

URGEO

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

Session 2: Racism and Individuals Deliverable: Complaints and Reporting Policy Harvard EPS/ESE URGE Pod

This is what was found by the EPS/ESE URGE Pod at Harvard University on policies for handling complaints, the reporting process, resources, and possible outcomes. Most information was public; answers that required a Harvard University login or email access are noted.

The links to reporting policy at Harvard are here:

While most of the policies below referenced “Harvard University’s policy” on discrimination and harassment, we could not find any such university-wide policy published online.

- [Harvard HR Policy on Discrimination and Harassment](#)
Access to this policy requires a Harvard University login.
 - Institutional Level: University, applies to employees.
 - Review system for policy: Unknown
 - Process for changing policy: Unknown
- [Title IX Office](#)
This policy relates specifically to sex- and gender-based harassment and discrimination, but word-of-mouth says their staff may help with other forms of bias
 - Institutional Level: University
 - Review system for policy: Periodically, a dean will call for a review of policy by a panel of students, faculty, and staff with opportunities for other community members to provide feedback. Unclear whether this is done on any set schedule.
 - Process for changing policy: Policy appears to be re-written following the procedure above. Unclear whether external groups (including student groups) can formally request or suggest changes to policy.
- [Graduate School of Arts and Sciences \(GSAS\) - Discrimination & Harassment Policy](#)
 - Institutional level: School (graduate-level)
 - Review system for policy: Unknown
 - Process for changing policy: Unknown
- Harvard College Policy on [Discrimination](#) and [Harassment](#)
 - Institutional Level: School (undergraduate-level)
 - Review system: Unknown
 - Process for changing policy: Unknown

The links to reporting resources at Harvard are here:

- [Anonymous Reporting Hotline](#)
 - Institutional level: University
 - Maintained by: [Navex Global](#) (third-party firm)
 - Reports handled by: Navex Global; not stated which Harvard office or person these reports are then forwarded to
 - Online? Yes
 - Anonymous? Yes, option available to submit anonymously
 - Advocate available? No
 - Publication of outcomes: No; reports are only disclosed “to those persons with a legitimate need to know”
 - Police involvement: If an incident is determined to be in violation of state or federal law, the Harvard University Police Department may be informed
- [Ombudsman](#)
 - Institutional level: University, all members of Harvard community
 - Maintained by: University Ombudsman Office
 - Reports handled by: University Ombudsman office, but they do not keep permanent records - all conversations are “off the record” and are not reported to the University.
 - Online? Yes
 - Anonymous? Anonymous option available
 - Advocate available? No
 - Publication of outcomes: No. All notes are shredded shortly after the case is resolved.
 - Police involvement: No, although they may be required to report in rare cases where a situation presents “imminent danger.”
 - Note: Ombudsman is mainly someone to talk to who can help you understand what your options are - they cannot take any actions and do not report to the university.
- [Title IX Anonymous Disclosure](#)

Title IX relates specifically to sex- and gender-based harassment and discrimination, but word-of-mouth says their staff may help with other forms of bias

 - Institutional level: University
 - Maintained by: “an independent, third-party vendor”
 - Reports handled by: Title IX Office and staff
 - Online? Yes
 - Anonymous? Yes
 - Advocate available? Unknown; union employees may have a union representative.
 - Publication of outcomes: A yearly report is published along with the Office for Dispute Resolution. Includes trainings completed, disclosures received, and some breakdown of disclosures by school/unit, role, gender, and outcome
 - Police involvement: Unknown
- [Title IX Formal Complaint](#)

Title IX relates specifically to sex- and gender-based harassment and discrimination, but word-of-mouth says their staff may help with other forms of bias

- Institutional level: University
- Maintained by: Title IX Office
- Reports handled by: Title IX Office and staff
- Online? Yes
- Anonymous? No
- Advocate available? Yes, “personal advisors” (including attorneys) may be involved at the discretion of the parties. Union employees may have a union representative.
- Publication of outcomes: A yearly report is published along with the Office for Dispute Resolution. Includes trainings completed, disclosures received, and some breakdown of disclosures by school/unit, role, gender, and outcome
- Police involvement: If there is an active police investigation into the complaint, Title IX coordinates with the police. Title IX Office offers to put complainants in touch with local police but does not require it.
- [Harvard Graduate Student Union \(HGSU\) - Workplace Issue Form](#)
 - Institutional level: University, student workers only (graduate students + TAs)
 - Maintained by: HGSU-UAW (graduate student union)
 - Reports handled by: HGSU Contract Enforcement and Education Committee (CEEC) members
 - Online? Yes
 - Anonymous? Only if submitting on behalf of someone else; a contact name and email/phone number must be provided
 - Advocate available? Yes; student workers have the contractual right to have a CEEC member present for *any* dispute resolution discussions or arbitration with the University
 - Publication of outcomes: Yes, but only to HGSU members; CEEC presents a summary of all active and resolved grievances at monthly membership meetings (*requires union membership to view*)
 - Police involvement: No
- [Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers \(HUCTW\) - Workplace Problem Solving](#)

This is the general contract grievance process, not specifically for harassment/discrimination.

 - Institutional level: University, employees covered by the HUCTW union contract
 - Maintained by: HUCTW
 - Reports handled by: Harvard HR, then to Regional Problem Solving Team, then University Problem Solving Team, and finally Third party mediation, if necessary
 - Online? Yes
 - Anonymous? No
 - Advocate available? Yes; union employees have the right to a union representative

- Publication of outcomes: None that we could find, but they may only be published internally to union members.
- Police involvement: No.
- [Human Resources](#)
 - Institutional level: University, applies to employees
 - Maintained by: Harvard HR
 - Reports handled by: Local HR office, Deans, & VPs
 - Online? Yes
 - Anonymous? [Anonymous reporting hotline](#) available
 - Advocate available? No; union employees may have a union representative.
 - Publication of outcomes: None that we could find online
 - Police involvement: No.
- Harvard University Police Department (HUPD) (for [criminal harassment](#) or [hate crimes](#))
 - Institutional level: University
 - Maintained by: HUPD
 - Reports handled by: HUPD
 - Online? A “Contact Us” form is available, but incident reports must be by phone
 - Anonymous? No
 - Advocate available? No
 - Publication of outcomes: Annual crime reports publish bulk statistics. We could not find an official policy about this, but from experience it seems that [details of crimes](#) and [identity of alleged perpetrators](#) are sometimes published in news outlets, etc. HUPD is likely subject to legal/constitutional privacy rights.
 - Police involvement: Yes
- [Graduate School of Arts and Sciences \(GSAS\) Racial Harassment & Discrimination](#)
 - Institutional level: School (graduate-level)
 - Maintained by: GSAS staff
 - Reports handled by: the Deans, GSAS Administration Board, and/or Student-Faculty judicial board. Unclear whether anyone else would have access to the report.
 - Online? Yes; no form, just a list of emails for Deans to contact
 - Anonymous? No
 - Advocate available? Unknown; union employees may have a union representative.
 - Publication of outcomes: No
 - Police involvement: Unknown
- [Harvard College Report Bias Form](#)
 - Institutional level: School (undergraduate-level)
 - Maintained by: Office of Diversity Education & Support
 - Reports handled by: Unknown; “the appropriate University officials”
 - Online? Yes
 - Anonymous? Yes
 - Advocate available? Unknown; union employees may have a union representative.

- Publication of outcomes: Unknown
- Police involvement: Unknown
- [Harvard EPS Graduate Studies Committee](#)
No specific mention of harassment/discrimination, but they can handle “any issue related to relationship or communication with advisor, other faculty, or other student.”
 - Institutional level: Department (graduate students)
 - Maintained by: Graduate Studies Committee (5 EPS faculty members)
 - Reports handled by: Graduate Studies Committee. Not officially private.
 - Online? Yes, you can email them.
 - Anonymous? No
 - Advocate available? No
 - Publication of outcomes: No
 - Police involvement: No

What are the outcomes or consequences for reported individuals?

- **Follow-up by supervisor, training (bias, etc.), disciplinary action, termination?**
None of the policies or reporting resources noted above mentioned specific outcomes or consequences for reported individuals. Title IX, which pertains specifically to sex- and gender- based harassment, does outline some policies and support measures, but this does not apply to racial discrimination. Most policies focus on finding a resolution between two parties, such as the Harvard HR and associated HUCTW policies.
- **Who decides the outcomes/consequences? What is the process?**
In most university-wide cases, such as the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Harvard HR, HUCTW, and HGSU, there is a specific committee or set of committees that determines the consequences. Department-level processes are more informal and do not have a specific committee for determining consequences, such as reporting within the EPS department to the Graduate Studies Committee. Most of the reporting resources detailed above do not appear to publicize outcomes or consequences.
- **Are reports tracked? How are they tracked? By who?**
Most University-wide reporting resources (e.g. GSAS, Harvard College, Harvard HR, HUCTW) direct students and workers to use residential- or department-level reporting systems, many of which are informal and do not publicize statistics or outcomes on reports of bias. In the case of our department (EPS), there are only informal methods of reporting, which do not appear to be tracked. Over the years, various groups within EPS have requested implementation of a system to track reports of bias, including at Graduate Studies Committee meetings last fall 2020. However, no formalized tracking system has been put in place (as of spring 2021).

The Harvard Graduate Student Union publishes grievances which were filed to their members only. The Harvard University Police department publishes crime reports,

including bias crimes. We could not find evidence of tracking or publication of racial discrimination reports in any of the other reporting resources available to people in our department.

- **Are repeated complaints escalated to a disciplinary board? What is the process?**
We did not find any evidence online that repeated complaints of race-based (not sex-based) harassment or discrimination are escalated to a disciplinary board for any of these reporting avenues.

What resources are available for individuals reporting?

- **Counselors or advocates, especially those of the same race, ethnicity, and gender:**

Counseling & Mental Health Services mentions support services for issues relating to race and identity in their [Social Justice Statement](#): “We will hold space for our clients to address and treat racial trauma, systematic oppression, and the effects of enduring, active threat to the health and livelihood of all marginalized identities, and particularly Black bodies today.”

The Harvard Graduate Student Union (HGSU-UAW) established the right to union representation in “any and all stages of discrimination or harassment complaints, regardless of the method of reporting” in the [2020-2021 contract](#). The Harvard University Clerical and Technical Workers has a similar clause governing their employees.

The [University Ombudsman Office](#) offers consultations on topics including inappropriate behavior and concerns around retaliation. However, they cannot offer advocates, and speaking with the ombudsman does not constitute an official report to the university.

- **Automatic or requested investigation of potential impact on grades or evaluations:**
Retaliation “is prohibited” in all of the policies listed above, but we could find no investigation process for looking into alleged retaliation.
- **Protection against retaliation or repercussions, accommodations for continuing work/courses, option for pass/fail or outside assessment:**
Under the HGSU-UAW [2020-2021 contract](#) (which covers graduate students and TAs), “retaliation against an individual for raising an allegation, for cooperating in an investigation of such a complaint, or for opposing discriminatory practices is prohibited,” but academic retaliation specifically is excluded from the union’s grievance procedure and cannot be grieved under that contract. Similarly, while the College’s Harassment policy states that retaliation is prohibited, we could not find mention of any specific protections or accommodations.

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?**

We are not aware of any specific mechanisms or processes related to policy change. We do not have a prescribed department-level follow-up process for town halls.

- **Working groups or committees with power to change or propose changes to policy.**

The HGSU and HUCTW unions both have the power to negotiate contracts and workplace policies with Harvard every few years when a contract is up.

For students Harvard-wide, the Harvard Undergraduate Council and Harvard Graduate Council advocate to Harvard administrators with student issues.

Within EPS, the Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging Committee advocates for diversity and related issues to the EPS community. They do this by meeting with department leadership and organizing and presenting at department-wide events.

While the councils above can interface with administrators and faculty, who can change policy, they do not have the power to change policies themselves.

Examples of some Harvard-wide committees formed to address the legacy of racism:

- [Change of official seal of Harvard Law School](#) (March 2016) after a [racist vandalism hate crime](#) (2015)
 - Committee was [created to](#) “lead research into, and a community discussion, of whether to continue using the HLS shield”
 - [Change of title of “House Master” to “Faculty Dean”](#) (Jan/Feb 2016)
 - [Plaque on “Wadsworth House”](#) (April 2016) honoring Titus, Venus, Juba, and Bilhah, four slaves who worked in the house.
 - [Committee to Articulate Principles on Renaming](#) (Oct 26, 2020)
 - Committee was [created to](#) “articulate general principles to help determine when the names of such historical figures should or should not continue to be associated with Harvard buildings, spaces, professorships, programs, or other named objects”
 - Change of “Board of Overseers” name (pending)
 - [Requested](#) by Coalition for a Diverse Harvard (July 2020)
 - [Change of “Mather House” name](#) (pending) (July 2020)
 - [University Discrimination and Bullying Policy Steering Committee and Working Groups](#) (ongoing) (Jan 2021)
- **Cultural surveys, regular or only after wide-spread reports or high-profile incidents.**

On the university level, we have identified two university-wide cultural surveys:

- ❑ [Harvard Pulse Survey](#) (2019): Triggered by the arrest of a student by the Cambridge Police Department in 2017, which led to the creation of a university committee which recommended, among other things, implementation of the “Pulse survey,” which is scheduled to run once every two years (2019 was the first). Online, anonymous, 10-question survey sent over email to students, staff, faculty, and academic personnel. Questions focused on sense of belonging and trust in university leadership, but do not address harassment and discrimination.
- ❑ [Harvard Faculty Climate Survey](#) (2019): Conducted every ~6 years since 2006. We could not find whether survey responses were anonymous.

On the department level (*based on emails sent to the EPS department*):

- ❑ EPS Climate Survey (2020): EPS has a diversity & inclusion survey which they developed starting in Spring 2019 and administered in 2020. This survey is part of a broader effort in the Division of Science which was accelerated by the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020. We believe this survey is intended to occur regularly, but it has not been announced.
- **Leadership proactively asks students and/or staff for input on how to improve?**
Based on emails sent to the EPS department: The EPS Graduate Studies Committee does occasionally ask for student input. The Faculty leadership has also solicited advice from the students. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic we had EPS town hall meetings, although these have tapered off recently. We did not find anything at the University level, but this may go through university-wide organizations like the Graduate Student Council and Undergraduate Council.