

# URGE

## Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



WOODS HOLE  
**OCEANOGRAPHIC**  
INSTITUTION

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URGE Complaints and Reporting Policy for Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (with some information for University of Washington and University of Hawaii from other pod members)

This is what was found by the FOLFE pod at WHOI on policies for handling complaints, the reporting process, resources, and possible outcomes. Some information was public; answers that were only found through follow up with contacts are noted.

- **The link(s) to the reporting policy at our organization are here:**

- Link - Organization, Company, University Policies
- Link - Department, Lab, Division, Advisor or Supervisor Policies
- Are reporting policies regularly reviewed? What is the process for changing policy?  
Sometimes there are email notifications with updates. Never heard of a subcommittee on WHOI policies. Maybe should charge a committee
- Are the rates of reporting made publicly available (e.g. # of reports each year)?  
Rates of reporting not publicly available, but casual comments that there are very few. Would want to know the breakdown by categories. Is it happening a lot and people aren't reporting it?

- **What mechanisms are available for reporting complaints, bias, microaggressions, harassment, and overt racism?**

- Who are the designated individuals/positions for reporting incidents?
  - Head of HR, Dept Chairs, any supervisor
- Can reports be made online? Where? **Yes** Anonymously? **Yes**
  - WHOI: Ethics Point online option: [www.who.ethicspoint.com](http://www.who.ethicspoint.com)
  - **HOWEVER**, Communications with EthicsPoint are not considered official notice to the Institution
  - UW: Online anonymous [reporting tool](#) (in writing) at School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences
  - [SOEST (UH Mānoa): [Online guide](#) and information for reporting (just as another example). The only information I could find online was very focused on Title IX issues, so this might just be a good "bad" example.]
- Who do in-person and online reports go to? Who has access to see reports? Names and/or positions or "Not publicly listed/Unknown"
  - Head of HR: Kathi Benjamin
  - General Counsel: Chris Land
  - Title IX: Christine Charette
- Are police included in the process? When and how? Are individuals accompanied by an advocate or someone from the organization?
  - No explicit mention of involving police or welcoming any victim to do so

- **What are the outcomes or consequences for reported individuals?**

- WHOI policy states: "Individuals found in violation of this policy are subject to disciplinary action, which may include any level of counseling, warnings, transfers, suspensions, reductions in pay or duties, and/or termination of employment."
- Who decides the outcomes/consequences? What is the process?
  - WHOI policy states: "Initially, resolution through informal, with all Institutional support requested or available, means is encouraged and, in most instances, will be satisfactory. However, if the problem remains unresolved, or if the problem reoccurs, more formal action, including an investigation, may be taken."
- Are reports tracked? **Presumably** How are they tracked? By who? **By HR**
- Are repeated complaints escalated to a disciplinary board? What is the process?
  - Unknown at WHOI
  - At UW, in accordance with state law, any new hires (faculty and staff) must complete a [sexual misconduct declaration](#) prior to being hired. So, one outcome is that this could affect the person's future hiring decisions

- **What resources are available for individuals reporting?**

- Counselors or advocates, especially those of the same race, ethnicity, and gender.
  - Employee and Student Assistance Program (ESAP): free, confidential consultations, counseling and targeted referrals at no cost. Contact the ESAP 24/7 at: 800-648-9557 or visit [www.kgreer.com](http://www.kgreer.com) and entering company code: WHOI (unsure if they have individuals of same race, ethnicity, or gender)
  - MIT-WHOI JP students have access to MIT's resources: <http://idhr.mit.edu>
- Automatic or requested investigation of potential impact on grades or evaluations.
  - Unsure
- Protection against retaliation or repercussions, accommodations for continuing work/courses, option for pass/fail or outside assessment.
  - Protection against retaliation is written into policies

- **What resources are available to groups raising issues or proposing changes?**

- Petitions of # signatures trigger a town hall, meeting with organizational leadership, or policy change. What is the follow-up process for town halls and meetings?
  - Never heard of the ability to trigger a town hall
  - Anyone can propose a new policy or a change to an existing policy ([link](#)), but undergoes extensive review and approval by administration
- Working groups or committees with power to change or propose changes to policy.
  - CDEI at WHOI has taken and collated complaints to the administration in a mediation role.
  - WCC has the ability to influence policy by commenting on new or existing policies.
- Cultural surveys, regular or only after wide-spread reports or high-profile incidents.
  - Yes, WHOI has conducted infrequent climate surveys
- Leadership proactively asks students and/or staff for input on how to improve.
  - We think they would be welcome to input but we don't recall regular, proactive requests for doing so.