

URGE Complaints and Reporting Policy for University of Alabama, and Department of Geological Sciences

This is what was found by the University of Alabama Department of Geological Sciences URGE pod on policies for handling complaints, the reporting process, resources, and possible outcomes. Most of this information is for the University as a whole. Very little definitive protocol is in place specific to the Department of Geological Sciences. This information was publicly available online and is summarized here.

The link(s) to the reporting policy at our University are here:

- [UAct Incident Reporting Policies](#)
- [Harassment Policy](#)
- University of Alabama [Reporting Channels and Resources](#) Related to Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Assault, or Sexual Violence
- University of Alabama, Division of Student Life [Complaint and Appeals Form](#). This non-anonymous form asks first that efforts are made to have “incidents resolved directly with the staff or department involved”, then requires listing the names of all involved parties, and asks: “Please provide a detailed description of the incident/complaint using specific, concise, and objective language. Please include any prior action taken to date to resolve the complaint. What is the outcome you are requesting?”, and the opportunity to attach supporting documentation.
- [Title IX Compliance](#)
- [Harassment](#) Information and FAQ- directs people to Hazing and Harassment Hotline, Director of Equal Opportunity Programs, Office of the Dean of Students, Office of Student Conduct, and a list of Designated Harassment Resource Persons.
- Hate and Bias Hotline: 205-348-2427, sourced to a third party hotline manager
 - Or report hate or bias incidents [online](#)
 - From the hate/bias reporting website: “After processing the report, Navex will provide the information to designated University officials for appropriate action. Reports submitted to Navex will be handled promptly and discreetly.”
- Are reporting policies regularly reviewed?
 - *Information unavailable.*
- What is the process for changing policy?
 - *Information unavailable*
- Are the rates of reporting made publicly available (e.g. # of reports each year)?
 - No

No official procedures, links, or reporting mechanisms are present on the DGS website. After discussion with a departmental DEI committee, the process to raise issues and be heard is informal.

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

- Who are the designated individuals/positions for reporting incidents?

- Steven Hood, Division of Student Life;
- Dr. G. Christine Taylor, Division of Student Life Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI);
- Jessica Humber, Title IX Coordinator;
- Miranda Whitney, Title IX Investigator;
- Lasharia Turner, Title IX Investigator;
- Lisa Dorr, Arts & Sciences Harassment Resource Official
- Reports can be made online, anonymously if chosen, through the [UAct](#) website.
- Who do in-person and online reports go to? Who has access to see reports?
 - Each College has a designated “Harassment Resource Official”.
 - The complete list can be found here: <https://eop.ua.edu/persons.html>
- Are police included in the process? When and how? Are individuals accompanied by an advocate or someone from the organization?
 - Police are utilized for emergency or urgent reporting, and reporters are directed to call UAPD if the university is closed or if after hours. Additional information was not readily available.

What are the outcomes or consequences for reported individuals?

- From the [UA System Hotline website](#): “Appropriate consequences, up to and including termination, expulsion, or other sanctions, should flow from violations of Board expectations and standards.” There are no additional possible outcomes, examples of resolved cases, etc. readily available online.
- Who decides the outcomes/consequences? What is the process? Are reports tracked? How are they tracked? By who? Are repeated complaints escalated to a disciplinary board? What is the process?
 - *This information was not available*

What resources are available for individuals reporting?

- [Support for victims under UAct](#) links people to the Counseling Center (for a fee), University Medical Center Psychiatry and Behavioral Health Clinic, The Women and Gender Resource Center, UA Employee Assistance Program (free), Capstone Family Therapy Clinic, and an off campus domestic violence and sexual assault agency.
- [Retaliation Protection](#) in the Harassment Policy describes a zero tolerance protocol for retaliation against reporters. “An employee/student is protected against retaliation for their opposition to harassment as long as the employee/student has a reasonable and “good faith” belief that the complained of conduct is illegal...Any employee who retaliates against an employee or a student in violation of the law and/or the University’s Harassment policy is subject to disciplinary action.”
 - Confidentiality: “The University will do everything consistent with enforcement of this policy and with the law to protect the privacy of the individuals involved and to ensure that the complainant and the accused are treated fairly. Information about individual complaints and their disposition is considered confidential and will be shared only on a “need to know” basis.”
- Counseling Center offers a number of [support groups](#), at least one of which is aimed

towards Black and African American Identified Students

- The office of DEI has links to [Multicultural Resources](#)
- Information about [Intervention Training](#) is provided via 3 videos each <3 minutes long
- Information about logistical resources available to reporting students (e.g. Automatic or requested investigation of potential impact on grades or evaluations, accommodations for continuing work/courses, option for pass/fail or outside assessment) was not available

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

- The University DEI office is providing [opportunities to speak with leadership](#) regarding concerns about moving forward, providing communication and outreach about progress
 - The DEI office provides many resources <https://diversity.ua.edu/resources/>, including requests for training, example syllabi DEI statements, diverse courses, etc.
- [Intercultural Diversity Center](#): “The mission of the Intercultural Diversity Center is to advance The University of Alabama’s commitment to cultivating and respecting diversity by serving as a resource and liaison for students, staff and faculty on issues of equity through education, outreach and advocacy.”
- [Advisory Committee for DEI](#): A recently formed University committee that meets biweekly. Members of the community are invited to raise questions, concerns or propose ideas at these meetings
- There has been no indication that there is significant buy-in, from the University or department, to survey feelings about the cultural climate on campus. It has been difficult to find evidence that leadership proactively asks students and/or staff for input on how to improve.
- In the DGS, there is a Diversity Alliance committee. It is not official or formal. We recommend writing a permanent committee into department bylaws, with rotating committee members composed of Faculty, Graduate and Undergraduate Students, and Staff.
 - It should be the role of this committee to have a time-bound action plan and represent these efforts to the entire department. Our URGE pod is in the process of compiling some recommendations for the Diversity Alliance, including creating a formal reporting channel within the department and surveying the cultural climate for students and faculty.