Understanding sex discrimination

Sex discrimination occurs when a person is treated unfavorably based on their actual or perceived sex, gender, gender identity or expression, or sexual orientation. Sex discrimination can be experienced by anyone.

Sexual harassment, sexual assault, and gender-based harassment are all forms of sex discrimination.

Sexual harassment is characterized by unwelcome language or conduct of a sexual nature. The behavior is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive such that it could create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment or impact an individual's academic or work performance.

Sexual assault is sexual contact with another person without, or that exceeds, that person's consent. Gender-based harassment, or discriminatory harassment based on sex, is characterized by unwelcome or derogatory language or behavior that is motivated by gender or gender identity.

The University prohibits retaliation against any person for reporting, cooperating in an investigation or participating in the complaint resolution process, and/or for exercising their rights under University policy.

If you are in danger or need immediate medical assistance, call 911.

Recognizing the behaviors

What could constitute sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or sexually suggestive conduct. This may include:

- Gestures; staring; sexually explicit images; sexually suggestive objects
- Jokes; derogatory comments; slurs
- Unwanted bodily contact, such as pinching, rubbing or hugging; restricting a person’s movement
- The use of power dynamics to create fear or to undermine, coerce, or intimidate
- Conduct that occurs in person or electronically, through texts, email, or social media

The above lists are not exhaustive.
If you are uncomfortable with behavior you have experienced or observed or are unsure if it could constitute harassment, consider contacting a UW resource.

You can access resources and receive support without confronting the other person. However, if you feel comfortable doing so, you can tell the person that their behavior is inappropriate and they should stop the offensive or unwelcome conduct.

If that approach doesn’t feel right, consider asking for help from a supervisor, colleague, friend, or another person you trust. Connect with a UW resource to learn more about your rights and reporting options.

Federal and state laws and regulations
Laws and regulations, including Title IX, prohibit sex discrimination. University policies incorporate these legal mandates and apply to every member of the University community: students, staff, faculty and other academic personnel, and third parties (i.e., volunteers, contractors, vendors, etc.).

Any person can raise a concern about another community member.

UW policies
UW policies and Washington Administrative Code prohibit sex- or gender-based discrimination, including sex- or gender-based harassment, sexual assault, intimate partner violence, stalking, and other forms of sexual misconduct. See additional information on the Policies page at uw.edu/titleix.

Resources and support
If you have experienced any form of sex- or gender-based violence or harassment, support resources are available whether or not you make a formal complaint or request an investigation.

UW confidential advocates
Advocates can help you make a safety plan, facilitate support measures, and provide information about your rights and reporting options. Confidential advocacy meetings and services are free and available to any member of the UW community.

Advocacy for students
Seattle: 206.685.4357   lwadvoc@uw.edu Bothell: 425.352.3851   uwbvae@uw.edu Tacoma: 253.692.4750   uwtsva@uw.edu

Advocacy for employees
206.685.4357   lwadvoc@uw.edu

SafeCampus
Call anonymously 24 hours a day/7 days a week. 206.685.7233   safecampus@uw.edu
Counseling services and medical care are also available to students and employees.

Confidentiality and privacy
Confidential advocates have legally protected confidentiality and only share information with others when given specific permission by the survivor/victim—or when required by law. The Office of the Title IX Coordinator and SafeCampus do not have the same legally-protected confidentiality, but protect the privacy of individuals who have been impacted by sexual misconduct. They share information as needed to respond to the requests of those who have been harmed, to assess community safety, or to comply with legal requirements.

Office of the Title IX Coordinator
Valery Richardson, Title IX Coordinator
Mags Aleks, Deputy Title IX Coordinator
Kiana Swearingen, Deputy Title IX Coordinator
for Education & Prevention
4311 11th Avenue NE, Suite 340 Seattle, WA 98105
206.221.7932 titleix@uw.edu
Learn more at uw.edu/titleix.

What to do if you witness or become aware of concerning behaviors
When you learn that a member of our community has experienced harm, you are encouraged to contact SafeCampus. Their staff will assess for immediate safety concerns and provide consultation and support tailored to the situation. You can contact SafeCampus anonymously.

SafeCampus is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 206.685.7233.
Learn more at uw.edu/safecampus

Any unwelcome behavior, even conduct that does not clearly violate University policy, can be addressed.

If you have received instructions that your role or position requires you to report sexual misconduct, follow those instructions. If you have questions about what is expected of you, contact the Office of the Title IX Coordinator.

Are you a Title IX Official Required to Report (ORR)?
If you are an ORR, you must contact SafeCampus when you become aware of possible sexual misconduct. Visit the Title IX website to confirm that your role or position is identified as an ORR and learn more about your obligations.

Are you a Campus Security Authority (CSA)?
If you are a CSA, you must contact SafeCampus when you become aware of any crime—including sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking—on or near a UW campus or other location where University activities take place.
Is a minor (individual under 18 years of age) involved?
If you have concerns about or become aware of sexual misconduct that involves a minor, you should contact SafeCampus. If you are an employee and suspect or become aware of abuse or neglect of a minor participating in UW-sponsored or -affiliated activities, you must contact law enforcement or the Washington State Department of Social & Health Services at 1-866-ENDHARM.

Make a formal complaint
You have the right to make a formal complaint to the University, a report to the police, to do both or neither. Go to the Reporting Options page at uw.edu/titleix for more information about making a complaint and available academic, workplace, and other support measures.

Consider connecting with a confidential advocate first—advocates can help you understand your options, provide information about what to expect when making a complaint, and support you and your choices.

Confidential advocates can assist with complaints to the University and/or reports to the police.

Title IX Investigation Office
For complaints about students.
206.616.5334  tixinv@uw.edu

University Complaint Investigation and Resolution Office (UCIRO)
For complaints about faculty and other academic personnel, staff, and student employees.
206.616.2028  uciro@uw.edu

Law enforcement
For police and campus safety contact information about your campus, go to the Title IX website at uw.edu/titleix.

Contact the Office of the Title IX Coordinator at any time regarding support measures, complaints, or other concerns related to sex discrimination.

Prevention and education

Training and education
Attend campus workshops and complete the Title IX prevention and response course. Information and details regarding additional online and in-person University training can be found at uw.edu/titleix.

Inform yourself
Learn how you can support someone who has experienced sex- or gender-based violence or harassment at uw.edu/titleix. Consult the University’s policy directory for Title IX-related information relevant to employees and students.
Get involved
Commit to working towards and maintaining equitable, respectful, and inclusive work and learning environments. Talk with peers and colleagues about how to prevent violence and harassment from occurring. Attend UW and community events and activities on these topics.