

## Complaints and Reporting Policy for LSU Geology and Geophysics

As part of our commitment to achieving the objectives of URGE, it is important to identify the process and procedures for reporting and dealing with complaints involving some component of racism, including but not limited to microaggressions, harassment, and overt racism. It is equally important to identify how such incidents are documented and addressed at different levels within our organization, as well as what resources are made available to targeted individuals.

### **Summary of LSU policies relevant to racial discrimination and harassment:**

LSU is committed to providing equal opportunities and an environment free from harassment and discrimination based on race, creed, color, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, religion, sex, national origin, age, mental or physical disability, or veteran's status ([Policy Statement 1: Equal Opportunity](#)). PS1 describes LSU's support for affirmative action, compliance with relevant Federal and State law, and the processes (both formal and informal) for reporting and addressing an incident of harassment or discrimination.

All LSU students are expected to adhere to the [LSU Code of Student Conduct](#), including "practicing justice, equality, and compassion in human relations" and "respecting the dignity of all persons".

LSU has additional specific policies regarding sexual harassment ([Policy Statement 73: Sexual Harassment](#); [Policy Statement 95: Sexual Harassment Of Students](#)) and disability ([Policy Statement 26: Policy On Disability Service, Duties, and Compliance](#)). LSU does not have additional specific policies regarding racial discrimination or harassment. LSU has a [Title IX Coordinator](#). It does not have a specified Title VI (non-discrimination) or Title VII (equal opportunity employment) coordinator. Instead, issues affecting students and employees are handled by the [Division of Student Affairs](#) and the [Office of Human Resource Management](#), respectively.

Revising and adopting new LSU policies is a joint process between the Office of Academic Affairs, Faculty Senate, and a committee of stakeholders. Policy changes must be reviewed and approved by the College Deans, University Vice Provosts, and Faculty Senate. Once proposed policy changes are agreed upon, they must be approved by the Office of Academic Affairs, Provost, and LSU Board of Supervisors. The [list of all LSU Policies & Procedures](#) notes when each policy was adopted along with the last time it was updated.

### **If I experience racial discrimination or harassment, what can I do? Who can I talk to?**

- As stated in PS1, any member of the University community who believes he or she has been subjected to discrimination and/or harassment can report the conduct to **any University official or supervisor**. This means any faculty member, any staff member, any graduate teaching assistant, or any other person with any position of authority at

LSU. That person has an obligation to help you determine the appropriate response, or to help you find a person better situated to help you determine the appropriate response.

- The appropriate response to an incident of discrimination and/or harassment will vary with each situation, but might include a simple verbal or written communication that the behaviour is unwelcome and should cease, or filing a formal complaint, or anything in between.
- If you are unsure who you should contact, LSU Cares operates an [Online Reporting System](#) for any issues students may face, including a specific site to [Report a Bias or Discrimination Incident](#). Reports can be made anonymously. LSU Cares staff monitor all reports and will help connect you to the appropriate resources and/or advocate.
- **If you have experienced a hate crime, report it directly to the LSU Police Department at 225-578-3231 or dial 911 for an immediate emergency.**

### **How does this apply to the Department of Geology and Geophysics?**

G&G is subject to all the same policies and procedures as the University as a whole, but there are specific cases and instances that may be unique to the G&G setting. These will also be different depending on whether the persons involved are general education students, undergraduate majors or minors, graduate students, postdocs or other academic staff, administrative staff, faculty, or visitors. For graduate students, the G&G specific implementation of LSU policies is summarized in the Graduate Student Handbook (not currently online, but available upon request). For other G&G communities, the implementation is less formalized.

Minimally, the LSU G&G URGE pod suggests that all G&G community members be reminded of their rights and responsibilities. This may include making available the above summary of existing LSU policy and procedures by including in the Graduate Student Handbook, by distributing through the Undergraduate and Graduate Advisors, through student organizations such as Geoclub and AAPG, by posting on the G&G website, and by physically printing and posting throughout the department. Overall, G&G faculty want to encourage a department culture in which students, staff, and faculty can easily speak up about even minor problems they encounter so we can work together to dismantle and ideally prevent major problems.

### **List of University Policies that might be in some way relevant...**

- [List of all LSU Policies & Procedures](#)
- [Policy Statement 1: Equal Opportunity](#)
- [Policy Statement 21: Graduate Assistantships](#)
- [Policy Statement 26: Policy On Disability Service, Duties, and Compliance](#)
  - [Summary of Disability Laws for Faculty](#)
- [Policy Statement 30: Student Privacy Rights](#)
- [Policy Statement 48: General Procedures for Student Grievances, Complaints, and Appeals](#)

- [Policy Statement 80: Grievance Procedures for Professional, Other Academic, and Classified Employees](#)
- [Policy Statement 73: Sexual Harassment](#)
- [Policy Statement 95: Sexual Harassment Of Students](#)
- [LSU Code of Student Conduct \(Student Advocacy & Accountability\)](#)
- [LSU Bias or Discrimination Incident Report \(can be made anonymously\)](#)
- [LSU Cares Online Reporting \(can be made anonymously\)](#)
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**Our assessment of the existing policies and identifying holes:**

- LSU cares is anonymous online reporting for students (undergraduate and graduate). What about staff, or faculty?
- LSU makes a special effort to enforce Title IX of the Civil Rights Act Education Amendments (sex discrimination) and the subsequent Americans with Disabilities Act, but does not seem to have a parallel structure in place “on the look out” for racial discrimination (expecting and assuming such discrimination/harassment is rare enough to not warrant extra resources). The existing policies and enforcement can be described as “everything that is required of us by law”, but definitely does not rise to the level of “anti-racist”.
- Is there anything specifically G&G relevant we want to put into place? For complaints, probably not, but our other policy considerations noted aspects
- The formal university offices are required to document and report the numbers of incidents formally reported to them. Do we have a way to track Department level issues and complaints? E.g., count how many? How do we know if we’re “doing better”? (this is probably not possible, but is a thought to keep in mind).
- We have a way of tracking “repeat cheaters” across courses and subjecting them to stiffer penalties. Is there a similar process for “repeat discriminators”?
- The G&G grad handbook isn’t online. This seems like an oversight. In general we should be intentional about this???
- [Develop a handbook for G&G undergraduate students that includes curriculum issues \(of course\) and also pathways to report grievances and contacts, etc](#)

**Ideation of a more active department-level grievance pathway? (this might become more clear during later sessions):**

- Consider a departmental grievance committee with student, staff, and faculty representation to minimize the potentially intimidating prospects of the formal grievance policy ([https://www.lsu.edu/hrm/employees/employee\\_resources/grievances.php](https://www.lsu.edu/hrm/employees/employee_resources/grievances.php)) -> a modification of this could be not a standing committee, but a clear procedure for empaneling a committee should the need arise, i.e., if a complaint(s) is made.
- Consider development of an anonymous reporting mechanism for grievances within the department, with a clearly established policy for monitoring (i.e., not a “suggestions box” that is never opened). Also would need to think about whether there is a way to make sure this is not weaponized, i.e., avoid spurious complaints.

- If implemented (and whether this reporting mechanism is anonymous or not), there should also be a clear policy for how specific grievances are dealt with, e.g., some progression of outcomes for a person whom complaints are made against. This would need to be within (or in compliance with) more formal LSU disciplinary guidelines covered by policies in the opener.
- Whatever reporting mechanism we put in place, there should also be consideration of how its existence is communicated to students. I.e., it's simple enough for this to be covered in orientation for grad students, but do we have anything like an "orientation" for undergraduate majors? Would it just be contingent on the undergraduate advisor to make new students aware of this mechanism. Do we just make a page on our website with a link to the reporting mechanism, whatever that maybe, and hope people find it?

#### **Other ideas not related to complaints about racial discrimination or harassment**

- Establishing departmental partnership with LSU's Black Male Leadership initiative (<https://www.lsu.edu/diversity/bmli/coordinator.php>) and broadly with programs for underserved or persecuted communities (e.g., safe spaces throughout the department with training via <https://www.lsu.edu/lgbtqproject/> )
- Empower future faculty hired by diversifying search committees (<https://lsu.edu/diversity/resources/faculty/DiversityTrainingPacket.pdf>) to implement their ideas (e.g., counting such effort as the sole service component, releasing them of other departmental service responsibilities; introducing a diversity service component to the departmental promotion and tenure review)
- Encourage departmental participation in LSU's diversity grants (<https://lsu.edu/diversity/resources/faculty/diversitygrants.php>) (e.g., by counting participation as major service contribution by faculty; releasing students from course commitments to participate in funded workshops, etc.)
- Intermittent virtual meetings between the department and LSU's racial diversity experts identified [online](#)
- Department-hosted inclusivity learning workshops for faculty, students and staff via LSU's Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion [online](#)
- we could consider a campus and Baton Rouge police - community outreach event for our department, used successfully at the University of Illinois to empower underserved communities in interactions with the local police.