

PROCEDURE FOR POLICY 1.35 - Non-Discrimination/Harassment/Sexual Misconduct

Governing Policy: [MAPP 1.35 - Non-Discrimination/Harassment/Sexual Misconduct](#)

Subsections:

Responsible Officer: Vice-President (Operations & Finance)

Responsible Office: Human Rights Office
Associate Vice-President (Human Resources)

Effective Date: February 6, 2025

Supersedes: June 29, 2023

I. General

The Human Rights Office and the Office of the Associate Vice-President, Human Resources (AVP- HR) have primary responsibility for administering the Non-Discrimination/Harassment/Sexual Misconduct Policy in accordance with the procedures detailed herein.

The current Prohibited Grounds for discrimination are: race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, record of offences, marital status, family status, gender identity, gender expression.

II. Roles and Responsibilities

The University of Western Ontario and all members of the University community share responsibility for ensuring and promoting a safe and respectful working and learning environment that is free from Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct. All members shall take proper and reasonable steps to uphold the Policy and its procedures.

In addition:

1.1. The University shall:

- a. provide Academic and Administrative Leaders and members of the University community with appropriate training regarding Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct.

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- b. provide supports and resources for the administration of its policies, and programs relating to Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct including, but not limited to, the Policy.
 - c. ensure that in addition to the Director of the Human Rights Office (HRO), at least one additional Human Rights Advisor is appointed to provide education and support pursuant to the Policy and procedures and other University policies related to human rights.
 - d. take proper and reasonable steps to prevent systemic discrimination, through avoiding policies and practices that may lead to adverse job or academic consequences.
- 1.2. Academic Leaders and Administrative Leaders shall:
- a. become familiar with and communicate the University's policies regarding Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct to faculty, staff and students within their Faculty/Department/Unit.
 - b. participate in education relating to Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct, specifically related to administrative duties and accountabilities.
 - c. identify training needs and encourage all faculty, staff and students to attend relevant training related to the University's policies and programs relating to Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct.
 - d. involve the HRO in any unit-based attempts at resolving or mediating potential Discrimination, Harassment and/or Sexual Misconduct matters.
 - e. report any incident(s) which may be related to Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct immediately to the HRO or as otherwise described herein.
 - f. keep detailed records of any instances of Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct and forward to the HRO and/or AVP-HR as required.
- 1.3. University community members shall:
- a. cooperate with the University in its exercise of the duties imposed by the Policy and these procedures (e.g., any efforts to resolve and/or investigate matters relating to Discrimination, Harassment and/or Sexual Misconduct).
 - b. report immediately any instances of Discrimination, Harassment or Sexual Misconduct to the HRO in accordance with the applicable procedure.
 - c. participate in training as required.
- 1.4 The Human Rights Office shall:
- a. facilitate the development, implementation and ongoing management/coordination of the University's policies and programs relating to Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct including, but not limited to, this procedure.
 - b. provide support, education and advice to Academic and Administrative Leaders with respect to dealing with Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct issues.
 - c. provide information to individuals on the various support programs/mechanisms available to them (e.g., Employee Assistance

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- Program, Student Development Services).
- d. as appropriate, review and address issues of climate and culture concerns, on request of the University (through the office of the AVP-HR).
 - e. In June each year, provide an annual report to the President with a copy to the community. This report shall provide a statistical record of incidents occurring, including the results of alternate resolutions and dispositions of complaints.

III. Violence and Threats to Safety

1. Where an individual becomes aware of circumstances that might reasonably be interpreted as a threat to the safety of any University community member or becomes aware that any University community member is a victim or perpetrator of violence, including domestic violence, the individual shall immediately report this information to Western Special Constable Service.
 - 1.1 The HRO may be required by law to release relevant information to law enforcement agencies or to the University regarding threats to safety or potential violence.

IV. Right to Advice, Representation or Support Person

1. Individuals may seek the advice of the HRO in order to discuss situations which may be encompassed by the Policy.
 - 1.1 In any meeting or hearing an individual may be accompanied by a representative of their employee group, or by a colleague or other support or resource person of the individual's choosing.
 - 1.2 With respect to matters arising under the Policy, individuals may be represented by legal counsel at their own expense.

V. No Reprisal or Retaliation

Any alleged reprisal or retaliation or threat thereof shall be grounds for a complaint under the Policy and shall proceed directly to a fact-finding investigation as described in section VII, subsection 3 of these procedures.

VI. Conflict of Interest

1. Any person involved in the application of any of the provisions of, or procedures under the Policy shall, on the grounds of conflict of interest or reasonable apprehension of bias, immediately declare any such conflict of interest or bias to the parties, to the Vice-President (Operations & Finance) or designate and to the employee representative, if applicable. The Vice-President (Operations & Finance) or designate shall forthwith provide a replacement for the person who has made the declaration.
2. Any party who objects to the participation of any person in the application of the provisions of, or procedures under the Policy on the grounds of conflict of interest

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or reasonable apprehension of bias may inform the Vice-President (Operations & Finance) or designate that they wish that person to be replaced, stating their reasons. The Vice-President (Operations & Finance) or designate shall also immediately inform the person named in the declaration, and they shall be given a reasonable opportunity to respond to it. The Vice- President (Operations & Finance) at their sole discretion can appoint a replacement.

VII. Procedure for Reporting Incidents and Complaints of Discrimination, Harassment, and/or Sexual Misconduct

1. Any University community member who believes that they have been subjected to, or have witnessed, behavior that is contrary to the Policy, should immediately report their concerns to or the incident to the HRO. If the alleged Discrimination, Harassment or Sexual Misconduct was by a member of the HRO, the individual shall report their concerns to the AVP-HR.
 - 1.1 If a University community member seeks assistance with a matter relating to Discrimination, Harassment or Sexual Misconduct from someone other than the HRO, except as otherwise provided for in section VII. 1. above, the person shall be advised to contact the HRO. In addition, the person being asked for assistance should also contact the HRO to advise of the incident reported. The HRO or the AVP-HR, as the case may be, will be responsible for acting on the information received.
 - 1.2 The HRO or the AVP-HR, as the case may be, shall provide a confidential consultation to discuss concerns and/or incidents which may be encompassed by the Policy.
 - 1.3 If the HRO or the AVP-HR, as the case may be, determines that the facts alleged, if proven, would constitute Discrimination, Harassment or Sexual Misconduct under the Policy, the HRO, or the AVP-HR, as the case may be, will advise the individual that they can choose from the following two options:
 - a. Request Alternate Resolution; or
 - b. File a Complaint and Request Investigation
2. Option A. Request for Alternate Resolution
 - 2.1 Alternate resolution refers, generally, to options *other than* a complaint process. It is a problem- solving approach which has the goal of achieving a resolution satisfactory to all parties. Alternate resolution is generally not appropriate where one of the parties desires a formal procedure which may result in a decision imposing corrective, preventive, remedial or disciplinary consequences.
 - 2.2 Each situation is unique and it is necessary for the HRO or the AVP-HR, as the case may be, to have flexibility in determining the most appropriate options to attempt to reach a resolution. In order for the alternate resolution to proceed, all parties must agree to participate in the process. Some examples of alternate resolution include:
 - Facilitated discussion

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- Mediation
 - Education
- 2.3 The HRO or the AVP-HR, as the case may be, retains the discretion to approve a request for alternate resolution based on whether:
- a. the request is made within 6 months of the date of the last incident;
 - b. the matter is within the jurisdiction of the University, i.e., involves members of the University community; and
 - c. the issues to be addressed through alternate resolution are within the scope of the Policy, i.e., alleging Discrimination, Harassment or Sexual Misconduct.
- 2.4 In addition, there may arise circumstances where, in the opinion of the HRO or the AVP-HR, as the case may be, alternate resolution is not a viable option. Such circumstances include, but are not limited to, situations where:
- a. there is a safety risk to either or both of the parties;
 - b. there is significant power imbalance between the parties;
 - c. the remedy sought by one party is of a monetary or a punitive nature; or
 - d. the prospects of resolution appear to be unlikely
- 2.5 The HRO or the AVP-HR, as the case may be, may, at any time, refuse to continue alternate resolution proceedings based on information or concerns related to the factors outlined at clauses 2.3 and 2.4 of this section. Where alternate resolution is refused or terminated, the HRO or the AVP-HR, as the case may be, shall provide reasons for their decision, if requested.
- 2.6 Alternate resolution proceedings shall be completed within 20 working days of receiving the request for alternate resolution. This time period may be extended upon agreement among the HRO or the AVP-HR, as the case may be, and involved party(ies), to a maximum of 40 working days.
- 2.7 If alternate resolution proceedings do not result in settlement of all issues, the HRO or the AVP-HR, as the case may be, shall advise all involved parties of the option to file a Complaint and Request for Investigation.
- 2.8 If a resolution consistent with the terms of the Policy and any applicable legislation (e.g., the Ontario *Human Rights Code* or the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*) is achieved, all parties shall sign a statement of the terms of resolution. A copy of the terms of resolution shall be retained in the files of the HRO or the AVP-HR, as the case may be, for a period of 5 years and shall not be placed in official student or employee files. Files will be destroyed, in a confidential manner, after the five-year period.
3. Option B: Complaint and Request for Investigation
- 3.1 A complaint may be submitted by a University community member within 12 months of the latest alleged incident of Discrimination, Harassment and/or Sexual Misconduct directly to the AVP-HR (or designate). If the complaint is against the AVP-HR, it shall be submitted to University Secretary.

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- 3.2 The complaint must be in writing and include:
- a. the name(s) of the Complainant(s);
 - b. the name(s) of the Respondent(s);
 - c. a description of the incident(s), including date, time and place of the incident(s); and
 - d. any relevant information or evidence to the support the allegation including names of witnesses; and
 - e. sufficient information for the Respondent(s) to be able to respond.
- 3.3 Within 30 days of the receipt of the complaint, the AVP-HR (or designate) will provide the complainant with:
- a. an outline of the process/next steps; and
 - b. the estimated time for addressing the complaint with estimated time being no longer than 12 months from the time the complaint was received.
- 3.4 Upon receipt of the complaint, and prior to commencing any investigatory action the AVP-HR (or designate) shall determine whether the complaint may go forward based on the following criteria:
- a. the complaint was received within 12 months of the latest alleged incident;
 - b. the matter is within the jurisdiction of the University, i.e., involving employees and/or students of the University;
 - c. the allegations are within the scope of the Policy; and
 - d. the allegation contains sufficient information for the Respondent(s) to be able to respond.
- 3.5 Where the AVP-HR, or designate, determines that the complaint may go forward, they shall:
- a. determine which interim measures, if any, are required during the complaint and investigation process. Interim measures may include, but are not limited to safety protocols, no contact orders, and restrictions on campus access.
 - b. appoint an internal or external investigator, to prepare a fact-finding report in which the investigator shall review the complaint and determine whether Discrimination, Harassment and/or Sexual Misconduct has been established. In appointing an investigator, the AVP-HR (or designate) is responsible for the ensuring that the investigator has relevant experience in such investigations and does not have a conflict of interest in the matter under review. The fact-finding report is provided to AVP-HR (or designate).
- 3.6 The Employer-approved costs of the External Investigator shall be borne by the Employer.
- 3.7 Within ten (10) working days of the investigator's appointment, the Respondent shall be provided, by registered mail or equivalent, a copy of the complaint, including any and all allegations.

The Respondent shall be provided the opportunity to respond to the complaint

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within ten (10) working days of receipt. Any written reply shall be provided to the Complainant. The Complainant and Respondent will be required to participate in the investigation. Where the Complainant(s) fail(s) to participate in an investigation, the Complaint shall be deemed withdrawn. Where a Respondent fails to participate, the investigation, and any subsequent findings, may proceed in absentia.

- 3.8 Any information obtained by the University about an incident or complaint of Discrimination, Harassment or Sexual Misconduct including identifying information about any individuals involved, will not be disclosed unless the disclosure is necessary for the purposes of investigating or taking corrective action with respect to the incident or complaint, or is otherwise required by law.
- 3.9 Individuals and the University shall maintain the confidentiality of the investigative process and its findings until the imposition of discipline, if any, unless the University has grounds to believe that such confidentiality may put a person at risk of significant harm.
- 3.10 Individuals contacted by the University during the investigation shall be informed of the confidentiality requirement under Clause VII. 3.8. A request with respect to participation in the investigatory process shall be in accordance with any applicable collective agreement or employment contract.
- 3.11 Where appropriate, discipline and appeal will be in accordance with the appropriate collective or employee agreement or the Code of Student Conduct.

An individual who has allegedly experienced Discrimination, Harassment or Sexual Misconduct, and the individual alleged to have engaged in Discrimination, Harassment or Sexual Misconduct, will be informed of the results of the investigation and of any corrective action that has been taken or that will be taken as a result of the investigation. Corrective action may include measures such as training, restrictions on access to campus and/or disciplinary measures such as reprimand, suspension, dismissal or expulsion.

- 3.12 Any complaint that is not addressed through this Procedure can be referred to the Ontario Ombudsman.

VIII. Retention of Files

All documents relating to a complaint filed according to section VII.3 shall be retained in confidence for ten (10) years in the HRO. Such files in the HRO may only be accessed by the Director – Human Rights Office, Human Rights Advisor or the AVP-HR (or designate). Files will be destroyed, in a confidential manner, after the ten-year period.