
URGE Session 2 Deliverable:
Complaints and Reporting Policy for Johns Hopkins University

This is what was found by the EPS URGE Pod at Johns Hopkins University on policies for handling complaints, reporting processes, resources, and possible outcomes. Some information was public; answers that were only found through follow up with contacts and questions that have not yet been resolved are underlined.

- **The link(s) to the reporting policy at our organization are here:**
 - The [Office of Institutional Equity](#) (OIE; oie@jhu.edu) is responsible for the assessment, investigation, and resolution of discrimination or harassment complaints received from faculty, staff, and students at JHU. The reporting policy is described [here](#).
 - Are reporting policies regularly reviewed? What is the process for changing policy?
 - Policies are reviewed on an annual basis, at minimum. OIE's front page does mention that its harassment policies were updated in June 2019, but other updates are not noted.
 - We are awaiting feedback from OIE on how policy changes are made. However, we note two possible routes for changes to be suggested. First, the Homewood Council on Inclusive Excellence is probably the organization that OIE will look to for ideas for new policies and procedures; [their agenda for this year is here](#) and includes contact information for committee members. Second, department chairs can pass suggestions on through the deans, though this may be less effective.
 - Are the rates of reporting made publicly available (e.g. # of reports each year)?
 - [2018 OIE Annual Report](#): 238 reports against protected classes in 2018
 - [2017 OIE Annual Report](#): 117 reports
 - OIE reports for 2019 and 2020 have not been found.
 - Crime logs, including cases of harassment, are made available for the [Homewood Campus for the last 60 days](#).
- **What mechanisms are available for reporting complaints, bias, microaggressions, harassment, and overt racism?**
 - Who are the designated individuals/positions for reporting incidents?
 - Reports can be filed with the Office of Institutional Equity, which is “responsible for receiving and handling complaints of discrimination, harassment and retaliation. OIE is a neutral resource available to all students, faculty and staff.”



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- Responsible Employees who receive reports or otherwise become aware of discrimination, harassment and retaliation are required to promptly report such information to the Office of Institutional Equity. Professors and certain students (e.g., Resident Assistants) are considered Responsible Employees. All faculty members are required to take regular courses on the requirements for being a Responsible Employee.
- OIE notes, "The complainant and the respondent may be assisted and advised by a supporter of their choice, including legal counsel or a union representative, throughout the investigative and informal resolution process. The supporter may not be any individual who is a potential witness in the investigation. The supporter may accompany the party to any meeting held pursuant to this Policy."
- Members of the JHU-EPS Urge Pod have suggested maintaining a list of department members who are willing to volunteer as supporters. A complainant would be able to choose a supporter from among this list, and the volunteer supporters could receive training on best practices in the supporting process.
- Can reports be made online?
 - Yes: <https://forms.jh.edu/view.php?id=164822>
 - Note: this is a general form and covers all types of harassment and discrimination. It is not specific to discrimination based on race.
- Can reports be made online anonymously?
 - Yes, but they note that anonymous complaints may be harder for the university to investigate. OIE encourages complainants who want to file anonymously to speak with the Vice Provost, Assistant Vice Provost, or OIE in order to understand the potential limitations of an investigation conducted based on an anonymous report. The reporting form asks for an email address but also specifies, "If you choose to provide an email address but wish to remain anonymous, please enter an anonymous or made-up email address. JHU-provided email addresses or email addresses containing your full name are not anonymous."
- Who do in-person and online reports go to? Who has access to see reports?
 - Reports go to the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE). The Vice Provost or Assistant Vice Provost determines whether an investigation will be initiated with input from limited fact-gathering activities by OIE, if necessary. OIE does not specify which Vice Provost or Assistant Vice Provost is responsible for this. The assessment is based on whether the alleged conduct violates JHU discrimination and harassment policies. It



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is also based on requests from the complainant regarding confidentiality and/or for the incident to not be investigated. OIE and the Provost's office have access to these reports. OIE releases an annual report each year summarizing reports from previous years (see previous section).

- It is not yet clear how respondents receive reports and what type of information is included in the report to the respondent.
- If the Vice Provost or Assistant Vice Provost decides to open an investigation, they will notify the complainant and respondent in writing of the alleged violation that will be investigated. If the complainant has not chosen to remain anonymous, their identity will be shared with the respondent. They will also update both parties as the investigation progresses and if the scope of the investigation changes. The complainant and respondent can decline to participate in the investigation. However, the University may continue the process without the participation of the complainant or the respondent.
- If the investigation discovers other violations of University Policy, other authorities (e.g., Office of Student Conduct, Human Resources) may get involved.
- Are police included in the process? When and how? Are individuals accompanied by an advocate or someone from the organization?
 - Police involvement is somewhat unclear and appears to be navigated on a case-by-case basis. OIE notes, "Depending on the facts and circumstances, discrimination, harassment and/or retaliation may involve criminal activity, such as a hate crime. The University encourages students, faculty, staff and other members of its community to report any potential criminal conduct to law enforcement authorities, and the University may do so in a health or safety emergency."
 - Johns Hopkins University does not currently have a private police force, but plans to establish one were in place before 2020. If JHU does establish a private police force in the future, its potential level of involvement in the reporting process remains to be seen.
- **What are the outcomes or consequences for reported individuals?**
 - Outcomes may include follow-up by a supervisor, training (bias, etc.), disciplinary action, and termination.
 - "If OIE finds that harassment and/or discrimination occurred, OIE makes recommendations to the relevant management or leadership for the parties, which would include Student Conduct for students. Possible



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recommendations are varied and dependent upon the specific circumstances." [\[Source\]](#)

- "Interim Measures: Upon receipt of a report, the Vice Provost or Assistant Vice Provost or a designee will provide written notice to the complainant of the interim measures that may be available and feasible." OIE's document [Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures](#) contains a list of potential interim measures.
- Who decides the outcomes/consequences? What is the process?
 - Quotes below are from Section VII of OIE's document, [Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures](#):
 - "Resolution of discrimination, harassment and/or retaliation complaints in which the respondent is a staff member will be governed by the procedures in the University's personnel policies, except as provided herein."
 - "Resolution, sanctions and appeals of discrimination, harassment and/or retaliation investigations in which the respondent is a member of the faculty, post-doctoral fellow, or resident will be processed by the office of the dean of the appropriate division according to the disciplinary procedures established by that division, except as provided herein."
 - "Other divisional or university policies may afford further process following the completion of these resolution procedures. ... If the respondent in a complaint of discrimination, harassment and/or retaliation is a student, OIE will notify Student Affairs and commence an investigation pursuant to this Policy and these Procedures. OIE will evaluate the facts according to the standards articulated in this Policy and prepare a report, which OIE will issue to Student Affairs. Any resulting disciplinary action will be determined by Student Affairs. "
- Are reports tracked? How are they tracked? By who?
 - These questions have been forwarded to OIE. Some Pod members were uncertain of the meaning of the term "tracked."
- Are repeated complaints escalated to a disciplinary board? What is the process?
 - These questions have been forwarded to OIE.
- **What resources are available for individuals reporting?**
 - Counselors or advocates, especially those of the same race, ethnicity, and gender:



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- For reporting purposes, OIE includes a full list of confidential resources [here](#). However, the race, ethnicity, and gender of counselors (and the ability to select a counselor on such a basis) is not made clear.
- For mental health purposes, Johns Hopkins offers access to formal counseling at the Homewood Counseling Center. It also offers the mySupport program, Mental Telehealth, and the Johns Hopkins Student Assistance Program (JHSAP) for life management.
 - Students have access to the [Homewood Counseling Center](#).
 - [MySupport](#) is described as follows: “Through mySupport, JHU employees and their household family members have free 24/7 access to confidential counseling and referral services for help with stress at work or at home, emotional distress, a difficult life transition, or other challenges. When you call mySupport, a clinician will listen, provide support, and help you identify resources and next steps.”
 - Students also have free access to [Mental Telehealth](#), which is offered in collaboration with an independent company called [Timely MD](#). In terms of finding a counselor that matches an individuals’ demographic profile, the website says they **may** be able to help find a provider that matches an individuals’ demographic profile.
- Automatic or requested investigation of potential impact on grades or evaluations:
 - It is possible to reschedule exams or classes, but there is no specific wording about investigations into grade impacts.
- Protection against retaliation or repercussions, accommodations for continuing work/courses, option for pass/fail or outside assessment:
 - OIE lists the following options [on its FAQ page](#): Rescheduling of exams and assignments, changing class schedules, including the ability to transfer course sections or withdraw from a course, changing work schedule or job assignment, changing campus housing, imposing an on-campus “no contact order,” or other administrative remedies designed to curtail contact and communication between individuals.
 - There is no wording on protection against retaliation.
- What are the trainings that different members of the university receive (e.g., faculty, grad students, undergrads, postdocs, staff)?
 - Trainings are listed on the [OIE Training page](#) and on the JHU Human Resources Department’s [page on Diversity Resources](#).



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- OIE offers a live, 1-2 hour long training session on preventing discrimination, harassment and sexual misconduct. Departments or divisions can schedule this training by submitting a form to OIE. There are also 5 online training modules:
 - 1) Diversity: Skills for collaboration in the workplace
 - 2) Managing bias in the workplace
 - 3) Title IX and harassment prevention training
 - 4) California-based Title IX training
 - 5) Title IX bridges: building a supportive community.
 - The [JHU Safe Zone](#) training is also open for all members of JHU, although this is LGBTQ-oriented rather than race-oriented.
 - There is an initiative through JHU's [SNF Agora Institute](#) that involves commissioned research, student seminars, workshops, and public lectures aimed at understanding and reconciling the university's own history of discrimination, both overt and subtle, from its founding to the present day.
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- **What resources are available to groups raising issues or proposing changes?**
 - Do petitions with a certain number signatures trigger a town hall meeting with organizational leadership, or a policy change? What is the follow-up process for town halls and meetings?
 - At the Department level, there is no set minimum number of signatures required to trigger a town hall meeting. It appears that OIE has not established clear guidelines for this process, but we have asked and a response may be forthcoming.
 - Do working groups or committees have power to change or propose changes to policy?
 - The JHU [Diversity Leadership Council](#) (DLC) publishes annual reports on staff/community demographic composition and its progress towards the diversity initiatives in the 2016 [JHU Roadmap on Diversity and Inclusion \(2019 Staff Composition Report; Roadmap Progress Reports; DLC Annual Reports\)](#). The DLC consists of roughly 50 members from across all divisions of Johns Hopkins University. However, the degree of formal or institutionalized power granted to the DLC to make changes is not immediately clear.
 - Are there cultural surveys, either regularly or only after wide-spread reports or high-profile incidents?



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- The JHU Diversity Leadership Council sent out a survey in November 2020 soliciting responses in regard to community concerns and recommendations. This survey was associated with an [updated Roadmap to Diversity and Inclusion](#). It appears that the DLC sends out annual surveys to collect data for annual reports on demographics and initiatives, but it is unclear whether these surveys solicit information on culture and environment or whether they simply collect demographic data.
- JHU Human Resources and Gallup have conducted an [Employee Engagement Survey](#) every three years since 2012. The most recent (2018) survey introduced questions on diversity, equity, and inclusion (results summarized in the [2019 Report on Staff Composition](#)).
- JHU worked with the FutureWork Institute to survey URM former faculty and conduct a focus group of URM junior faculty, focusing on their experiences with the university's culture and climate. JHU also used the COACHE faculty survey in 2012 and 2018 to gather information on climate. Both of these efforts are mentioned in the [2020 Report on Faculty Composition](#), but it is unclear how regularly the university plans to use these tools.
- Does leadership proactively ask students and/or staff for input on how to improve?
 - Certain initiatives are sent for comment to the community; for example, the recent change in the policy on Staff-Student Relationships was circulated to all JHU graduate students through the Graduate Representative Organization, and to the Chairs through the Council of Chairs. There are also periodic reviews of each department by the Homewood Academic Council and external reviews commissioned by the Dean, during which issues can be entered into the formal record. However, it is unclear whether the process of soliciting feedback and input is standardized at the university level.