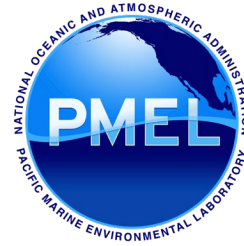




Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



URGE Complaints and Reporting Policy for PMEL Staff at NOAA and Cooperative Institutes

This is what was found by the PMEL Pod at NOAA and University of Washington on policies for handling complaints, the reporting process, resources, and possible outcomes for staff. PMEL is made up of employees from NOAA, University of Washington, Oregon State University, University of Hawaii and Contractors. Some information was public; answers that were only found through follow up with contacts are noted.

I. The link(s) to the reporting policy at our organizations are here:

- **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)**
 - [NOAA EEO counseling & complaints](#)
 - OAR [Equal Employment Opportunity \(EEO\) Complaint Process and Policies](#)
 - Reporting Harassment Allegations to the Office of Human Capital Services
 - Reporting Allegations of Harassment to the NOAA Office of Inclusion and Civil Rights/EEO complaint - [Office of Inclusion and Civil Rights \(OICR\) policies and programs](#)
 - [Sexual Harassment Policies and Reporting](#)
- **University of Washington (UW)**
 - [Complaint resolution | Human Resources](#)
 - [University Complaint Investigation and Resolution Office \(UCIRO\) | Compliance](#) (for complaints related to discrimination or retaliation)
 - [Process for formal complaints of sexual harassment](#)
- **Oregon State University (OSU)**
 - [Discrimination, Discriminatory Harassment, Bullying, and Retaliation Processes](#)
 - [Discrimination and Harassment Policies](#)
 - [Sexual Misconduct & Title IX](#)
 - [Responsible Employee Policy](#)
- **University of Hawai'i (UH)**
 - [Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Policies](#) (Anti-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment; Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence and Stalking)
 - [Complaint Procedures](#)
- During our search, there were no cross organizational policies that exist. There are some resources that are for employees and others but no policies on a blended workforce.

II. Are reporting policies regularly reviewed? What is the process for changing policy?

- Policy is based on federal law (Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964)
- There was no information online for any institution about how these policies are reviewed or what the process is for change.
- NOAA does have [policy statements](#) on these topics online that do seem to be updated by NOAA leadership during each administration. *We have reached out for more information from OAR.*
- We were not able to find information on if UW/UH/OSU policies/procedures/processes are regularly reviewed.

III. Are the rates of reporting made publicly available (e.g. # of reports each year)?

- NOAA has [OICR FY 19 Diagnostic Assessment](#). *We could not find more information on past years or how often this is conducted.*
- The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission provides statistics in the federal sector in annual reports: <https://www.eeoc.gov/federal-sector/reports>
- [Update on Sexual Harassment in the Federal Workplace](#) 2016 Survey Results
- OSU reports all complaints and demographics in an annual report: <https://eoa.oregonstate.edu/eoa-annual-report>
- UH - no public report found.
- UW - no public reports found.

IV. What mechanisms are available for reporting complaints, bias, microaggressions, harassment, and overt racism?

- The main pathway for reporting or bringing up complaints is through supervisors or directly at the office who handles complaints. With many of these, the offices will protect confidentiality of the employee but cannot guarantee 100% confidentiality.
- NOAA EEO Complaint Process: To begin the pre-complaint process (informal process) must first contact the [OICR](#) (Office of Inclusion and Civil Rights) via mail, email, phone or fax and report to EEO Counselor
- NOAA 955 Complaint Process: Report incident to supervisor, higher level supervisor or NOAA's Office of Human Capital Services (OHCS) Employee & Labor Relations Branch (ELRB) by [email](#)
- UW: Complaints can be made to your supervisor, department HR Administrator, [HR Consultant](#), [University Complaint Investigation and Resolution Office \(UCIRO\)](#), Title IX Coordinator, [ADA Coordinator](#), [Advocate](#) or [Office of Ombud](#) depending on the type of complaint. You can also contact [SafeCampus](#) to report any of these things and seek guidance.
 - Complaint to be made in person, via Zoom, or phone
 - University give some confidentiality but due to public record laws and legal processes may require to disclose certain records

- Allegations of serious misconduct (theft, discrimination including sexual harassment) must be reported to appropriate authority
 - You can also contact [SafeCampus](#) or a [UW Police Department Victim Advocate](#) to discuss resources, options and to develop with a plan, which does not mean that a police report will be filled
- OSU:
 - [Online form](#) to raise concerns of discrimination, harassment, and bullying with the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access.
 - Can also report concerns to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access, 541-737-3556 or eo.oregonstate.edu or equal.opportunity@oregonstate.edu
 - [Online Sexual Misconduct Reporting Form](#)
 - Can contact the Title IX Coordinator: Kim Kirkland, Executive Director for the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access (541-737-3556 or kim.kirkland@oregonstate.edu)
- University of Hawaii:
 - [Online form](#) to report sexual assault and other crimes. The form allows for the individual reporting to choose to include a confidential advocate and to contact law enforcement.
 - [Contact your campus EEO/AA Coordinator](#) for information and assistance with the informal or formal complaint process via phone or email (808) 956-7077 (voice/text) or eeo@hawaii.edu
- At the universities, the police can be involved at the request of the individual reporting during the formal complaint process. There are also advocates and anonymous resources individuals can use to determine if to proceed with informal or formal complaints.

V. What are the outcomes or consequences for reported individuals?

- NOAA -
 - Through informal complaint, the outcomes, consequences, and disciplinary actions are agreed upon by all parties in the Settlement Agreement and signed by the servicing Client Service Office Division Director, the Office of General Counsel, and the Civil Rights Office (for EEO cases).
 - When a [formal complaint is filed with the Office of Civil Rights](#), the department conducts an investigation within 180 days of the filing of the complaint. After the investigation, the Office of Civil Rights will provide the complainant with a copy of the final investigative file. The complainant can then either request a hearing before an EEOC Administrative Judge or request an immediate final decision from the Office of Civil Rights. If a hearing is requested for the formal complaint, the Administrative Judge decides the outcomes / consequences. The Administrative Judge shall issue a decision on the complaint and order remedies and relief when discrimination is found within 180 days of the receipt of the formal complaint.

- UW - Outcomes are decided by UCIRO investigator. If an employee is found responsible for violating University policy or code, sanctions or disciplinary actions are available. <https://www.washington.edu/sexualassault/reporting/uw/> and <https://www.washington.edu/compliance/UCIRO/>
- UH - While an anonymous complaint may not trigger an investigation, a pattern of anonymous complaints against an individual or unit may indicate a potential problem, and the University may take remedial action such as training, if appropriate. When a report has been made, the Complaint Officer will explain the avenues of recourse that are available. An Investigating Officer will be assigned to conduct fact finding and submit findings to the campus Decision Maker or designee who has authority over the issue. The Decision Maker shall render a decision within twenty (20) working days and notify the Complainant and the Respondent of the decision.
- OSU - the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access will follow up with each incident that has been filed and request to meet with the individual or connect the individual to the office most capable of responding to the issue.
- **Tracking:**
 - At NOAA - the Office of Civil Rights and Inclusions tracks reports made. It was unclear who at the Universities track the reports and how.
- **Trainings:**
 - Many of the University offices also provide trainings for supervisors and on topics such as bias and Title IX. NOAA provides annual mandatory training on "Preventing Harassment and Discrimination". UW provides annual mandatory training on sexual harassment through UW SafeCampus.

VI. What resources are available for individuals reporting?

- NOAA:
 - NOAA Sexual Assault/Sexual Harassment (SASH) Helpline - This helpline was designed to provide crisis intervention, referrals, and emotional support to **NOAA employees, contractors, and affiliates** who are victims and/or survivors of sexual harassment or sexual assault. Operated by Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network ([RAINN](#)) 24/7 to provide live, confidential and anonymous services, can be reached by phone, website & online chat, mobile app, and text
 - Phone: 1-866-288-6558
 - Website & Online Chat: <https://www.noasashhelpline.org/>
 - Mobile App: NOAA SASH Helpline (available via iOS and Android App Stores)
 - Text: (202) 335-0265
 - NOAA [SASH \(Sexual Assault/ Sexual Harassment\) Helpline:](#) Helpline
 - [Alternative Dispute Resolution](#) - ADR refers to a variety of approaches used to resolve conflict other than litigation. ADR provides a secure and satisfying way for employees to resolve workplace conflicts or

disagreements. It is encouraged to use ADR whenever appropriate. The ADR process is confidential and any concerns regarding confidentiality will be discussed once an ADR service has been requested. Any disputes that may impede productivity or have a negative impact on the work environment are resolved using either mediation, consultation, or facilitated problem solving.

- Workplace Violence Prevention and Response (WVPR) to report and receive victim advocacy services via violence.prevention@noaa.gov
- [Employee Assistance Program](#) - Federal employees and their immediate family members may also contact the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for counseling services.
 - Phone 24/7 toll free at 1-800-222-0364 (for individuals with hearing impairments, TTY 1-800-262-7848)
 - https://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~civilr/sexual_harassment.html
- [WorkLife4You](#) - WorkLife4You helps employees and their household members better manage daily responsibilities and life events. This program provides free access to work/life services — 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- UW
 - [Ombuds](#) - The Office of the Ombud is a place where all members of the University of Washington community can seek information, consultation, and assistance. They provide a safe environment to voice concerns and develop constructive options to address the situation.
 - [UW Sexual Assault Resources](#)
 - [Contact confidential advocates](#)
 - [Counseling | Sexual Assault Resources](#)
 - [Know Your Rights & Resources guide](#)
 - [Seek Medical Care](#)
 - [Safe Campus](#) - Call SafeCampus anytime — no matter where you work or study — to anonymously discuss safety and well-being concerns for yourself or others.
- OSU
 - [Ombuds](#)
 - [Beyond Benefits \(EAP\)](#) - Areas of focus include family needs, financial needs, mental/emotional support needs and legal needs. More information is available on the Office of Human Resources [website](#). Beyond Benefits EAP is confidential and available 24 hours, 7 days a week. Employees can reach the EAP at:
 - Phone 1-855-327-4722
 - Online: guidanceresources.com
 - [Survivor Advocacy and Resource Center \(SARC\)](#)
 - [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#)
- University of Hawai'i -

- UH Mānoa employees may contact the [Gender Equity Counselor](#) or the [Counseling & Student Development Center](#). [UH Mānoa Office of Gender Equity](#) provides confidential advocacy, safety planning, risk assessment, and case referral.
- Ombud Office was closed in 2009
- [UH Alternative Dispute Resolution Program](#)
- [UH Advocacy Office](#) and [UH Confidential Resources](#) - provide confidential advocacy services and case management to victims of sex discrimination and gender-based violence who are involved in the University system on O'ahu.
 - UH Confidential Advocate Phone: (808) 341-4952 Email: advocate@hawaii.edu
- [Community Resources](#) - off-campus local and national resources
- [UH Mānoa Office of Human Resources](#) - provides assistance with employment concerns
- [UH Employee Assistance Program](#) - provides counseling services for employees
- [UH Mānoa Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action \(EEO/AA\) Office](#) - provides training, resources, and information regarding equal employment opportunity requirement.
- UH, OSU, UW and NOAA protect the individuals reporting from retaliation
 - University policy prohibits retaliation against people who bring a complaint or participate in the complaint process. An employee who engages in retaliatory conduct is subject to appropriate corrective action, including dismissal.
 - It is unlawful to retaliate against an individual for opposing employment practices that discriminate based on sex or for filing a discrimination charge, testifying as a witness, or participating in any way in an equal employment opportunity (EEO) investigation, proceeding, or litigation under Title VII ([NOAA](#))
 - [OSU Retaliation Policy](#)
 - UH - The University prohibits and will not tolerate retaliation. Persons who commit retaliation in violation of this policy are subject to appropriate disciplinary action. Retaliation includes adverse actions against a person because they have filed a complaint, participated in an investigation, or otherwise opposed discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence. Retaliation involves adverse actions that would dissuade a reasonable person from opposing prohibited conduct.

VII. What resources are available to groups raising issues or proposing changes?

- There are three sources of employee surveys that have provided information and recommendations about the status of workplace culture at PMEL: The [2017](#)

[PMEL/JISAO culture survey](#), [2019 PMEL Strategic Planning Employee Sessions](#), and [2020 OAR Organizational Health Assessment Survey](#).

- The PMEL Diversity and Inclusion Committee meets monthly on the second Friday at 11 am PT. These meetings are open to all to attend and to bring up any issues or propose initiative or changes.
- PMEL Director also holds office hours, weekly on Tuesday's at 3 pm PT for anyone to join to collect input from staff on how to improve.
- PMEL also has a [suggestion box](#) that has been dormant for a few years to collect feedback or share concerns.
- NOAA maintains a [Diversity, Inclusion, and Racial Equality Suggestion Box](#) for individuals to share experiences or suggestions for ways NOAA can improve handling of DEI issues.

VIII. What other mechanisms can we implement or consider implementing?

- Suggestion box - Revise the [PMEL D&I Suggestion Box](#) to voice complaints/shared experiences as well as provide updates and tracking for PMEL.
- Develop a process for the blended workforce at PMEL for bringing up complaints and raising issues. This can include establishing points of contacts for people to come to raise issues or discuss situations.
- Host listening sessions for people to come share their experiences to create more community and trust among peers. *UW CICOES hosted a few listening sessions this past summer and should be modelled off of and continued.*
- Create or share NOAA or University Affinity/Employee Resource Groups where people of similar identities can come together and find community

IX. What can be done to build trust between mentor and mentee and avoid uncomfortable situations in the first place?

- While these policies apply to employees, PMEL does work with students, typically through other programs. These are opportunities to build community and provide informal and formal opportunities to provide feedback.
- Chat groups and happy hours
- Encourage community building at weekly coffee hour (already implemented)
- Participation in monthly show n tell seminar (already implemented)
- Liaison for undergraduate summer interns (already implemented) that is not a mentor but can provide resources and check-ins with students from across the various programs.
- Develop annual evaluation - more formalized process for mentees to provide feedback for advisors and vice versa (learning process)