

URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



URGE Complaints and Reporting Policy for **Sea Education Association, Inc.**

This is what was found by SEA URGE Pod at Sea Education Association on policies for handling complaints, the reporting process, resources, and possible outcomes. Some information was public.

- **The link(s) to the reporting policy at our organization are here:**
 - SEA's reporting policy is included in the SEA Code of Conduct and is available on the SEA [website](#). It is accessible to the general public, but it is not actively promoted as a resource for SEA employees or contractors.
 - The SEA Personnel Manual, which includes the SEA Code of Conduct, is only available online to a subset of SEA employees, the crew of our two ships, and is accessible by login and password ([SEA Crew Marine Portal](#)). Otherwise, it is available in digital or electronic format from HR and is distributed regularly.
 - All personnel policies, including reporting policies (for all types of prohibited actions), are reviewed when changes are made to state or federal regulations, or after an incident. SEA's business office conducts periodic reviews of policies, but not necessarily annually.
 - For policy changes, a lead is assigned from the business office or senior management group (SMG) who then proposes and reviews changes with the rest of the SMG, and sometimes with entire organization.
 - Reporting rates are not made publicly available.
- **What mechanisms are available for reporting complaints, bias, microaggressions, harassment, and overt racism?**
 - As laid out in the documents listed above, students report to the Associate Dean or the Dean, and the staff (office and ship crew) report to their immediate supervisor, or those above them if necessary (up the chain of leadership), with different individuals designated based on the situation and who is involved.
 - These documents define unacceptable harassment behaviors, but do not list racist actions specifically.
 - Neither the SEA Code of Conduct nor the SEA Personnel Manual provides specifics on how to make a report, just who to report to.
 - Reports cannot be made online or anonymously, though anonymity may be used once an investigation begins (after making initial report), but it is not guaranteed.
 - Only the Principal Investigator of an incident (could be SMG member) can see reports. The report is eventually sealed as an HR file. Within the organization, information is shared only on a need-to-know basis (i.e. is very limited).
 - Police involvement may be considered but it is not required by the Personnel Policy.

- **What are the outcomes or consequences for reported individuals?**
 - Follow-up can involve counseling, dismissal (any level, including students), termination of employment, and may include being banned from specific buildings/areas or from contact with a specific person(s).
 - The Principal Investigator (typically SMG member) decides outcomes and consequences. They may refer the case to a committee or external investigator.
 - Reports are currently tracked within the organization via personnel files but not for trends over time (due to low number of incidences).
 - Repeated complaints are escalated to someone's supervisor and further up the chain of leadership, but there is no disciplinary board.

- **What resources are available for individuals reporting?**
 - SEA has no official counselors for individuals reporting. Staff/Faculty can be advocates, but SEA cannot guarantee an advocate of the same race or gender.
 - SEA has multiple mechanisms for ensuring grades were not influenced by racism/discrimination. For example, faculty undergo training on bias, and all grades are reviewed by the Associate Dean and Dean before final submission.
 - SEA protects against retaliation or repercussions from reporting on a case-by-case basis. There is no one path laid out in the policies.

- **What resources are available to groups raising issues or proposing changes?**
 - Many informal processes (e.g., student, alumni and crew letters encouraging SEA to address concerns) exist for groups to raise issues or propose changes, but not many formal processes outside of evaluations by students and crew at the end of every program (generally at least 8 each year).
 - Group concerns regarding a need for policy updates or concerns can be addressed directly to a supervisor, SMG member or HR staff.
 - The Senior Management Group have the power to change or propose changes to policy. Trustees may also request the review of and/or changes to SEA personnel policies.
 - An Employee Work Satisfaction and Effectiveness Survey was completed in 2017. This survey provided opportunities for staff to express concerns or issues anonymously. SEA intends to conduct such a survey every 3 to 4 years.
 - Currently, SEA proactively seeks feedback through Crew Evaluations of Captain/Chief Scientist, Captain/Chief Scientist Evaluations of Crew, and Student Evaluations of Crew, Faculty, and Programs, but there is limited formal evaluation of or solicited feedback from non-seagoing employees (includes office staff and some faculty).