



## Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

Complaints and Reporting Policy for USM-Marine Science

This is what was found by the Marine Science Pod at The University of Southern Mississippi on policies for handling complaints, the reporting process, resources, and possible outcomes.

- Racial harassment is addressed in our Employee Handbook ([Link](#)) as a ‘Major Rule’ violation that could result in an employee’s termination after a first written warning and a final written warning with possible suspension.
- Additionally, the Student Code of Ethics ([Link](#)) states that student misconduct based on bias due to race will result in a University Sanction, which could include disciplinary action ranging from community service, probation or expulsion.
- There is a formal institutional policy on the Procedure for the Resolution of Discrimination Complaints ([Link](#)). Complaints must be received in writing in the Office of Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity. Based on the complaint, the Office of AA/EEO will determine if further investigation is required. If it is determined that there was a violation of civil rights related to University policy, the complainant will be notified and given the option to settle the dispute with mediation. If mediation is not appropriate or fails, a formal investigation will be conducted and any necessary disciplinary or corrective action to stop the discriminatory behavior will be recommended to the appropriate vice president. The vice president will issue the appropriate disciplinary action in writing, leaving time for the party in question to appeal. If an appeal is determined warranted by the AA/EEO office, the President will call a Panel to review the case. In this case, the President will have final judgement.
- The simplest method of reporting an instance of racism would be to use the University’s “Ethics Line”. The [link](#) to this at the bottom of most USM webpages. A report can be made through this portal on-line, or by phone. The line is monitored 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and requires a response from the University administration.
- We note the University has another reporting system which could be an option depending on the situation. This route formally relates to concerns regarding the well-being and academic progress of students. This is called CARES (Campus Action Referral and Evaluation System) reporting and the link can be found at the bottom of most USM webpages under the name ‘[Report a Student Concern](#)’. The CARES reporting site also states for immediate concerns regarding possible student self-harm or harm to others, the University Police Department should be contacted (phone number listed on site).

Finally, our University additionally has a website for resources on Diversity and Inclusion ([Link](#)).