



AP 3435 DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT COMPLAINTS AND INVESTIGATIONS

References:

Education Code Section 212.5, 231.5, 66282.1 et seq., 67386, and 87623;

Government Code Section 12950.1;

Title 5 Sections 59320, 59324, 59326, 59328, 59300 et seq.;

Title 2 Sections 11023 and 11024

Definitions

- **Complaint:** A verbal or written statement filed with the District that alleges harassment, discrimination, or retaliation in violation of District's Board Policies, Administrative Procedures, or in violation of state law.
- **Complainant:** An individual who alleges he/she/they is the victim of conduct that could constitute harassment, discrimination, or retaliation.
- **Respondent:** the individual(s) reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute a violation of District's Board Policies, Administrative Procedures, or in violation of state law.
- **Investigator:** The individual or entity that is responsible to conduct or oversee investigations to ensure timely resolution and compliance with the procedure.
- **Witness:** Individual who sees an event take place, or has personal knowledge about the allegations, and provides information to the investigator.
- **Chancellor's Office:** California Community Colleges
- **District:** Santa Barbara City College
- **Days:** calendar days
- **Employee:** individuals employed by the District.
- **Party or parties:** Complainant and Respondent
- **Retaliation:** The act of intimidation, coercion, threats, or discrimination for the purpose of affecting an individual who made a report or complaint, testified, assisted or participated in the investigation.
- **Sanctions:** Punishment, consequence.
- **Unlawful discrimination:**
 - Environmental
 - Physical
 - Verbal
 - Visual or written



For sexual harassment under Title IX, Complainants must proceed under BP 3433 Prohibition of Sexual Harassment under Title IX, AP 3433 Prohibition of Sexual Harassment under Title IX, and AP 3434 Responding to Sexual Harassment under Title IX. For other forms of sexual harassment or gender-based harassment, Complainants should use this procedure.

Reporting and Filing Complaints

The law prohibits coworkers, supervisors, managers and third parties with whom an employee comes into contact from engaging in harassment, discrimination, or retaliation. All supervisors and managers have a mandatory duty to report incidents of harassment and discrimination, the existence of a hostile, offensive or intimidating work environment, and acts of retaliation.

Any person who has suffered harassment, discrimination, or retaliation, or who has learned of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation, may file a formal or informal complaint of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation.

All responsible employees are required to report all actual or suspected sexual harassment to the Title IX Coordinator or the VPHR immediately. A responsible employee is any employee who has the authority to take action to redress sexual harassment or provide supportive measures to students, or who has been given the duty of reporting incidents of sexual harassment to an appropriate District official who has that authority.

District Employees and Officials with Authority

The District has designated all employees as responsible employees because they have been given the **duty of reporting** incidents of sexual harassment to an appropriate District official.

District Employee Reporting Requirements

Responsible Employees are not confidential resources and are required to report all actual or suspected sexual harassment to the Title IX Coordinator or the VPHR immediately.

The District's employee reporting requirements are as follows:

ALL District employees are Responsible Employees when the complaint involves any student. This includes student employees while functioning in their role as employees.

Supervisors and managers are Responsible Employees when the complaint



involves employees or students.

Non-supervisor or manager District employees are encouraged to report allegations involving employees to the but are not required to do so unless the complaint involves a student.

The report must include all relevant information known about sexual harassment including the name of the Respondent, the Complainant, any other witnesses, and the date, time, and location of the alleged incident.

Confidential Reporting

An employee who is a therapist, physician, psychotherapist, member of the clergy, sexual assault counselor, domestic violence counselor, or other individual acting in a professional capacity for which confidentiality is mandated by law is exempt from having to report sexual harassment concerns to the Title IX Coordinator or other designated employee, unless otherwise required by law.

The District shall designate an employee at each campus as a point of contact for the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, pansexual, transgender, gender-nonconforming, intersex, and two-spirit faculty, staff, and students at the campus. This employee is a confidential resource.

An employee who is not considered a responsible employee must inform each student who provides them with information regarding sexual harassment of the student's ability to report to a responsible employee and direct the student to those specific reporting resources, including the Report a Concern process.

Outreach (Students)

When a responsible employee reports actual or suspected sexual harassment involving students to the Title IX Coordinator or Vice President of Human Resources (VPHR), the Title IX Coordinator or the Deputy Title IX Coordinator will assess the report of sexual harassment and provide outreach, as appropriate, to each identifiable student who is alleged to be the victim of the reported conduct. The outreach shall include all of the following information:

- The District received a report that the student may have been a victim of sexual harassment;
- A statement that retaliation for filing a complaint or participating in the complaint process, or both, under this procedure is prohibited;
- Counseling resources within the District or in the community;



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- Where a crime may have occurred, notice that the student has the right, but not the obligation, to report the matter to law enforcement;
 - The District's complaint and investigation procedures established pursuant to this procedure;
 - Potential interim measures, such as no-contact directives, housing changes, and academic schedule changes, where applicable;
 - The importance of preserving evidence;
 - A request for the student to meet with the Title IX Coordinator or other designated employee to discuss options for responding to the report; and
 - The manner in which the District responds to reports of sexual harassment and a description of potential disciplinary consequences.

The District shall consider and respond to requests for accommodations relating to prior incidents of student sexual harassment that could contribute to a hostile educational environment or otherwise interfere with a student's access to education where both individuals are, at the time of the request, subject to the District's policies.

Informal Complaints

An informal complaint is any of the following:

(1) a written allegation of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation that falls outside the timelines for a formal complaint; or

(2) a written complaint alleging harassment, discrimination, or retaliation filed by an individual who expressly indicates that they do not want to file a formal complaint.

Any person may submit an informal complaint to the Vice President of Human Resources or any other District or college administrator. Administrators receiving an informal complaint shall immediately notify the Vice President of Human Resources in writing of all pertinent information and facts alleged in the informal complaint.

Upon receipt of an informal complaint, the Vice President of Human Resources, or designee, will notify the person bringing the informal complaint of their right to file a formal complaint if the incident falls within the timeline for a formal complaint, and explain the procedure for doing so. The Complainant may later decide to file a formal complaint, if within the timelines to do so.

If the individual chooses not to file a formal complaint, or if the alleged conduct falls outside the timeline to file a formal complaint, the Vice President of Human Resources,



or designee, shall consider the allegations contained in the informal complaint and determine the appropriate course of action. This may include efforts to informally resolve the matter, or a fact-finding investigation.

Investigation of an informal complaint will be appropriate if the Vice President of Human Resources, or designee, determines that the allegation(s), if proven true, would constitute a violation of the District policy prohibiting harassment, discrimination, or retaliation.

The Vice President, Human Resources, or designee, will explain to any individual bringing an informal complaint that the Vice President, Human Resources, or designee, may decide to initiate an investigation, even if the individual does not wish the Vice President, Human Resources to do so.

The Vice President, Human Resources, or designee, shall not disregard any allegations of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation solely on the basis that the alleged conduct falls outside the deadline to file a formal complaint.

Regardless of whether a Complaint has been filed under this procedure, the District knows, or reasonably should know, about possible sexual harassment involving individuals subject to the District's policies at the time, the District shall promptly investigate to determine whether the alleged conduct more likely than not occurred, or otherwise respond if the District determines that an investigation is not required. If the District determines that the alleged conduct more likely than not occurred, it shall immediately take reasonable steps to end the harassment, address the hostile environment, if one has been created, prevent its recurrence, and address its effects.

Student Complainant Requests for Confidentiality

If a student Complainant requests confidentiality when reporting sexual harassment, which could preclude a meaningful investigation or potential discipline of the Respondent, or that no investigation or disciplinary action be pursued to address alleged sexual harassment, the District shall take the request seriously, while at the same time considering its responsibility to provide a safe and nondiscriminatory environment for all students, including for the Complainant. The District shall normally grant the request when possible. In determining whether to disclose a Complainant's identity or proceed to an investigation over the objection of the Complainant, the District may consider whether any of the following apply:

- There are multiple or prior reports of sexual misconduct against the Respondent;
- The Respondent reportedly used a weapon, physical restraints, or engaged in battery;



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- The Respondent is a faculty or staff member with oversight of students;
 - There is a power imbalance between the Complainant and Respondent;
 - The Complainant believes that the Complainant will be less safe if the Complainant's name is disclosed or an investigation is conducted; and
 - The District is able to conduct a thorough investigation and obtain relevant evidence in the absence of the Complainant's cooperation.

If the District determines that it can honor the student Complainant's request for confidentiality, it shall still take reasonable steps to respond to the Complaint, consistent with the request, to limit the effects of the alleged sexual harassment and prevent its recurrence without initiating formal action against Respondent or revealing the identity of the Complainant. The District shall also take immediate steps to provide for the safety of the Complainant while keeping the Complainant's identity confidential as appropriate. The District shall notify the Complainant that the steps the District will take to respond to the Complaint will be limited by the Complainant's request for confidentiality.

Formal Complaints

A formal complaint is a written or verbal statement filed with the District that alleges harassment, discrimination, or retaliation in violation of the District's Board Policies, Administrative Procedures, or in violation of state or federal law.

Formal Complaints must be filed with the Vice President of Human Resources and/or Superintendent/President unless the Party submitting the Formal Complaint alleges discrimination, harassment, or retaliation against the Vice President of Human Resources, in which case it should be submitted directly to the Superintendent/President.

The District may request, but shall not require the Complainant to submit a formal complaint on the form prescribed by the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges or through the District's "Report a Concern" platform (<https://www.sbcc.edu/student-services/report-a-concern.php>). A copy of the form will be available at the District's Human Resources department and on the college's website at <https://www.sbcc.edu/hr/forms/>.

A Complainant shall report verbal complaints to the Vice President of Human Resources, or designee. The Vice President of Human Resources, or designee, shall record the verbal complaint in writing. The Vice President of Human Resources, or designee, will take steps to ensure the writing accurately reflects the facts alleged by the Complainant.

If any Party submits a written allegation of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation not



on the form described above or through the District's Report a Concern, the District may seek to have the individual complete and submit the form. However, if the individual chooses not to do so, the District will attach the written allegation(s) to the form and treat it as a Formal Complaint. In no instance will the District reject a written allegation of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation on the basis that it was not submitted on the proper form.

A Formal Complaint must meet each of the following criteria:

- It must allege facts with enough specificity to show that the allegations, if true, would constitute a violation of District policies or procedures or state or federal law prohibiting discrimination, harassment, or retaliation.
- The Complainant must file any Formal Complaint not involving employment within one (1) year of the alleged discriminatory, harassing, or retaliatory conduct or within one (1) year of the date on which the Complainant knew or should have known of the facts underlying the allegation(s) of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation.
- The Complainant must file any Formal Complaint alleging discrimination, harassment, or retaliation involving employment within three years of the date of the alleged discriminatory, harassing, or retaliatory conduct.

If the Formal Complaint does not meet the requirements set forth above, the Vice President of Human Resources or designee shall:

- Immediately notify the complainant and the State Chancellor (if appropriate) that the complaint does not meet the requirements.
- Specify to the Complainant in particular in what requirement(s) the complaint is defective.
- Inform the Complainant of the deadline to submit any additional information to cure the defect. If the sole defect is that the Formal Complaint was filed outside the applicable proscribed timeline, the Vice President of Human Resources or designee will handle the matter as an informal complaint.

If the Complaint does not meet the requirements set forth above, the Vice President Human Resources or designee will promptly notify the Complainant and specify the defect within 14 days that the complaint does not contain allegations of unlawful discrimination that are sufficient under this procedure to trigger an investigation. The Vice President Human Resources or designee will specify why the complaint is defective.

If the defect is based on the Complainant's failure to state sufficient facts to support a claim of unlawful discrimination, the Vice President Human Resources or designee shall



offer the Complainant an opportunity to proffer additional facts to support/their claims through an intake interview, which shall be scheduled as soon as reasonably convenient for the Complainant and Vice President Human Resources or designee.

If, after the intake interview, the Vice President Human Resources or designee determines that the Complainant has still not stated sufficient facts to support a claim of unlawful discrimination, the Vice President Human Resources or designee shall provide the Complainant with a written determination explaining the basis for dismissing the complaint within 14 days of the intake interview. The Vice President Human Resources or designee must also notify the Complainant of their right to appeal this determination directly to the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges within 30 days from the date of the notice of dismissal.

Oversight of Complaint Procedure

The Vice President of Human Resources is the "responsible District officer" charged with receiving complaints of discrimination or harassment, and coordinating their investigation under this procedure.

The investigation of complaints must be assigned by the Vice President of Human Resources to a neutral investigator. A neutral investigator means an outside investigator or an internal investigator who is not in the chain of command of the respondent, not substantially implicated by the allegations in the complaint, and who is otherwise impartial. Neutral investigators must be properly trained to conduct such investigations.

Advisers in Complaints Involving Students

A student has a right to select an adviser of their choice or to request the District provide an adviser to the student. The District shall inform the student of their right to select an adviser of their choice or to request the District provide an adviser to the student. An adviser, with written permission from the student, shall receive updates along with the student during the complaint process and student discipline process, if applicable, and shall participate in the process as an advocate for the student.

The District may but is not required to use any of the following to fulfill its obligation to provide an adviser to the student: a confidential respondent services coordinator, an agreement with a student-based peer support program, or an agreement with an alumni-based support program.

The District shall provide training to the adviser selected by the student or provided by the public postsecondary educational institution. The training shall include information on the District's student discipline procedures and may be provided in an online or in-person format.



Parties to complaints under this AP are permitted to have a support person or adviser accompany them during any stage of the complaint process described in this procedure. Parties to complaints under this AP have the right to consult with an attorney, at their own expense, at any stage of the Complaint process if they wish to do so. An attorney may serve as a support person or adviser. A union representative or other legally required person may serve as an additional support person or adviser.

Who May File a Complaint

Any student, employee, parent of a minor, or an individual with legal authority on behalf of a student or employee who believes they have been discriminated against or harassed by a student, employee, or third party in violation of this procedure and the related policy (*See at the end of the procedure for related policies*).

Where to File A Complaint

A student, employee, parent of a minor, or an individual with legal authority on behalf of a student or employee who believes the student or employee has been discriminated against or harassed in violation of these policies and procedures may make a complaint orally or in writing directed to the Vice President of Human Resources. Complainants may but are not required to use the form prescribed by the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges or the District's Report a Concern. These forms are available from the Vice President of Human Resources or on the Human Resources website (<https://www.sbccc.edu/hr/forms/>), and at the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office website.

Employment-Related Complaints

Complainants filing employment-related complaints shall be notified that they may file employment discrimination complaints with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) (<http://www.eeoc.gov/>) or California Civil Rights Department.

Any District employee who receives a harassment or discrimination complaint shall notify the Vice President of Human Resources immediately.

Filing a Timely Complaint

Since failure to report harassment and discrimination impedes the District's ability to stop the behavior, the District strongly encourages anyone who believes they are being harassed or discriminated against, to file a complaint. The District also strongly encourages the filing of such complaints within 30 days of the alleged incident. While all complaints are taken seriously and will be investigated promptly, delay in filing impedes the District's ability to investigate and remediate.

All supervisors and managers have a mandatory duty to immediately report incidents



of harassment and discrimination, the existence of a hostile, offensive or intimidating work environment, and acts of retaliation.

The District will investigate complaints involving acts that occur off campus if they are related to an academic or work activity or if the harassing conduct interferes with or limits a student's or employee's ability to participate in or benefit from the school's programs or activities.

Communicating that the Conduct is Unwelcome

The District further encourages students and staff to let the offending person know immediately and firmly that the conduct or behavior is unwelcome, offensive, in poor taste or inappropriate.

Intake and Processing of the Complaint

Upon receiving notification of a harassment or discrimination complaint, the Vice President of Human Resources or designee shall:

- Consider whether the District can undertake efforts to informally resolve the charges, including but not limited to mediation, rearrangement of work/academic schedules, obtaining apologies, providing informal counseling and/or training, etc. The District shall not mandate mediation to resolve allegations of sexual harassment, and shall not allow mediation, even on a voluntary basis, to resolve allegations of sexual violence.
- Provide notice to Parties to a student sexual harassment complaint that the District is conducting an investigation. The notice shall include the allegations against the Respondent and the alleged District policy violations under review. If new allegations arise during the course of the District's investigation that could subject either student Party to new or additional discipline or corrective action, the student parties shall be provided with supplemental notice of the new allegations and any new alleged policy violations under review.
- Provide notice to Parties to a student sexual harassment complaint that the investigation and adjudication of alleged sexual harassment of a student is not an adversarial process between the Complainant, the Respondent, and the witnesses, but rather a process for the District to comply with its obligations under existing law. The Complainant does not have the burden to prove, nor does the Respondent have the burden to disprove, the underlying allegation or allegations of misconduct.
- Advise all parties that they need not participate in an informal resolution of the complaint, as described above and that they have the right to end the informal resolution process at any time.



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- Advise a student Complainant that they may file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education.
 - Advise employee Complainants that they may file a complaint with the California Civil Rights Department.
 - All Complainants shall be advised that they have a right to file a complaint with local law enforcement, if the act complained of is also a criminal act.
 - The District must investigate even if the Complainant files a complaint with local law enforcement.
 - In addition, the District should ensure that Complainants are aware of any available resources, such as counseling, health, and mental health services.
 - The Vice President of Human Resources shall also notify the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office of the complaint when required.
 - In matters involving student sexual harassment, provide student Parties notice regarding appropriate counseling resources developed and maintained by the District.
 - Take interim steps to protect a Complainant from coming into contact with an Respondent, especially if the Complainant is a victim of sexual violence. The Vice President of Human Resources should notify the Complainant of their options to avoid contact with the Respondent and allow students to change academic situations as appropriate. For instance, the District may prohibit the Respondent from having any contact with the Complainant pending the results of the investigation. When taking steps to separate the Complainant and Respondent, the District shall minimize the burden on the Complainant. For example, it is not appropriate to remove Complainants from classes or housing while allowing Respondents to remain.

Regardless of whether a Complaint has been filed under this procedure, if the District knows, or reasonably should know, about possible sexual harassment involving individuals subject to the District's policies at the time, the District shall promptly investigate to determine whether the alleged conduct more likely than not occurred, or otherwise respond if the District determines that an investigation is not required.

Limitations on Informal Resolution and Settlements

The District will not offer informal resolution, including settlement, in the following situations:

- An employee respondent is accused of committing sexual assault, sexual violence, or sexual battery; or



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- The complainant is a student; or
 - The settlement or informal resolution includes a nondisclosure agreement.

The Superintendent/President must preliminarily approve all informal resolutions and sexual harassment settlements. The governing board must approve offers of sexual harassment settlements that have been preliminarily approved by the Superintendent/President.

Interim and Supportive Measures

Interim measures are individualized services offered as appropriate to either or both the Complainant and Respondent in an alleged incident of sexual misconduct, prior to an investigation or while an investigation is pending.

Supportive measures are non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered free of charge to the Complainant or the Respondent regardless of whether a Complaint has been filed.

The District will provide interim or supportive measures to Parties as appropriate and as reasonably available.

Interim and supportive measures may include changes to academic, living, transportation, and working situation or protective measures such as counseling, extensions of deadlines, other course-related adjustments, modifications of work or class schedules, campus escort services, mutual restrictions on contact between the Parties, changes in work or housing locations, leaves of absence, increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus, and other similar measures.

No Contact Directives

When requested by a Complainant or otherwise determined to be appropriate, the District shall issue an interim no-contact directive prohibiting the Respondent from contacting the Complainant during the pendency of the investigation. The District shall not issue an interim mutual no-contact directive automatically, but instead shall consider the specific circumstances of each case to determine whether a mutual no-contact directive is necessary or justifiable to protect the noncomplaining party's safety or well-being, or to respond to interference with an investigation. If the District issues a no-contact directive after making a decision of responsibility, the no-contact directive shall be unilateral and only apply against the Party found responsible.

Upon the issuance of a mutual no-contact directive, the District shall provide the Parties with a written justification for the directive and an explanation of the terms of the directive. Upon the issuance of any no-contact directive, the District shall provide the



Parties with an explanation of the terms of the directive, including the circumstances, if any, under which violation could be subject to disciplinary action.

Investigation

The Vice President, Human Resources or designee shall:

- Authorize the investigation of the complaint, and supervise or conduct a thorough, prompt and impartial investigation of the complaint, as set forth below. Where Parties opt for informal resolution, the Vice President, Human Resources or designee will determine whether further investigation is necessary to ensure resolution of the matter and utilize the investigation process outlined below as appropriate.
- In the case of a formal complaint, the investigation will include interviews with the Complainant, the Respondent, and any other persons who may have relevant knowledge concerning the complaint. This may include victims of similar conduct.
- Review the factual information gathered through the investigation to determine whether the alleged conduct constitutes harassment, or other unlawful discriminatory conduct, giving consideration to all factual information and the totality of the circumstances, including the nature of the verbal, physical, visual or sexual conduct, and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred.
- When a policy violation is found, reach a conclusion as to the appropriate disciplinary and remedial action; and
- Assure that all recommended action is carried out in a timely fashion.

The District will fairly and objectively investigate harassment or discrimination complaints. Employees designated to serve as investigators under this policy shall have adequate training on what constitutes sexual harassment, including sexual violence, and that they understand how the District's grievance procedures operate. The investigator may not have any real or perceived conflicts of interest and must be able to investigate the allegations impartially, using trauma-informed investigation techniques.

Student parties to a student sexual harassment complaint shall be given an opportunity to identify witnesses and other evidence to assist the District in determining whether a policy violation has occurred. Student parties shall be informed that any evidence available but not disclosed during the investigation might not be considered at a subsequent hearing.

Investigation of the Complaint

The District shall promptly investigate every complaint and claim of harassment or discrimination where the allegations, if found true, constitute a violation of law or



District policy. No claim of workplace or academic harassment or discrimination shall remain unexamined. This includes complaints involving activities that occur off campus and in connection with all the academic, educational, extracurricular, athletic, and other programs of the District, whether those programs take place in the District's facilities, on a District bus or at a class or training program sponsored by the District at another location. The District shall promptly investigate complaints involving acts that occur off campus if they are related to an academic or work activity or if the harassing conduct interferes or limits a student's (or employee's ability) to participate in or benefit from the school's programs or activities.

The District shall provide notice to Parties to a complaint that the District is conducting an investigation. The notice shall include the allegations against the Respondent and the alleged District policy violations under review. If new allegations arise during the course of the District's investigation that could subject either Party to new or additional discipline or corrective action, the Vice President Human Resources or designee shall provide an amended notice to the Parties.

The District shall notify the Complainant that the District will commence an impartial fact-finding investigation of the allegations contained in the complaint.

As set forth above, where the Parties opt for an informal resolution, the Vice President, Human Resources or designee may limit the scope of the investigation, as appropriate.

The District will keep the investigation confidential to the extent possible, but cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality because release of some information on a "need-to-know-basis" is essential to a thorough investigation. When determining whether to maintain confidentiality, the District may weigh the request for confidentiality against the following factors:

- The seriousness of the alleged harassment;
- The Complainant's age;
- Whether there have been other harassment complaints about the same individual;
- The Respondent's rights to receive information about the allegations if the information is maintained by the District as an "education record" under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S. Code Section 1232g; 34 Code Federal Regulations Part 99.15.

The District will inform the Complainant if it cannot maintain confidentiality.

Investigation Steps



Investigators will complete the following steps:

- consider whether any involved person should be removed from the campus pending completion of the investigation;
- interview the Complainant(s);
- interview the Respondent(s);
- identify and interview witnesses, and review evidence, identified by each Party;
- identify and interview any other witnesses, or re-interview witnesses or parties if needed, reminding all individuals interviewed of the District's no-retaliation policy;
- review personnel/academic files of all involved Parties;

When the District evaluates the complaint, it shall do so using a “preponderance of the evidence” standard. The preponderance of the evidence standard is met if the District determines that it is more likely than not that the alleged misconduct occurred, based on the facts available at the time of the decision. Thus, after considering all the evidence it has gathered, the District will decide whether it is more likely than not that discrimination or harassment has occurred. Complainants should be aware that any evidence available but not disclosed during the investigation might not be considered at a subsequent hearing, if a hearing is required under this procedure.

Timeline for Completion

The District will undertake its investigation promptly and as swiftly as possible. To that end, the investigator shall complete the above steps, and prepare a written report within 90 days of the District receiving the complaint. Either party or the District may request an extension of time upon a showing of good cause. Both parties will be notified in writing of any extension. The District shall notify the Complainant and Respondent of the outcome of the investigation. The District will toll the timeline while the Parties are engaged in good faith efforts at informal resolution.

The District will provide, upon request of the Complainant or Respondent, and every 30 days until the outcome of a complaint is determined, and only to the extent permissible under state and federal law, status updates on complaints of sex discrimination, including, but not limited to, complaints of sexual harassment, to complainants and respondents.

The parties shall receive written notice of the outcome of the complaint, including whether a policy violation was found to have occurred, the basis for that determination, including factual findings, and any discipline imposed.

Cooperation Expected



All employees are expected to cooperate with a District investigation into allegations of harassment or discrimination. Lack of cooperation impedes the ability of the District to investigate thoroughly and respond effectively. However, lack of cooperation by a Complainant or witnesses does not relieve the District of its obligation to investigate. The District will conduct an investigation if it is discovered that harassment or discrimination is, or may be occurring, with or without the cooperation of the alleged victim and regardless of whether a complaint is filed. No employee will be retaliated against as a result of lodging a complaint or participating in any workplace investigation.

Written Report

The results of the investigation of a complaint shall document the process and evidence submitted and reviewed, and shall be set forth in a written report that will include at least all of the following information:

- A description of the circumstances giving rise to the Formal Complaint;
- A description of the procedural steps taken during the investigation, including all individuals contacted and interviewed;
- A summary of the testimony provided by each witness, with information relevant to the allegations including the Complainant;
- An explanation of why an identified potential witness was not interviewed;
- An analysis of relevant data or other evidence collected during the course of the investigation, including a list of relevant documents;
- A specific finding as to whether each factual allegation in the complaint occurred based on the “preponderance of the evidence” standard;
- A table of contents if the report exceeds ten (10) pages and;
- Any other information deemed appropriate by the District.

Evidence of Past Sexual History

An investigator or hearing officer, if required by this procedure, shall not consider the past sexual history of the Complainant or Respondent except in the limited circumstances described below:

- The investigator or hearing officer shall not consider prior or subsequent sexual history between the Complainant and anyone other than the Respondent for any reason unless directly relevant to prove that physical injuries alleged to have been inflicted by the Respondent were inflicted by another individual;
- The investigator or hearing officer shall not consider the existence of a dating relationship or prior or subsequent consensual sexual relations between the Complainant and the Respondent unless the evidence is relevant to how the Parties communicated consent in prior or subsequent consensual sexual relations;



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- o Where the investigator or hearing officer allows consideration of evidence about a dating relationship or prior or subsequent consensual sexual relations between the Complainant and the Respondent pursuant to this circumstance, the mere fact that the Complainant and Respondent engaged in other consensual sexual relations with one another is never sufficient, by itself, to establish that the conduct in question was consensual.

Before allowing the consideration of any evidence proffered pursuant to this section, the investigator or hearing officer shall provide a written explanation to the Parties as to why consideration of the evidence is consistent with this procedure.

Confidentiality of the Process

Investigations are best conducted within a confidential climate. Therefore, the District shall not reveal information about ongoing investigations except as necessary to fulfill its legal obligations. The District will keep the investigation confidential to the extent possible, but it cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality because release of some information on a “need-to-know-basis” is essential to a thorough investigation and to protect the rights of student and employee Respondents during the investigation process and any ensuing discipline.

Administrative Determination

In any case not involving employment discrimination, the District shall complete its investigation and forward a copy or summary of the investigative report to the Complainant setting forth all of the following:

- The Vice President, Human Resources or their designee’s determination as to whether unlawful discrimination occurred with respect to each allegation in the complaint based on a preponderance of the evidence standard and the basis for that determination including factual findings;
- In the event a discrimination allegation is substantiated, a description of actions taken, if any, to prevent similar problems from occurring in the future;
- The proposed resolution of the complaint; and
- The Complainant’s right to appeal to the District governing board and the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s office; and
- In matters involving student sexual misconduct, the Respondent’s right to appeal to the District’s Board of Trustees any disciplinary sanction imposed upon the Respondent.

In any case involving employment discrimination, the district shall complete its investigation and forward a copy or summary of the report and written notice to the Complainant setting forth all the following:



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- The Vice President, Human Resources or their designee's determination as to whether discrimination occurred with respect to each allegation in the complaint based on a preponderance of the evidence standard and the basis for that determination including factual findings;
 - If a discrimination allegation is substantiated, a description of actions taken, if any, to prevent similar acts of unlawful discrimination from occurring in the future;
 - The proposed resolution of the complaint; and
 - The Complainant's right to appeal to the District's Board of Trustees and to file a complaint with the California Civil Rights Department or the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

The District shall provide the Respondent the following:

- The Vice President, Human Resources or their designee's determination as to whether unlawful discrimination occurred with respect to each allegation in the complaint based on the preponderance of the evidence standard and the basis for that determination including factual findings;
- The proposed resolution of the complaint, including any disciplinary action against the Respondent; and
- In matters involving student sexual misconduct not subject to Title IX, the Respondent's right to appeal to the District's Board of Trustees any disciplinary sanction imposed upon the Respondent.

Within five business days of a decision of disciplinary action against a respondent in response to a complaint of sex discrimination, the District will provide a notification of the disciplinary action to the Respondent and Complainant.

The District will toll the timelines described above while the Parties are engaged in good faith efforts at informal resolution.

In matters involving an academic employee placed on involuntary paid administrative leave, the District shall complete its investigation within 90 working days of the administrative leave commencing, unless the period of paid administrative leave is extended by agreement of the employee and District for a period not exceeding 30 additional calendar days.

Discipline for Student Sexual Misconduct Not Subject to Title IX

In a complaint involving student sexual misconduct not subject to Title IX, if a student Respondent is subject to severe disciplinary sanctions, and the credibility of witnesses was central to the investigative findings, the District will provide an opportunity for the



student Respondent to cross-examine witnesses indirectly at a live hearing, either in person or by videoconference and conducted by a neutral decision-maker other than the investigator.

In other Complaints involving sexual harassment against a student, the District shall decide whether a hearing is necessary to determine whether any sexual violence more likely than not occurred. In making this decision, the District may consider whether the Parties elected to participate in the investigation and whether each Party had the opportunity to suggest questions to be asked of the other Party and witnesses during the investigation.

Any hearing shall be subject to the following rules:

- I. Any cross-examination of either party or any witness shall not be conducted directly by a party or a party's advisor. The District shall appoint a neutral third party to attend the hearing solely for the purpose of asking any questions to the witnesses. The neutral third party shall not be the student Respondent, the student Respondents representative, or any individual charged with making a final determination regarding discipline.
- II. Either party or any witness may request to answer the questions by video from a remote location.
- III. Student parties shall have the opportunity to submit written questions to the hearing officer in advance of the hearing. At the hearing, the other party shall have an opportunity to note an objection to the questions posed. The institution may limit such objections to written form, and neither the hearing officer nor the institution are obligated to respond, other than to include any objection in the record. The hearing officer shall have the authority and obligation to discard or rephrase any question that the hearing officer deems to be repetitive, irrelevant, or harassing. In making these determinations, the hearing officer is not bound by, but may take guidance from, the formal rules of evidence.
- IV. Generally, the parties may not introduce evidence, including witness testimony, at the hearing that the party did not identify during the investigation and that was available at the time of the investigation. However, the hearing officer has discretion to accept for good cause, or exclude, such new evidence offered at the hearing.
- V. The hearing officer shall not consider:
 - The past sexual history of a complainant or respondent except in the limited circumstances permitted by this paragraph.
 - Prior or subsequent sexual history between the complainant and anyone other than the respondent for any reason unless directly

relevant to prove that physical injuries alleged to have been inflicted by the respondent were inflicted by another individual.

- The existence of a dating relationship or prior or subsequent consensual sexual relations between the complainant and the respondent unless the evidence is relevant to how the parties communicated consent in prior or subsequent consensual sexual relations. When this evidence is relevant, however, the mere fact that the complainant and respondent engaged in other consensual sexual relations with one another is never sufficient, by itself, to establish that the conduct in question was consensual.

Before considering any of the above evidence, the hearing officer shall provide a written explanation to the parties as to why consideration of the evidence is permitted under this paragraph.

Discipline, Corrective Action, and Restorative Process

If harassment, discrimination or retaliation occurred in violation of the District's policy or procedure, the District shall take disciplinary action against the Respondent and any other remedial action it determines to be appropriately consistent with state and federal law. The action will be prompt, effective, and commensurate with the severity of the offense.

Possible disciplinary sanctions for student Respondents include written or verbal reprimand, required training or counseling, non-academic probation, suspension, and expulsion. Possible disciplinary sanctions for employee Respondents include written or verbal reprimand, required training or counseling, reduction in pay, demotion, suspension, or discharge.

Remedies for the Complainant might include, but are not limited to:

- Providing an escort to ensure that the Complainant can move safely between classes and activities;
- Ensuring that the Complainant and the Respondent do not attend the same classes or work in the same work area;
- Preventing offending third parties from entering campus;
- Providing counseling services or a referral to counseling services;
- Providing medical services or a referral to medical services;
- Providing academic support services, such as tutoring;
- Arranging for a student Complainant to retake a course or withdraw from a class without penalty, including ensuring that any changes do not adversely affect the Complainant's academic records; and
- Reviewing any disciplinary actions taken against the Complainant to see if



there is a causal connection between the harassment and the misconduct that may have resulted in the Complainant being disciplined.

If the District imposes discipline on the Respondent, the nature of the discipline will not be communicated to the Complainant. However, the District may disclose information about the sanction imposed on an individual who was found to have engaged in harassment when the sanction directly relates to the Complainant; for example, the District may inform the Complainant that the Respondent must stay away from the complainant.

Disciplinary actions against faculty, staff and students will conform to all relevant statutes, regulations, personnel policies and procedures, including the provisions of any applicable collective bargaining agreement.

The District shall also take reasonable steps to protect the Complainant from further harassment or discrimination, address the hostile environment, if one has been created, prevent its recurrence, address its effects, and protect the Complainant and witnesses from retaliation as a result of communicating the complaint or assisting in the investigation. The District shall take reasonable steps to ensure the confidentiality of the investigation and to protect the privacy of all Parties to the extent possible without impeding the District's ability to investigate and respond effectively to the complaint.

If the District cannot take disciplinary action against the Respondent because the Complainant refuses to participate in the investigation, it should pursue other steps to limit the effects of the alleged harassment and prevent its recurrence.

Appeals

If the District imposes discipline against a student or employee as a result of the findings in its investigation, the student or employee may appeal the decision using the procedure for appealing a disciplinary action.

If the Complainant or Respondent (when applicable) is not satisfied with the results of the administrative determination, they may, within thirty (30) days, submit a written appeal to the Board of Trustees.

In a complaint involving student sexual misconduct not subject to Title IX, a Respondent who is not satisfied with the results of the administrative determination may submit a written appeal to the District's Board of Trustees within 30 days.

The Board's review on appeal is limited to the following issues:

- *whether there was a procedural error in violation of this procedure;*
- *whether there was a defect in the investigation;*
- *whether new evidence unavailable during the investigation despite the Complainant's due diligence would substantially impact the outcome of the*



investigation;

- *whether correct legal standards were applied; and*
- *whether the District's determination was an abuse of discretion.*

The Board shall review the original complaint, the investigative report, the administrative decision, and the appeal. The Board shall issue a final District decision in the matter within 45 days after receiving the appeal. A copy of the decision rendered by the Board shall be forwarded to the Complainant and to the Respondent. The Complainant shall also be notified of their right to appeal this decision.

If the Board does not act within 45 days the administrative determination shall be deemed approved on the forty-sixth day and shall become the final decision of the District in the matter. The District shall promptly notify the Complainant and the Respondent of the Board's action, or if the Board took no action, that the administrative determination is deemed approved.

In any case not involving employment discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, the Complainant shall have the right to file a written appeal with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office within 30 days after the Board issued the final District decision or permitted the administrative decision to become final. Such appeals shall be processed pursuant to the provision of Title 5 Section 59350.

In any case involving employment discrimination, including workplace harassment, the Complainant may, at any time before or after the issuance of the final decision of the District, file a complaint with the California Civil Rights Department

In any complaint dismissed pursuant to Title 5 Section 59332, a complainant may file a written appeal with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office within 30 days from the date of the notice of dismissal

Remand

The California Community College Chancellor's Office may remand any matter to the District for any of the following reasons:

- to cure defects in the investigation or in procedural compliance;
- to consider new evidence not available during the investigation despite the Complainant's due diligence that would substantially impact the outcome of the investigation; or
- to modify or reverse a decision of the District's Board of Trustees based upon misapplication of an applicable legal standard or an abuse of discretion.

If the California Community College Chancellor's Office remands a matter to the District, the District shall take necessary action and issue a decision after remand within sixty (60) days. In any case not involving employment discrimination, the Complainant may appeal the District's amended determination to the California



Community College Chancellor's Office within 30 days by following the appeal procedures above.

Extension of Time

A student Complainant or Respondent may request, in writing, an extension of a deadline related to a Complaint during periods of examinations or school closures. The District shall grant a student Party's reasonable request for an extension of a deadline related to a Complaint during periods of examinations or school closures.

If the District is unable to comply with the 90-day deadline, the District may extend the time to respond by up to 45 additional days. An extension may be taken only once without permission from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, and must be necessary for one of the following reasons:

- a need to interview a party or witness who has been unavailable;
- a need to review or analyze additional evidence, new allegations, or new complaints related to the matter; or
- to prepare and finalize an administrative determination.

The District shall send a written notice to the Complainant and to a Respondent who is aware of an investigation indicating the necessity of an extension, the justification for the extension, and the number of days the deadline will be extended. The District shall send this notice no later than 10 days prior to the initial time to respond.

The District may request additional extensions from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office after the initial 45-day extension. The District shall send a copy of the extension request to the Complainant and to a Respondent who is aware of an investigation. The Complainant and Respondent may each file a written objection with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office within 5 days of receipt.

The extension of time provisions described above do not apply to investigations involving an academic employee placed on involuntary paid administrative leave.

Disclosures to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office

Upon request of the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, the District shall provide copies of all documents related to a discrimination complaint, including the following:

- the original complaint,
- any investigative report unless subject to the attorney client privilege,
- the written notice to the Complainant setting forth the results of the investigation,
- the final administrative decision rendered by the Board or a statement indicating the date upon which the decision became final,



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- a copy of the notification to the Complainant of their appeal rights,
 - the Complainant's appeal of the District's administrative determination, and
 - any other non-privileged documents or information the Chancellor requests

The District shall provide to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office an annual report with the following information:

- the number of employment and non employment discrimination complaints and informal charges received in the previous academic year;
- the number of complaints and informal charges resolved in the previous academic year;
- the number of complaints of unlawful discrimination received in the previous academic year, and
- the number of those complaints that were sustained in whole or in part; and any other information requested by the Chancellor.

File Retention

The District will retain on file for a period of at least five (5) years after closing the case copies of:

- the original complaint;
- the investigatory report;
- the summary of the report if one is prepared;
- the notice provided to the Parties, of the District's administrative determination and the right to appeal;
- any appeal; and
- the District's final decision.

For any appeal to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, the District shall provide all relevant, non-privileged documents upon request of the Chancellor.

Dissemination of Policy and Procedures

District Policy and Procedures related to harassment will include information that specifically addresses sexual violence. District policy and procedures will be provided to all students, all employees, all volunteers who will regularly interact with students, and each individual or entity under contract with the District to perform any service involving regular interaction with students at the District. District policy and procedures related to harassment will also be posted on campus and on the District's website.

When hired, employees shall be required to sign that they have received the policy and procedures, and the signed acknowledgment of receipt is placed in each employee's personnel file. In addition, these policies and procedures are incorporated into the District's course catalogs and orientation materials for new students.



Annual Audits of Complaints

An annual audit of all complaints of discriminatory or harassment investigations and actions taken and the District's compliance with the rules shall be conducted pursuant to this procedure.

Training for Employees

The District shall provide training on sexual harassment to all employees as required by State law.

Training for responsible employees must also address the responsible employee's obligation to report sexual harassment and instruction on how to report sexual harassment to the responsible District officer.

The District will maintain records of the training provided.

Education and Prevention for Students

The District will ensure its students receive annual training on sexual violence and sexual harassment including related topics required by State law. The District shall implement comprehensive prevention and outreach programs addressing sexual violence, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

The District's primary concern is for student safety and the use of alcohol or drugs never makes the victim at fault for sexual violence. An individual who participates as a Complainant or witness in an investigation of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking will not be subject to disciplinary sanctions for a violation of the District's student conduct policy at or near the time of the incident, unless the District determines that the violation was egregious, including, but not limited to, an action that places the health or safety of any other person at risk or involves plagiarism, cheating, or academic dishonesty.

Complaint Reporting

The Superintendent/President shall prepare and submit to the Board of Trustees, upon request, a report of complaints filed pursuant to this procedure. This report must disaggregate the Complaints by complaint type (Student Complainant and Student Respondent, Student Complainant and Employee Respondent, Employee Complainant and Student Respondent, Employee Respondent and Employee Respondent, etc.). This report, when possible, must also disaggregate the Complaints by the Complainant's race, age, gender, religion, or any other characteristic or protected class identified in Board Policy 3400.

Related Documents



BP 3400 Protected Classes
BP/AP 3430 Prohibition of Harassment
BP/AP 3433 Prohibition of Sexual Harassment Under Title IX
AP 3434 Responding to Harassment Based on Sex under Title IX
BP/AP 3540 Sexual and Other Assaults on Campus
AP 5530 Student Rights and Grievances

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Legal Update #46: April 2025
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