLAINTS OR GRIEVANCES RELATED TO MSU HEALTH CARE**

Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act ("ACA") prohibits sex discrimination in applicable health programs and activities, including MSU Health Care. MSU strongly encourages any student, employee, MSU Health Care patient, or other individual who feels they were subjected to sex discrimination (including but not limited to sexual harassment, sexual abuse and/or sexual assault) to immediately contact OCR, MSU's Title IX Coordinator, and/or the MSU Police Department and/or the following Health Care Civil Rights Specialist:

Jonathan Richards  
MSU Office for Civil Rights  
Olds Hall, 408 West Circle Drive, Suite 5  
East Lansing, MI 48824  
Phone: (517) 353-3922  
Email: [OCRhealthcare@msu.edu](mailto:OCRhealthcare@msu.edu)

Complaints or grievances related to MSU Health Care and other health programs will be processed and resolved according to the process described in this Policy.

MSU Health Care has a policy which requires its providers to secure informed consent and have a chaperone present for sensitive examinations, as well as appropriate procedures to maximize physical privacy. Patients may also request a chaperone or support person at any time for any

examination with an MSU Health Care provider. The Chaperone Policy may be found at <https://healthcare.msu.edu/patients-visitors/Policies/Chaperone%20Policy/index.aspx>.

## **XVII. OPTIONS FOR EXTERNAL RESOLUTION OF COMPLAINTS**

Students, employees, MSU Health Care patients, or other individuals who feel they were discriminated against may file sex discrimination complaints related to MSU health care activities or programs with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Room 509F, HHH Building  
Washington, D.C. 20201  
1-800-368-1019, 800-537-7697 (TDD)  
<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/office/file/index.html>.

Students and employees who believe they have experienced sex-based discrimination in an educational program at MSU may file a complaint under Title IX with the regional enforcement office of the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, at the following address:

Office for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education  
Cesar E. Chavez Memorial Building  
1244 Speer Boulevard, Suite 310  
Denver, CO 80204-3582  
Telephone: 303-844-5695  
FAX: 303-844-4303; TDD: 800-877-8339  
Email: [OCR.Denver@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.Denver@ed.gov)

Faculty and staff may file complaints under Title IX with the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, in certain circumstances; under Title VII with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; or under the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act with the Michigan Department of Civil Rights.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission  
Detroit Field Office, Patrick V. McNamara Building  
477 Michigan Avenue, Room 865  
Detroit, MI 48226  
Phone: (800) 669-4000  
Fax: (313) 226-4610  
TTY: (800) 669-6820

Michigan Department of Civil Rights  
3054 West Grand Boulevard, Suite 3-600  
Detroit, MI 48202  
Phone: (313) 456-3700; (800) 482-3604  
Fax: (313) 456-3701  
TTY: (877) 878-8464  
Email: [MDCRServiceCenter@michigan.gov](mailto:MDCRServiceCenter@michigan.gov)

## **XVIII. DOCUMENTATION**

The University will document actions it takes in response to reports or formal complaints at each stage of the investigation and grievance process and will clearly identify all of the actions it takes that are responsive to reports or formal complaints.

- A.** The University will maintain such records for a minimum of seven years.
- B.** Regarding each report or formal complaint received, the Title IX Coordinator will document the basis for concluding that the University's response was not deliberately indifferent and document that it has taken measures designed to restore or preserve equal access to the University's education program or activity. If a claimant is not provided with supportive measures, the Title IX Coordinator or must document the reasons why such a response was not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances.

## **XIX. NOTICE TO THE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

The Title IX Coordinator provides the University President and Board of Trustees with:

- Written notification if more than one allegation has been made against an employee that resulted in a finding of no misconduct.<sup>19</sup>
- Quarterly reports containing aggregated data of the number of sexual misconduct reports that the office received for the academic year, the types of reports received, including reports received against employees, and a summary of the general outcomes of the reports and investigations.<sup>20</sup>
- Copies of all final investigative reports and written determinations in RVSM and Title IX Policy and ADP gender-related matters involving the alleged misconduct of an employee of the University.<sup>21</sup>

Reports will be provided in a manner that protects the claimant's anonymity and will not contain specific identifying information of the claimant or witnesses.

---

<sup>19</sup> State School Aid Act of 1979, Section 388.1841b, §241b(2)(e)

<sup>20</sup> State School Aid Act of 1979, Section 388.1841b, §241b(2)(d)

<sup>21</sup> State School Aid Act of 1979, Section 388.1841b, §241b(2)(f)

## **XX. FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS**

This Policy shall not be interpreted to abridge First Amendment rights or to infringe academic freedom. The protections of the First Amendment must be carefully considered in all complaints involving speech or expressive conduct. The fact that speech or a particular expression is offensive is not, standing alone, a legally sufficient basis to establish a violation of this Policy. In order to violate this Policy, speech or expressive conduct must constitute sexual harassment, as defined above. Speech or expressive conduct that constitutes sexual harassment is neither legally protected expression nor the proper exercise of academic freedom.

**POLICY HISTORY:** The Sexual Harassment Policy was issued by the Office of the President on September 1, 1992 and revised in May 1999, January 2011, and June 2011.

The Office of the President issued the expanded Relationship Violence & Sexual Misconduct Policy on January 1, 2015, which was revised on September 8, 2015, August 31, 2016, August 30, 2017, January 8, 2018, April 30, 2018, August 31, 2018, February 8, 2019, and January 3, 2020.

This Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct and Title IX Policy was issued on August 14, 2020 and revised on August 24, 2021, January 13, 2023, September 26, 2023, February 28, 2024 (minor revisions) August 14, 2024 (minor revisions), July 15, 2025, and August 25, 2025.