

# Title IX Training

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August 11, 2020

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*The statute, the final rule, what it all means*

**WHERE ARE WE TODAY?**

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## The Statute

No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex,

- be excluded from participation in,
- be denied the benefits of, or
- be subjected to discrimination

under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

20 U.S.C. § 1681

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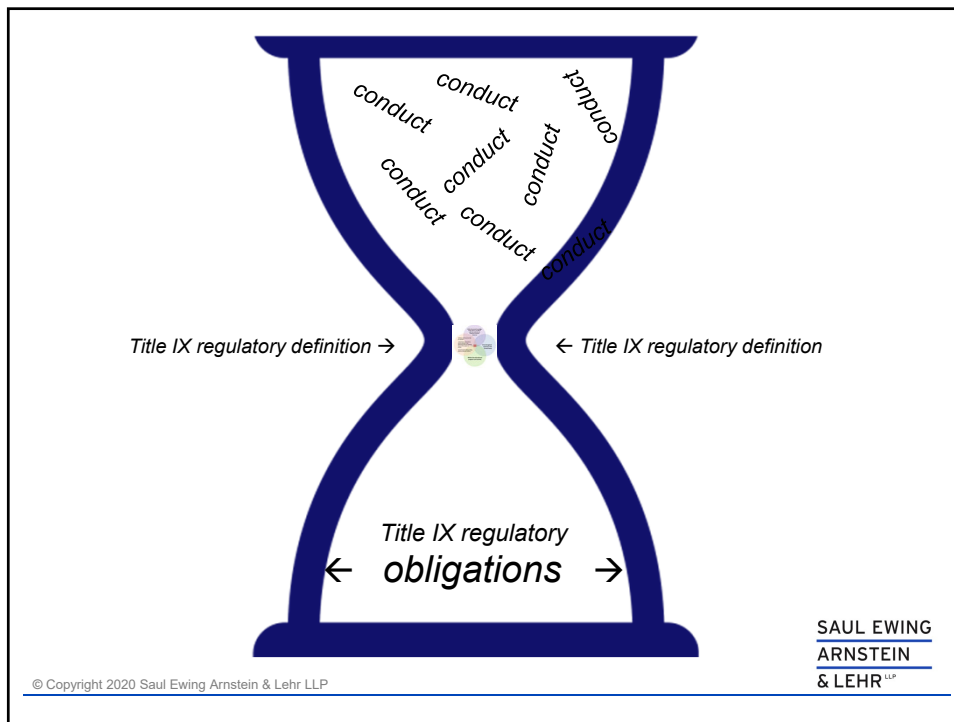
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## The Final Regulations

- Final rule released by ED informally on its website on May 6, 2020
  - (2000+ double-spaced pages)
- Published in the Federal Register on May 19, 2020 (34 CFR Part 106)
  - (550+ tight single-spaced pages)
- Effective date: **August 14, 2020**

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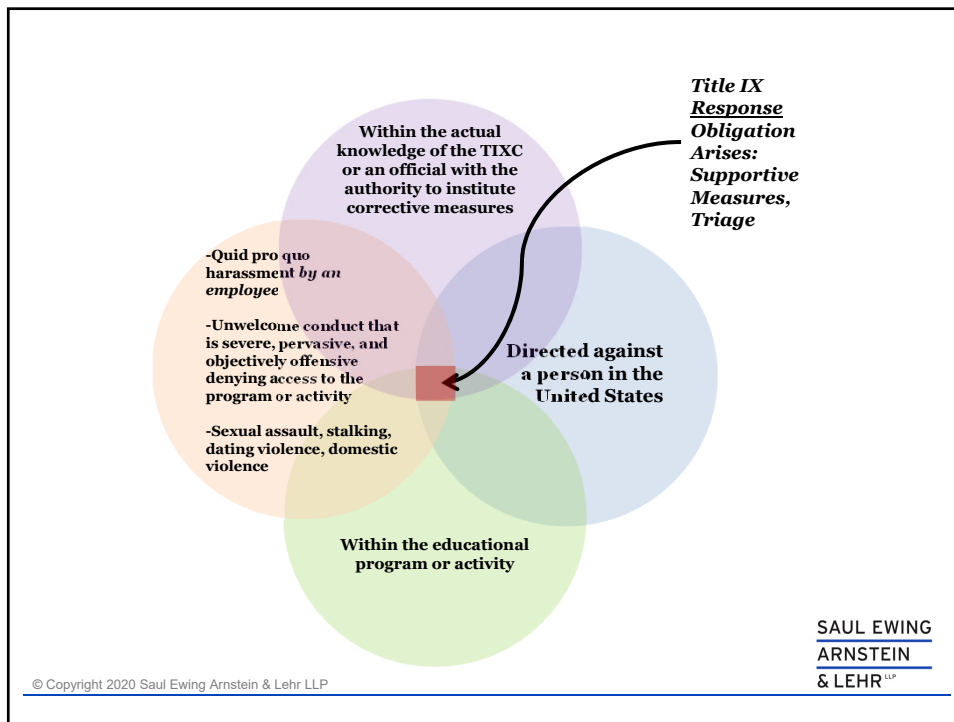


## The Foundation

If you have actual knowledge of sexual harassment that occurred in your education program or activity against a person in the United States, then you must respond promptly in a manner that is not deliberately indifferent.

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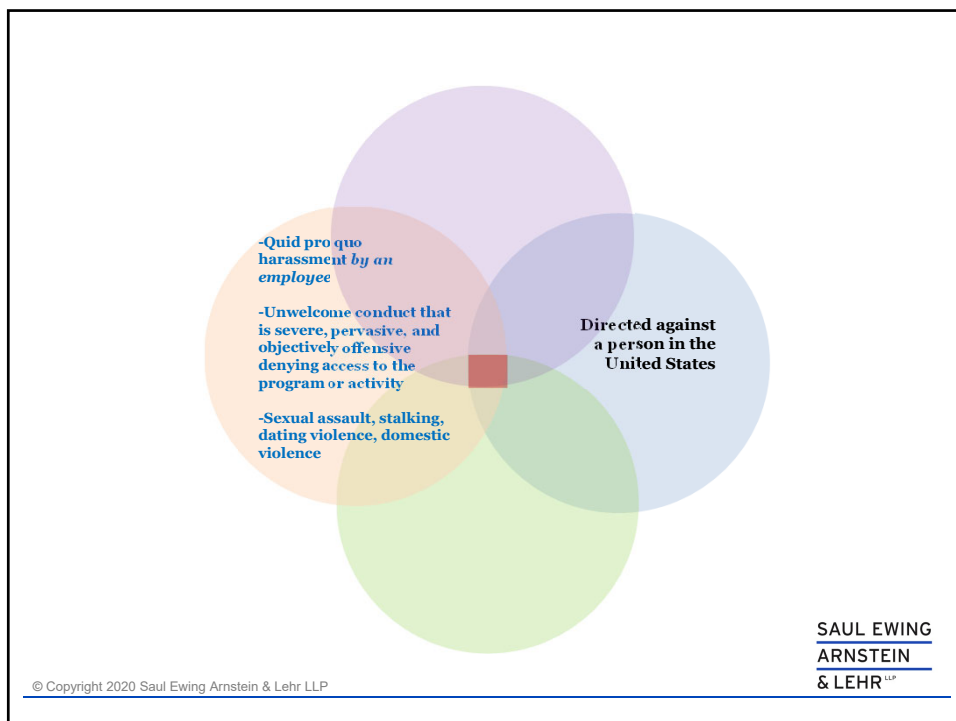
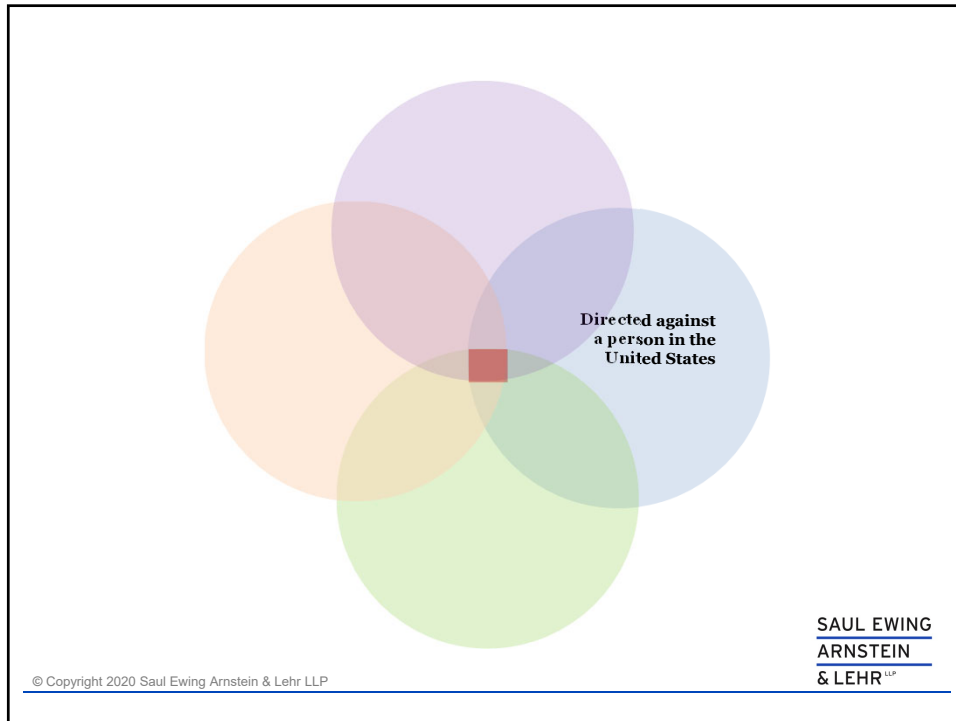


*Scope and Jurisdiction*

# TITLE IX COVERED CONDUCT

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## Scope: Sexual Harassment

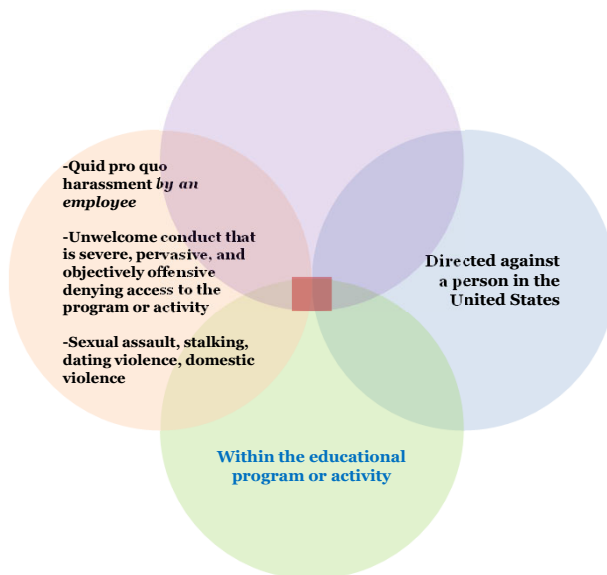
**Sexual Harassment** means: conduct *on the basis of sex* that satisfies one or more of the following –

- (i) an **employee** of the recipient conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the recipient on an individual’s participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;
- (ii) unwelcome conduct determined by a **reasonable** person to be so **severe, pervasive, \*and\* objectively offensive that it effectively denies** a person equal access to the recipient’s **education program or activity**; or
- (iii) “**sexual assault**” as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)(A)(v), “**dating violence**” as defined in 34 U.S.C. 1229(a)(10), “**domestic violence**” as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(8), or “**stalking**” as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(30)

§ 106.30

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## Jurisdiction

*“Education program or activity” is:*

All operations of the institution, including . . .

- “[L]ocations, events, or circumstances over which the recipient exercised substantial control over both the respondent and the context in which the sexual harassment occurs, and also includes any building owned or controlled by a student organization that is officially recognized by a postsecondary institution.”
- ***Applies to employees***, including employee on employee conduct

§ 106.44(a)

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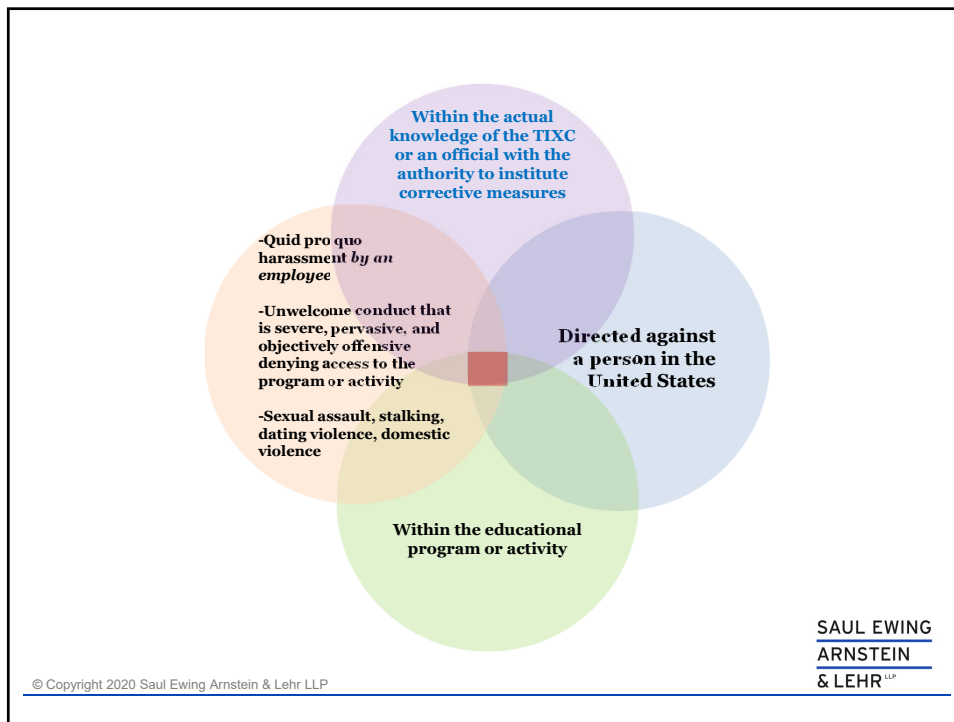
*Actual Knowledge & Deliberate Indifference*

## RESPONSE OBLIGATIONS

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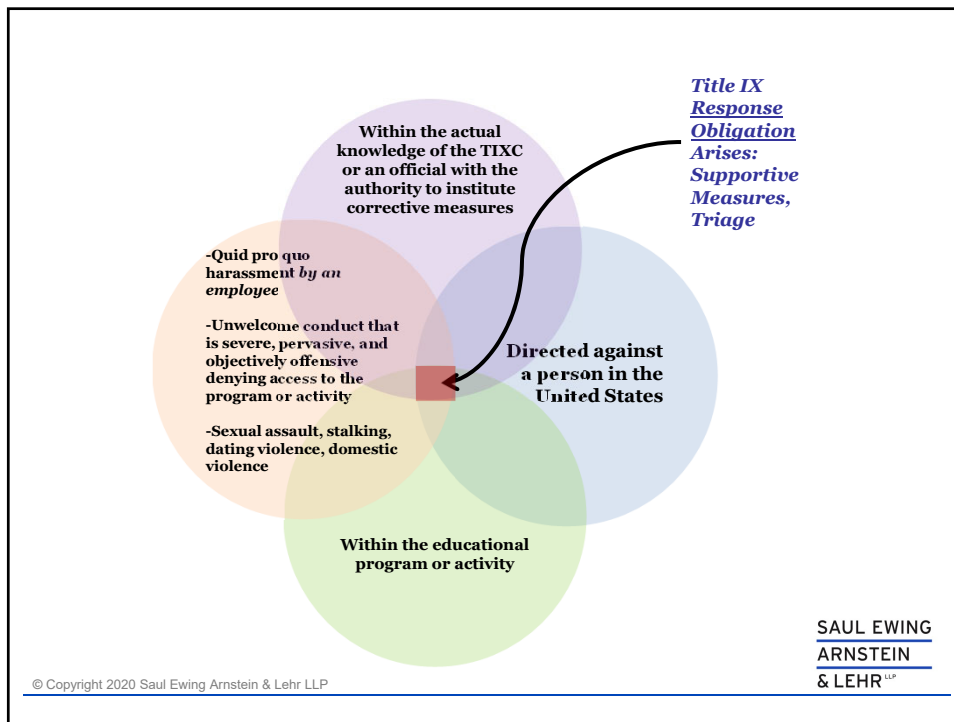
## Actual Knowledge

“*Actual Knowledge* means notice of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment to a recipient’s *Title IX Coordinator or any official of the recipient who has the authority to institute corrective measures* on behalf of the recipient...”

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## Response Obligations

### *Actual Knowledge -- What now?*

To a report:

- *Offer of supportive measures*
- *Explain formal complaint process*

To a formal complaint:

- *Investigation followed by*
- *Live hearing/compliant grievance process*

Unless facts require or permit dismissal

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## Response Obligations

Once the institution has actual knowledge the Title IX Coordinator must:

1. promptly contact the complainant to discuss the availability of supportive measures
2. consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures,
3. inform the complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a formal complaint, and
4. explain to the complainant the process for filing a formal complaint.

§ 106.44(a)

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## Response Obligations

### *Actual Knowledge -- Emergency Removals*

We may remove respondent on an emergency basis only if we:

- Conduct an individualized safety and risk analysis,
- Determine that respondent poses an immediate [imminent] threat to the *physical* health or safety of *anyone* justifying removal,
- The threat arises from the allegations of sexual harassment, and
- Provide opportunity for respondent to challenge removal immediately thereafter.

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## Response Obligations

### *Formal Complaints*

A school must follow procedures prescribed in the final regulations in response to a formal complaint

- Formal Complaint: *a document signed by the complainant or by the Title IX Coordinator alleging sexual harassment against a respondent and requesting that the recipient investigate the allegation of sexual harassment. At the time of filing a formal complaint, a complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in the education program or activity of the recipient with which the formal complaint is filed.*

§ 106.30

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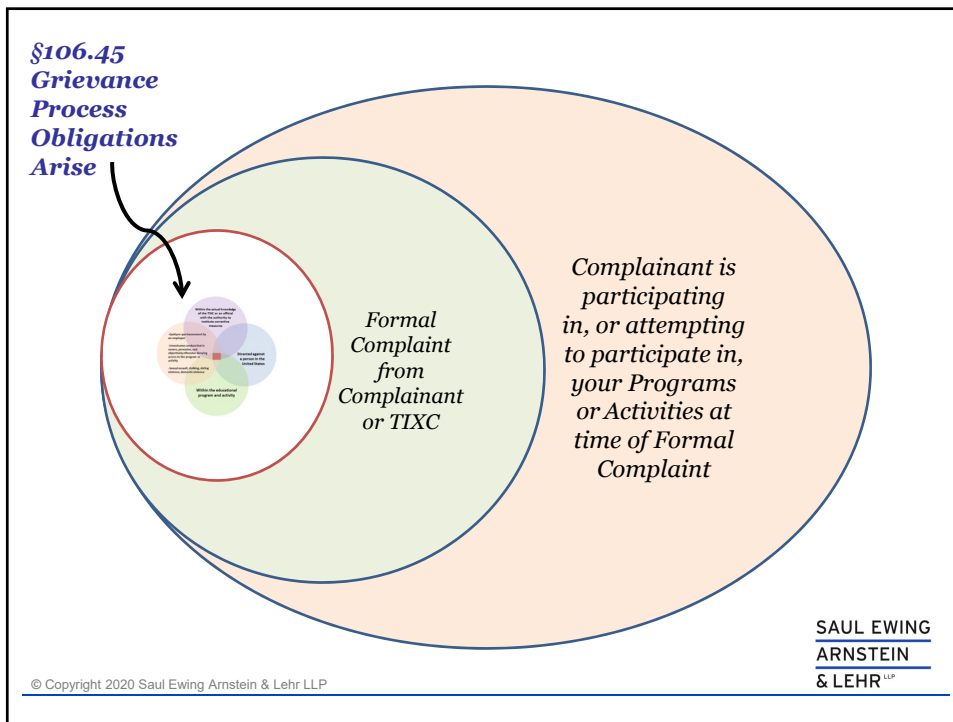
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## The Foundation

If you receive a formal complaint of sexual harassment signed by a complainant who is participating in or attempting to participate in your education program or activity, then you must follow a grievance process that complies with Section 106.45.

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## Mandatory Dismissal

### If the conduct alleged in the Formal Complaint:

- would not constitute **sexual harassment** even if proved,
- did not occur within the recipient's **program or activity**,
- did not occur against a **person in the United States**, or
- the complainant was not participating, or attempting to participate in the P&A at the time of the complaint . . .

the recipient **must terminate** its grievance process with regard to that conduct **for the purposes of sexual harassment under Title IX**.

*However, such a dismissal does not preclude action under another provision of the recipient's code of conduct.*

§ 106.45(b)(3)

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## Discretionary Dismissal

*We “may dismiss” if:*

- Complainant requests to withdraw their complaint
- Respondent is no longer enrolled or employed
- When specific circumstances prevent gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination

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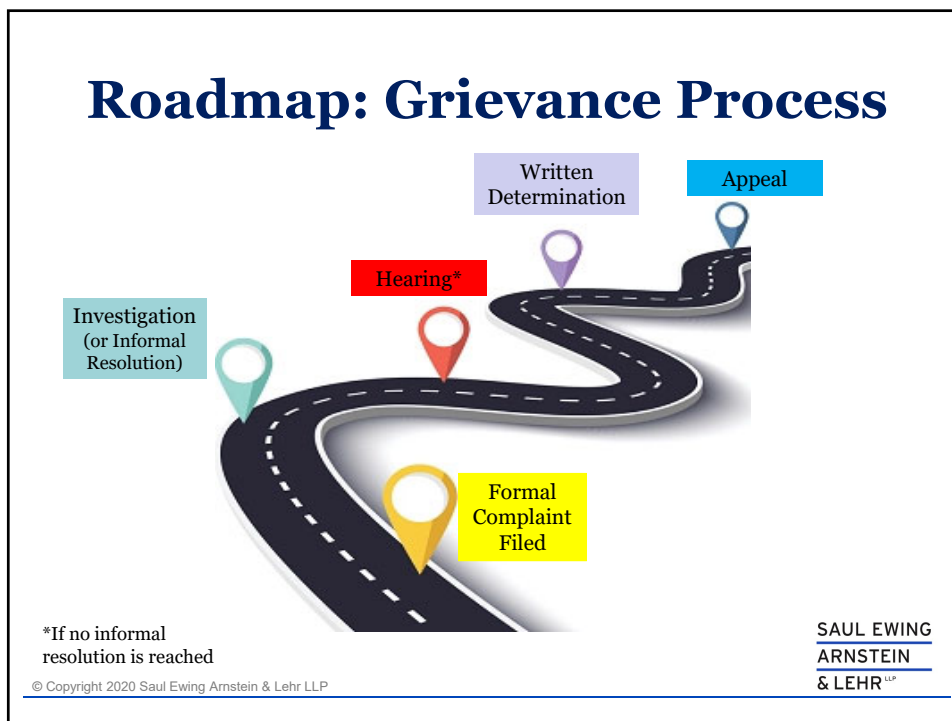
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*Implementing a compliant grievance process*

## AFTER A FORMAL COMPLAINT

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## Informal Resolution

### *Alternative Resolution Available*

- At any time prior to reaching a determination regarding responsibility, we may facilitate an informal resolution process that does not involve a full investigation and adjudication
  - *May not require the parties to participate in an informal resolution process; and*
  - *May not offer an informal resolution process unless a formal complaint is filed*

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## Informal Resolution

### *Alternative Resolution Requirements*

- Any party has the right to withdraw from the informal resolution process and resume the grievance process with respect to the formal complaint
- *May not offer or facilitate an informal resolution process to resolve allegations that an employee sexually harassed a student*

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## Informal Resolution

### *Alternative Resolution Requirements*

To facilitate an alternative resolution, we must:

- Obtain the parties' voluntary written consent; and
- Provide written notice to the parties disclosing:
  - The allegations;
  - The requirements of the informal resolution process, including the circumstances under which it precludes the parties from resuming a formal complaint arising from the same allegations; and
  - Any consequences resulting from participating in the informal resolution process, including records that will be maintained or could be shared.

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# Informal Resolution

## *Alternative Resolution Requirements*

A written consent form to participate in informal resolution might include e.g., agreement that:

- Successful completion of preparatory meetings is a precondition to participation in informal resolution
- The parties are bound by the terms of any final informal resolution agreement, cannot return to formal resolution after an agreement, and consequences for failing to comply with agreement terms
- How and for how long records will be kept

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*Training, serving without bias or conflicts of interest*

## **EXPECTATIONS**

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## Expectations: Training

- ***Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process receive training on:***
  - Definition of sexual harassment in § 106.30,
  - The scope of the recipient's education program or activity,
  - How to conduct an investigation and grievance process including hearings, appeals, and informal resolution processes, as applicable, and
  - How to serve impartially, including by avoiding prejudice of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest, and bias.

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## Expectations: Training

In addition,

- ***Investigators*** must receive training on issues of relevance to create an investigative report.
- ***Decision-makers*** must receive training on (1) any technology to be used at a live hearing and (1) issues of relevance of questions and evidence, including when questions and evidence about the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant; and

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## Expectations: Bias & Conflicts

Any individual designated as a Title IX Coordinator, investigator, decision-maker, or to facilitate an informal resolution process, must “*not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent.*”

§106.45(b)(1)(iii)

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## But not advisors. . .

The final regulations impose no prohibition of conflict of interest or bias for advisors

85 FR 30254 n.1041

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## Bias: what does it mean?

“Whether bias exists requires examination of the *particular facts* of a situation . . .

. . . and the Department encourages recipients to apply *an objective* (whether a reasonable person would believe bias exists), *common sense approach* to evaluating whether a particular person serving in a Title IX role is biased[.]”

85 FR 30248.

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## Bias: what does it mean?

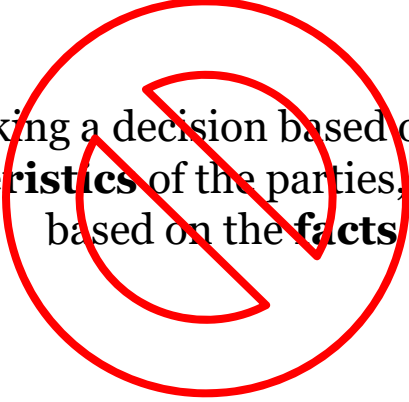
- Treating a party differently on the basis of the party’s **sex or stereotypes** about how men or women behave with respect to sexual violence. 85 FR 30238-40.
- Treating any individual differently on the basis of an individual’s **protected characteristic**, including sex, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or immigration status, financial ability, socioeconomic status, or other characteristic. 85 FR 30084.

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## Impermissible Bias

Making a decision based on the **characteristics** of the parties, rather than based on the **facts**



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## What is not defined as bias?

### 1. Outcomes of the grievance procedure

The Department cautions parties and recipients from concluding bias based **solely on the outcome of the grievance procedure.**

“[T]he mere fact that a certain number of outcomes result in determinations of responsibility, or non-responsibility, does not necessarily indicate or imply bias on the part of Title IX personnel.”

85 FR 30252

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## What is not defined as bias?

### 2. Title IX Coordinator Signs Formal Complaint

When a Title IX Coordinator signs a formal complaint, it does not render the Coordinator biased or pose a conflict of interest.

The Department has clarified that this **does not place the Title IX Coordinator in a position adverse to the respondent** because the decision is made on behalf of the recipient and not in support of the complainant or in opposition of the respondent.

85 FR 30372

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## What is not defined as bias?

### 3. Professional/Personal Experiences or affiliations

Not *per se* bias; exercise caution not to apply “generalizations that might unreasonably conclude that bias exists”:

- All “self-professed feminists” or “self-described survivors” as biased against men
  - A male is incapable of being sensitive to women
  - History of working in a field of sexual violence
- Prior work as a victim advocate = biased against respondents
- Prior work as a defense attorney = biased in favor of respondents
  - Solely being a male or female
  - Supporting women’s or men’s rights
- Having a personal or negative experience with men or women

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## But consider . . .

Whether a Title IX personnel has a bias and/or conflict of interest is determined on a **case-by-case basis**, and any combination of the experiences or affiliations on the prior slide *may* constitute bias and/or conflict of interest, depending on the circumstances

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## Conflicts of Interest: What are they?

The Department also declines to define conflict of interest and instead, leaves it in the discretion of the recipient.

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## Conflicts of Interest: What are they?

- It is **not** a conflict of interest for the **Title IX Coordinator** to serve as the **investigator**.
- However, **it is** a conflict of interest for the **investigator and/or the Title IX Coordinator** to serve as the **decision-maker or appeal decision-maker**.

85 FR 30367

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## Conflicts of Interest: What are they?

- It is **not** a conflict of interest for a **recipient to fill Title IX personnel positions with its own employees**
  - Recipients are not required to use outside, unaffiliated Title IX personnel. 85 FR 30252.
  - Any recipient, *irrespective of size*, may use existing employees to fill Title IX roles, “as long as these employees do not have a conflict of interest or bias and receive the requisite training[.]” 85 FR 30491-92.
  - Even a student leader of the recipient may serve in a Title IX role. 85 FR 30253.

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## Serving Impartially

**Avoid** prejudice of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest, and bias  
&  
**Don't** rely on sex stereotypes

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## Avoiding Prejudgment of the Facts at Issue

- Cannot **pass judgment** on the allegations presented by either party or witnesses
- Cannot **jump to any conclusions** without fully investigating the allegations and gathering all of the relevant facts and evidence from all parties involved.

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## Avoiding Prejudgment of the Facts at Issue

Regulations necessitate a broad prohibition on *sex stereotypes*

Decisions *must* be based on individualized facts, and not on stereotypical notions of what “men” and “women” do or not do

85 FR 30254

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## Avoiding Prejudgment of the Facts at Issue

- The Department **permits** institutions to apply **trauma-informed practices**, so long as it does not violate the requirement to serve impartiality and without bias
- It is possible, “albeit challenging,” to apply trauma-informed practices in an impartial, non-biased manner
- Any trauma-informed techniques must be applied equally to all genders

85 FR 30256, 30323

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## Avoiding Prejudgment of the Facts at Issue

- Any and all stereotypes about men and women must be checked at the Title IX door.
  - Leave behind any prior experiences, whether that be from past Title IX proceedings or personal experiences.
- Approach the allegations (of both parties) with neutrality at the outset
- Treat both parties equally and provide an equal opportunity to present evidence, witnesses, and their versions of the story.

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## Avoiding Prejudgment of the Facts at Issue

**Bottom Line:** The fact that an individual is “male”, “female”, or “non-binary” should not, and cannot, have any bearing on the credibility of the party or witness or how Title IX personnel approach the situation.

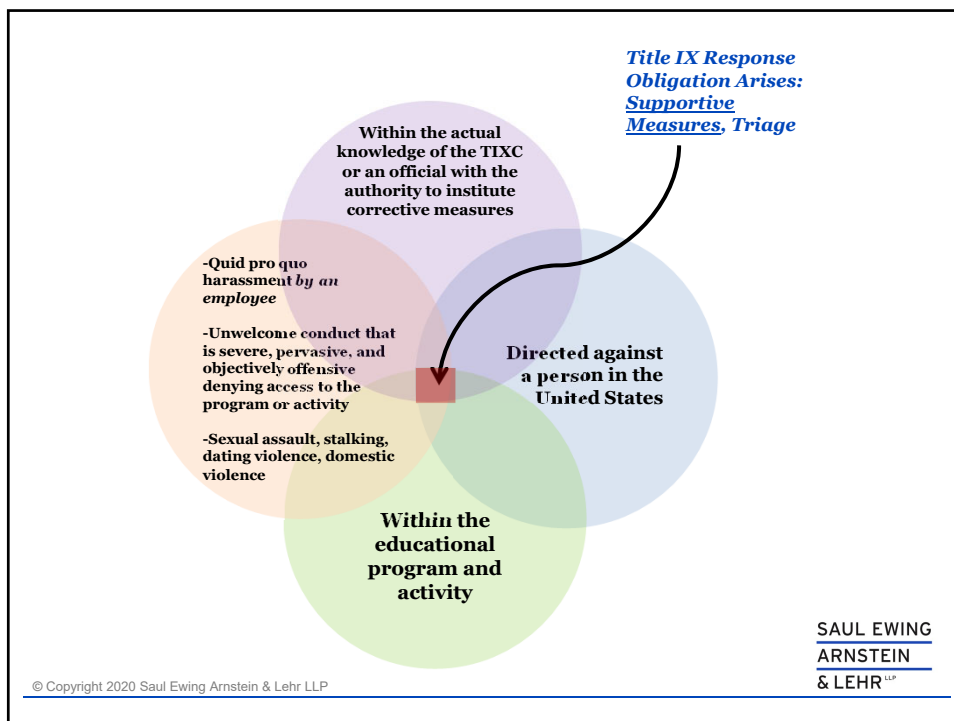
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# Reports Received & Supportive Measures

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## Obligation to Respond

“***Actual knowledge*** means notice of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment to a recipient’s Title IX Coordinator or any official of the recipient who has authority to institute corrective measures on behalf of the recipient” § 106.30(a)

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## What Constitutes Notice?

- “Notice results whenever . . . any Title IX Coordinator, or any official with authority: **Witnesses** sexual harassment; **hears about** sexual harassment or sexual harassment allegations from a complainant . . . or third party; **receives a written or verbal complaint** about sexual harassment or sexual harassment allegations; or **by any other means.**” 85 FR 30040
- “Notice’ . . . includes, but is not limited to, a report of sexual harassment to the Title IX Coordinator” § 106.30(a)

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**Notice\***



**Response\*\***

*\*Notice includes a Report*  
*\*\* The response obligation is the same*

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**REPORTING**

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## Reporting (Alleged) Sexual Harassment

### The Title IX Coordinator

- Students/employees must have a “**clear channel** through the Title IX Coordinator” to report
- Ensure that “complainants and third parties have **clear, accessible ways to report** to the Title IX Coordinator”
- Must “[n]otify all students and employees (and others) of the Title IX Coordinator’s contact information”

§ 106.8; 85 FR 30106

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## Reporting (Alleged) Sexual Harassment

### Who can report?

- “**Any person** may report sex discrimination, including sexual harassment (whether or not the person reporting is the person alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sex discrimination or sexual harassment)” § 106.8(a)
  - Complainant
  - Third Party (“such as an alleged [complainant’s] friend or a bystander witness”; “e.g., the complainant’s parent, friend, or peer”)

85 FR 30108; 85 FR 30040

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## Reporting (Alleged) Sexual Harassment

### Who can report?

- Institutions may permit anonymous/blind reporting
  - “[N]otice conveyed by an anonymous report may convey actual knowledge to the recipient to trigger a recipient’s response obligations”
  - “Nothing in the final regulations precludes a recipient from implementing reporting systems that facilitate or encourage an anonymous or blind reporting option”
- Note: ability to respond, i.e. offer supportive measures, or to consider initiating a grievance process will be affected by whether the report disclosed the identity of the complainant or respondent

85 FR 30132-33

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## Reporting (Alleged) Sexual Harassment

### Who must report?

- ~~Responsible employees~~
  - “[R]ecipients have discretion to determine which of their employees should be mandatory reporters, and which employees may keep a postsecondary student’s disclosure about sexual harassment confidential.” 85 FR 30108

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## Reporting (Alleged) Sexual Harassment

### How to Report

- In person
- Mail
- Telephone
- Email
- Electronic/online portal
- Using Title IX Coordinator's published contact information

***Any means that results in the Title IX  
Coordinator receiving a verbal or written  
report***

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## Responding to a Report

Once the institution has **actual knowledge** of allegations of sexual harassment the Title IX Coordinator **must**:

1. **promptly contact the complainant to discuss the availability of supportive measures,**
2. **consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures,**
3. **inform the complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a formal complaint,**  
and
4. explain to the complainant the process for filing a formal complaint.

§ 106.44(a)

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## **SUPPORTIVE MEASURES**

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### **What are Supportive Measures?**

- Non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services,
- offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge,
- to the complainant or the respondent,
- including as designed to restore or preserve equal access to the recipient's education program or activity without unreasonably burdening the other party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or the recipient's educational environment, or deter sexual harassment.

§ 106.45(a)(3)

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## Process & Oversight

- Flexibility to determine *how* to process requests for supportive measures
- The burden of arranging & enforcing supportive measures remains on the institution not on a party
- Title IX Coordinator must remain responsible for coordinating effective implementation . . .

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## Process & Oversight

- Title IX Coordinator must:
  - serve as the point of contact for parties
  - Ensure that the burden of navigating administrative requirements does not fall on the parties
- Title IX Coordinator may:
  - Rely on other campus offices/administrators to *actually provide* supportive measures

*How can you best serve the parties through coordination & planning?*

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## Process & Oversight

- Select & implement measures:
  - Meet one or more of the stated purposes (i.e. restore/preserve equal access; protect safety; deter sexual harassment)
  - Within the stated parameters (i.e. not punitive/disciplinary/unreasonably burdensome)
- Flexibility based on (1) specific facts and circumstances; and (2) unique needs of the parties in individual situations

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## What are Supportive Measures?

- Non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services,
- offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge,
- **to the complainant or the respondent,**
- including as designed to restore or preserve equal access to the recipient's education program or activity without unreasonably burdening the other party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or the recipient's educational environment, or deter sexual harassment.

§ 106.45(a)(3)

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## To Whom and When?

### The Complainant

- Must be discussed with/offered to every complainant promptly upon receipt of actual notice (including a report) § 106.44(a); 85 FR 30180
  - “Section 106.44 *obligates* a recipient to offer supportive measures to every complainant . . .” 85 FR 30266
  - If you do not provide supportive measures to the Complainant, you must document why that response was not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances (e.g. because complainant did not wish to receive supportive measures or refused to discuss measures with the Title IX Coordinator”) 85 FR 30266
- Discretion to continue providing measures after a finding of non-responsibility

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## To Whom and When?

### The Respondent

- “There is no corresponding obligation to offer supportive measures to respondents [at reporting], rather, recipients *may* provide supportive measures to respondents.” 85 FR 30266
- *Permitted* before or after a formal complaint is filed. 85 FR 30185
  - Recommended discussion after formal complaint (at least)
  - Consider also that the respondent may request supportive measures at any point
- Discretion to continue providing after a finding of non-responsibility

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## Supportive Measures

- Non-disciplinary, non-punitive,
- **individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge,**
- to the complainant or the respondent,
- including as designed to restore or preserve equal access to the recipient's education program or activity without unreasonably burdening the other party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or the recipient's educational environment, or deter sexual harassment.

§ 106.45(a)(3)

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## Individualized & Reasonably Available

- Complainant's wishes must be considered after a report
- Case-by-case basis
- "Reasonable efforts" standard from Clery/VAWA might be helpful

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## Supportive Measures

- **Non-disciplinary, non-punitive,**
- individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge,
- to the complainant or the respondent,
- including as designed to restore or preserve equal access to the recipient's education program or activity without unreasonably burdening the other party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or the recipient's educational environment, or deter sexual harassment.

§ 106.45(a)(3)

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## Non-disciplinary & Non-punitive

- Institutions cannot “treat a Respondent as though accusations are true before the accusations have been proved” 85 FR 30267
- “The final regulations prohibit a recipient from taking disciplinary action, or other action that does not meet the definition of a supportive measure, against a respondent without following a [compliant] grievance process” 85 FR 30267, n.1097

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## Supportive Measures

- Non-disciplinary, non-punitive,
- individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge,
- to the complainant or the respondent,
- including as **designed** to restore or preserve equal access to the recipient's education program or activity without **unreasonably burdening** the other party, including measures designed to **protect the safety of all parties or the recipient's educational environment, or deter sexual harassment.**

§ 106.45(a)(3)

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## Designed to Restore/Preserve Equal Access

“Designed to” ≠ “Necessarily Do”

- Measures should be intended to help a party retain equal access to education
- Protection against unfair imposition of liability (e.g. where “underlying trauma from a sexual harassment incident still results in a party's inability to participate in an education program or activity”)

85 FR 30182

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## Goals / Purpose

- Restore or preserve equal access to the recipient’s education program or activity:
  - E.g., help to stay in school, stay on track academically (85 FR 30088)
  - Protect the safety of all parties or the recipient’s educational environment
  - Deter sexual harassment

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## No “unreasonable burden”

- Protect each party from a request from the other for “measures that would unreasonably interfere with either party’s educational pursuits” 85 FR 30180
- “Does not bar all measures that place *any* burden on a respondent” 85 FR 30267; 85 FR 30180 ([or complainant](#))

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## No “unreasonable burden”

- **Does not mean** “proportional to the harm alleged”
- **Does not mean** “least burdensome measures” possible
- **May be** (un)reasonable to make housing/schedule adjustments or to remove a party from an extracurricular/athletic pursuit (85 FR 30182)
  - Fact-specific determination
    - Take into account the nature of the educational programs, activities, opportunities, and benefits in which a party is participating . . . not limited to academic pursuits

*\*\*Document the reasons why a particular supportive measure was not appropriate, even though requested . . . including by documenting the assessment of burden\*\**

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## Punitive + Unreasonably Burdensome

- The possible sanctions described/listed in a grievance procedure constitute actions the institution considers “disciplinary”
- Those sanctions thus cannot be supportive measures

### Supportive Measures ≠ Sanctions

- Certain actions are inherently disciplinary/punitive/unreasonably burdensome even if not listed as sanctions in grievance procedure:

### Suspension, Expulsion, Termination ≠ Supportive Measures

85 FR 30182 (*but see* emergency removal & administrative leave)

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## Examples

Possible supportive measures include (but are not limited to):

- counseling;
- extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments;
- modifications of work or class schedules;
- campus escort services;
- mutual contact restrictions;
- changes in work or housing locations;
- leaves of absence; and
- increased security and monitoring of certain areas of campus.

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## One-Way No Contact Orders

- Require a fact-specific inquiry
- Must be carefully crafted
- For example:
  - Help enforce a restraining order, preliminary injunction, or other order of protection issued by a court
  - Doesn't unreasonably burden the other party

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## Mutual No Contact Orders

- Limit interactions, communications, contact between the parties
- No communication:
  - Likely would not unreasonably burden either party
  - May avoid more restrictive orders (or measures)
- No physical proximity:
  - Requires a fact-specific analysis to assess, among other things, the burden
  - Consider alternatives to a no contact order

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## Confidentiality

**Must be kept confidential unless confidentiality would impair provision**

- Complainant thus may obtain supportive measures while keeping identity confidential from respondent (and others)
  - Unless disclosure is necessary to provide the measures (e.g. where a no-contact order is appropriate)

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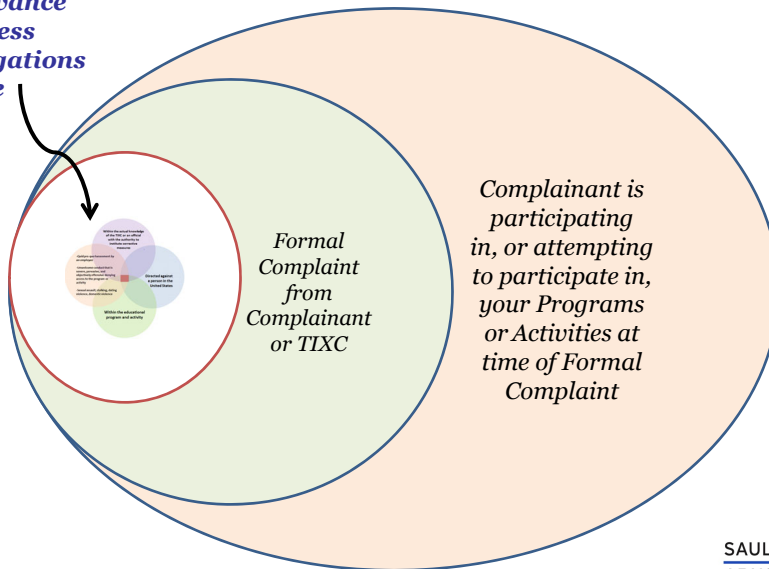
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# Formal Complaint through the Investigation Stage

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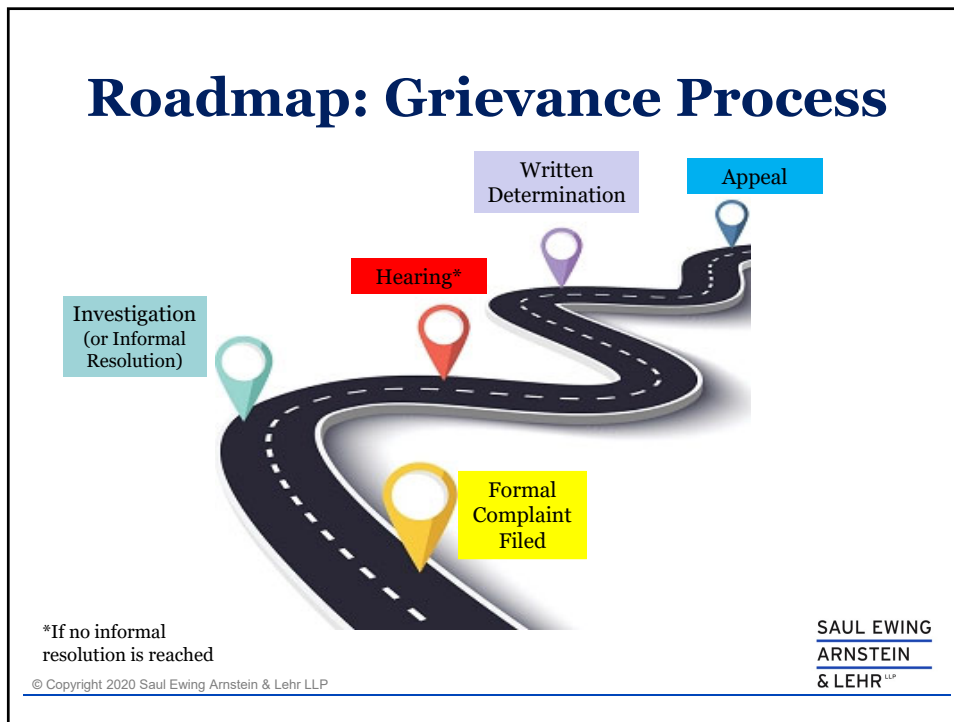
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**§106.45  
Grievance  
Process  
Obligations  
Arise**



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## Formal Complaint

### What is Formal Complaint?

“[A] document

- filed by a complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator
- alleging sexual harassment against a respondent and
- requesting that the recipient investigate the allegation of sexual harassment.”

§ 106.30

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## Formal Complaint

### Who can file?

- Complainant may file Formal Complaint by signing document; or
  - University *must* investigate when Complainant desires the action
- Title IX Coordinator may sign Formal Complaint
  - If the Title IX Coordinator has determined on behalf of the University that an investigation is needed

§ 106.30; 85 FR 30131 n. 580

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## Formal Complaint

In other words, **complainant must assent** or the **Title IX Coordinator must believe it is necessary**.

- “The formal complaint requirement ensures that a grievance process is the result of an intentional decision on the part of either the complainant or the Title IX Coordinator.”

85 FR 30130

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## Formal Complaint

### If the Title IX Coordinator signs the Formal Complaint

- Title IX Coordinator is not a complainant or otherwise a party
- Complainant remains the party to the action
- Complainant has right to refuse to participate in grievance process § 106.71

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## Formal Complaint

### No anonymous filing:

“A complainant...**cannot file a formal complaint anonymously** because § 106.30 defines a formal complaint to mean a document or electronic submission...that contains the complainant’s physical or digital signature or otherwise indicates that the complainant is the person filing the formal complaint. The final regulations require a recipient to send written notice of the allegations to both parties upon receiving a formal complaint. The written notice of allegations under § 106.45(b)(2) must include certain details about the allegations, including the identity of the parties, if known.”

85 FR 30133.

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## Formal Complaint

### How to File:

“A formal complaint may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator **in person, by mail**, or by **electronic mail**, by using the contact information required to be listed for the Title IX Coordinator under § 106.8(a), and by **any additional method designated by the recipient.**”

§ 106.30

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## Formal Complaint

### Where to File:

- “A formal complaint may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator”
  - At the Title IX Office
  - Online submission system
  - Via email or mail to the Title IX Coordinator’s contact address/email

\*Must consist of a *written document*

85 FR 30137

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## Formal Complaint

### When to file:

- No set time limit from date of allegations to filing (no statute of limitations)
- “[The Department] decline[s] to impose a requirement that formal complaints be filed ‘without undue delay’”
  - Doing so would be “unfair to complainants” because “for a variety of reasons complainants sometimes wait various periods of time before desiring to pursue a grievance process in the aftermath of sexual harassment”

85 FR 30127

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## Formal Complaint

### When to file:

- At the time the complaint is filed, the complainant **must be participating in or attempting to participate in** the recipient’s education program or activity.

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## Formal Complaint

### Why file:

- A Formal Complaint must be filed before the University can commence an investigation or the Informal Resolution process

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## Formal Complaint

### Fulfill Title IX Obligation

- Recipients' **obligation to respond** to reports of sexual harassment promptly in a way that is not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances **extends to recipients' processing of a formal complaint**, or document or communication that purports to be a formal complaint.

85 FR 30135-30136

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## Evaluating Formal Complaint: Mandatory Dismissal

- When a Formal Complaint is filed, the Title IX Coordinator **evaluates** the Formal Complaint
- If one (or more) of the following conditions is **not met**, the Title IX Coordinator **must dismiss** the Formal Complaint for Title IX purposes:
  - Conduct alleged, if true, does not meet § 106.30 sexual harassment definition;
  - Conduct alleged did not take place within the University’s educational program or activity;
  - Conduct alleged is not perpetrated against a person in the United States; **or**
  - At time of filing Formal Complaint, Complainant is not participating in or attempting to participate in the University’s programs or activities

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## Evaluating Formal Complaint: Dismissal

“[A mandatory] dismissal does **not preclude** action under another provision of the recipient’s code of conduct”

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## Evaluating Formal Complaint: Discretionary Dismissal

- If one (or more) of the following conditions is **not met**, the Title IX Coordinator **may dismiss** the Formal Complaint for Title IX purposes:
  - Complainant withdraws Formal Complaint or allegations in writing;
  - Respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by the University; or
  - Specific circumstances prevent the University from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination regarding responsibility.

§ 106.45(b)(3)(ii)

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## Evaluating Formal Complaint: Notice & Opportunity to Appeal

- **Dismissal Notice & Right to Appeal**
  - Upon a mandatory or discretionary dismissal, the University must promptly send written notice of the dismissal and reason(s) therefor simultaneously to the parties. 106.45(b)(3)(iii).
  - Both parties must be provided equal right to appeal a dismissal decision. 106.45(b)(8).

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## Evaluating Formal Complaint: Consolidation

- University **may consolidate** multiple Formal Complaints
- Consolidation may involve:
  - Same facts or circumstances involving multiple respondents or multiple complainants;
  - Allegations of conduct that are temporally or logistically connected.

§ 106.45(b)(4).

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## Formal Complaint: Written Notice

- After a Formal Complaint is filed, the University must **simultaneously send both parties written notice of allegations, containing the following:**
  - Notice that the informal and formal resolution processes **comply with the requirements of Title IX;**
  - Notice of the **allegations potentially constituting sexual harassment**, providing sufficient detail for a response to be prepared before any initial interview, including (1) identities of the parties, if known; (2) the conduct allegedly constituting sexual harassment; and (3) the date and location of the alleged incident, if known;

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## Formal Complaint: Written Notice

### [CONT.]

- A statement that the respondent is **presumed not responsible** for the allegations and a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process;
- Notice that each party **may have an advisor** of their choice who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney and who may inspect and review evidence;
- **Warning about false statements** if the recipient's code of conduct prohibits students from making false statements or submitting false statements during a disciplinary proceeding.

106.45(b)(2)(i)(A), (B)

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## Formal Complaint: Written Notice

### [CONT.]

- Notice that **punishing a party** for making a false statement is permitted when the recipient has concluded that the party made a materially false statement in **bad faith**. The University may not conclude that a complainant made a false statement solely because there was a determination of no responsibility.

106.45(b)(2)(i)(B), 85 FR 30576

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## Emergency Removal / Administrative Leave

- The University may employ an **emergency removal process** if there is an **immediate threat to the physical health or safety** of any students or other individuals arising from the allegations of sexual harassment.
- The University may place a non-student employee on **administrative leave** during the pendency of a grievance process.
  - **\*\*Employee may not be placed on administrative leave unless and until a Formal Complaint is filed**

§ 106.44(c), (d)

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*Gather & fairly summarizing evidence*

## INVESTIGATIONS

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## Investigation

The institution **must investigate** allegations in a **Formal Complaint**

- *Remember: Formal Complaints request that the “recipient investigate the allegation of sexual harassment.”*

§ 106.30

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## Notice of Meetings

Parties must be given **written notice** of the date, time, location, participants, and purpose of all hearings, investigative interviews, or other meetings where the party’s participation in such meetings is invited or expected. The written notice to the parties of such meetings must be provided with sufficient time for the party to prepare to participate.

§ 106.45(b)(5)(v)

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## Right to Discuss Investigation

The institution may **not restrict** either party's ability to (1) discuss **the allegations** under investigation or (2) gather and present relevant evidence.

§ 106.45(b)(5)(iii)

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## Advisors' Participation

Both parties must have the same opportunity to be **accompanied** by the advisor of their choice to any meeting or proceeding during the investigation process. The institution may **not** limit the **presence or choice** of an advisor at any meeting.

§ 106.45(b)(5)(iv)

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## Step One: Gathering Evidence

- The Investigator must gather **all evidence sufficient to reach a determination regarding responsibility**.
- The investigator should:
  - undertake a thorough search,
  - for relevant facts and evidence,
  - while operating under the constraints of completing the investigation under designated, reasonably prompt timeframes
  - and without powers of subpoena.

85 FR 30292

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## Step One: Gathering Evidence

The burden of proof and the **burden of gathering evidence** sufficient to reach a determination regarding responsibility rests on the recipient and not on the parties.

§ 106.45(b)(5)(i)

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## Step One: Gathering Evidence

- Each party must have an equal opportunity to **present witnesses**, which includes both fact witnesses and expert witnesses.
- Similarly, each party must have an equal opportunity to present **inculpatory and exculpatory** evidence.

§ 106.45(b)(5)(ii).

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## Step One: Gathering Evidence

“Cannot require, allow, rely upon, other use . . . Evidence that constitute[s] or seek[s] disclosure of, information protected under a **legally recognized privilege**, unless the person holding such privilege has waived the privilege”

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## Step One: Gathering Evidence

- **Cannot** access, consider, disclose, or otherwise use a party's records made or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional acting in the professional's or paraprofessional's capacity, or assisting in that capacity, and which are made and maintained in connection with the provision of treatment to the party. . .
- **Unless** the party provides voluntary, written consent.

§ 106.45(b)(5)(i)

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## Step Two: Review of and Response to Evidence

- Both parties (and advisors) must be given equal opportunity to ***inspect and review*** any evidence obtained during the investigation that is ***directly related*** to the allegations in the formal complaint
- Evidence must be sent to each party, and their advisors (if any), in an electronic format or hard copy

§ 106.45(b)(5)(vi)

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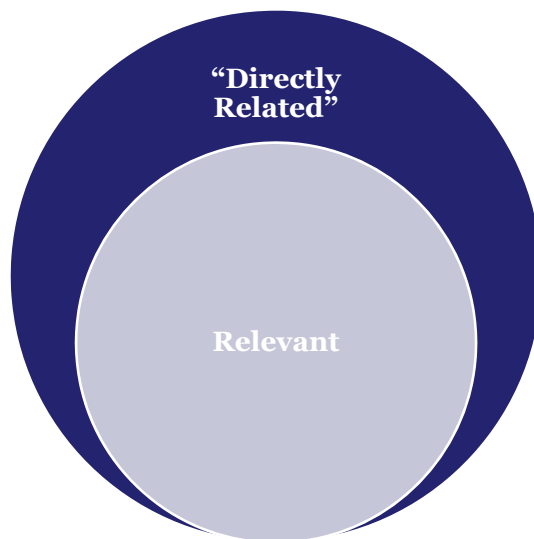
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## Step Two: Review of and Response to Evidence

- Evidence that must be shared includes:
  - evidence upon which recipient does not intend to rely in reaching a responsibility determination
  - Inculpatory & exculpatory evidence, whether obtained from a party or other source
- *Note: all of the evidence that subject to review and response must be made available at the hearing*

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## Step Two: Review of and Response to Evidence

- Parties must have at least 10 days to respond in writing to the “directly related” evidence (if they so choose) to:
  - Clarify ambiguities or correcting where the party believes the investigator did not understand
  - **Assert which evidence is “relevant” and should therefore be included in the Investigative Report**
- The investigator must consider any written responses before finalizing the investigative report

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## Step Three: The Investigative Report

After the parties have had the opportunity to inspect, review, and respond to the evidence, the Investigator must –

- Create an investigative report that **fairly summarizes relevant evidence** and,
- At least 10 days prior to a hearing, send the report to each party and their advisor (if any) for their review and written responses.
  - (Hard copy or electronic format)

§ 106.45(b)(5)(vii)

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## Step Three: The Investigative Report

Creating an investigative report that “fairly summarizes relevant evidence” does not require making credibility determinations, proposing findings, or a recommending an outcome.

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## Step Three: The Investigative Report

“[T]hese final regulations do not prescribe the contents of the investigative report **other than specifying its core purpose of summarizing relevant evidence.**”

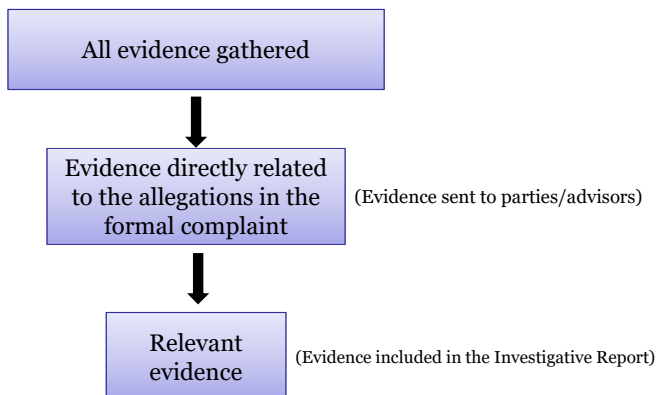
85 FR 30310

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## Step Three: The Investigative Report



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## What is Relevant Evidence?

“The final regulations do not define relevance, and the **ordinary meaning** of the word should be understood and applied.”

85 FR 30247 n. 1018

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## Purpose of Requirement to Summarize Relevant Evidence

“The requirement for recipients to summarize and evaluate relevant evidence, . . . appropriately directs recipients to focus investigations and adjudications on evidence pertinent to **proving whether facts material to the allegations under investigation are more or less likely to be true (i.e., on what is relevant).**”

85 FR 30294

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## What is Relevant Evidence?

**rel·e·vant** | \ 're-lə-vənt \ adj.

**a:** having significant and demonstrable bearing on the matter at hand

**b:** affording evidence tending to prove or disprove the matter at issue or under discussion

// *relevant* testimony

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## Prohibition on Exclusion of Relevant Evidence

### May not:

- Adopt an “undue/unfair prejudice” rule. 85 FR 30294
- Adopt a rule prohibiting character, prior bad acts, evidence. 85 FR 30248
- Exclude certain types of relevant evidence (*e.g.* lie detector test results, or rape kits). 85 FR 30294

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## What is Not Relevant?

- The following is considered **per se not relevant** (or otherwise excluded):
  - Complainant’s prior sexual behavior (subject to two exceptions) or predisposition;
  - Any party’s medical, psychological, and similar treatment records without the party’s voluntary, written consent; and
  - Any information protected by a legally recognized privilege, unless waived.

85 FR 30293 n. 1147

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## “Rape Shield” Provision

Questions and evidence about the complainant’s **sexual predisposition** or prior **sexual behavior** are not relevant, **unless** such questions and evidence . . .

1. Are offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the conduct alleged by the complainant; or
2. Concern specific incidents of the complainant’s prior sexual behavior with respect to the respondent and are offered to prove consent.

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## “Rape Shield” Provision

“[Q]uestions and evidence subject to the rape shield protections are ‘not relevant,’ and therefore the rape shield protections apply wherever the issue is whether evidence is relevant or not. [The regulation] requires review and inspection of the evidence ‘directly related to the allegations,’ that universe of evidence is *not screened for relevance*, but rather is measured by whether it is ‘directly related to the allegations.’ However, the investigative report must summarize ‘relevant’ evidence, and thus **at that point the rape shield protections would apply to preclude inclusion in the investigative report of irrelevant evidence.**”

85 FR 30353

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## Challenges to Investigator's Relevancy Determinations

“A party who believes the investigator reached the wrong conclusion about the relevance of the evidence **may argue** again to the decision-maker (i.e., as part of the party's response to the investigative report, and/or at a live hearing) about whether the evidence is actually relevant[.]”

85 FR 30304

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## Bias/Conflict of Interest

- “A recipient must ensure that Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process, receive training on . . . how to serve impartially, including by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest, and bias.”

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## Bias

- bi·as | \ 'bī-əs\ **noun**
- **1a:** an inclination of temperament or outlook *especially* : a personal and sometimes unreasoned judgment : PREJUDICE

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## Bias

- Fundamentally about making a decision based on something about the characteristics of the parties, instead of based on the facts.

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*Decision-maker responsibilities*

## **THE HEARING**

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## **The Hearing Officer**

- Serve impartially
  - Avoid prejudgment of the facts at issue, bias, and conflict of interest
- Oversee the hearing
- Objectively evaluate all relevant evidence
  - Inculpatory & exculpatory
- Independently reach a determination regarding responsibility
  - Cannot give deference to an investigation report

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## The Hearing

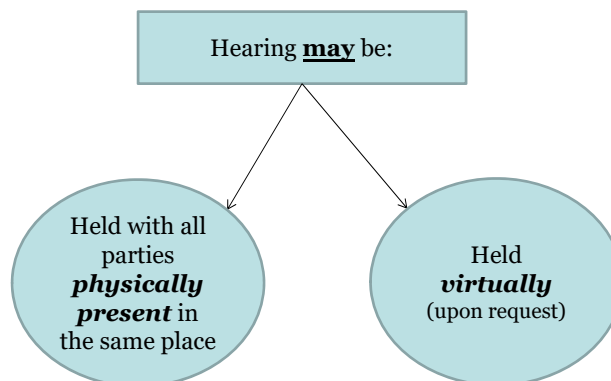
- Live
- With Cross-Examination  
*Opportunity for Hearing Officer to ask questions of parties/witnesses, and to observe how parties/witnesses answer questions posed by the other party*
- Results in a determination of responsibility

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## Live Hearing: Location

Hearing must be live



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## Living Hearing: Recording

- Institutions must create an **audio or audiovisual recording, or transcript**, of the live hearing. § 106.45(b)(6)(i).
- The recording or transcript must be made available to the parties for inspection and review.
  - “Inspection and review” **does not** obligate an institution to send the parties a copy of the recording or transcript. 85 FR 30392.

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## Presentation of Relevant Evidence

“[T]hroughout the grievance process, a recipient must not restrict the ability of either party . . . to gather and present relevant evidence.”

§106.45(b)(5)(iii).

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## Presentation of Relevant Evidence

“The recipient must make **all evidence** [directly related to the allegations] subject to the parties’ inspection and review **available at any hearing to give each party equal opportunity to refer to such evidence** during the hearing, including for purposes of cross-examination.”

§106.45(b)(5)(vi)

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## Relevance Determinations

- “Ordinary meaning of relevance should be applied throughout the grievance process.” 85 FR 30247, n. 1018.
- “Fact determinations reasonably can be made by layperson recipient officials impartially applying logic and common sense.” 85 FR 30343
- Relevant evidence must include both inculpatory and exculpatory evidence. 85 FR 30314.

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## Relevance Determinations

- The following evidence is always considered “**irrelevant**” (or otherwise not admissible):
  - Any party’s medical, psychological, and similar treatment records without the party’s voluntary, written consent;
  - Any information protected by a legally recognized privilege without waiver;
  - Complainant’s sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior (subject to two exceptions); and
  - Party or witness statements that have not been subjected to cross-examination at a live hearing.

85 FR 30293 n. 1147

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## Rape Shield Provision

- Prohibits questions or evidence about a complainant’s prior **sexual behavior**, with two exceptions. *See* 34 CFR § 106.45(b)(6).
- Deems all questions and evidence of a complainant’s **sexual predisposition** irrelevant, with no exceptions. *See* 85 FR 30352.

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## Rape Shield Provision

- Intended to protect **complainants** from harassing, irrelevant questions.
- Does not apply to respondents
  - Questions and evidence about a respondent's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not subject to any special consideration, but rather must be evaluated based on relevancy, like any other question or evidence.

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## Rape Shield Provision

- What is “**sexual predisposition**”?
  - No definition in regulations or preamble
  - Advisory comment to Fed. R. Evidence 412 defines sexual predisposition as “the victim’s mode of dress, speech, or life-style.”

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## Rape Shield Provision

- What is “**sexual behavior**”?
  - No definition in final regulations or preamble.
  - Advisory comments to Fed. R. Evid. 412 explains that sexual behavior “connotes all activities that involve actual physical conduct, i.e., sexual intercourse and sexual contact, or that imply sexual intercourse or sexual contact.”

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## Rape Shield Provision

- There are two exceptions where questions or evidence of past sexual behavior are allowed:
- **Exception 1:** Evidence of prior sexual behavior is permitted if offered to prove someone other than the respondent committed the alleged offense.

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## Rape Shield Provision

- **Exception 2:** Evidence of prior sexual behavior is permitted if it is specifically about the complainant and the respondent **and** is offered to prove consent. 34 CFR § 106.45(b)(6).
- Does not permit evidence of a complainant's sexual behavior with anyone other than the respondent.

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## Rape Shield Provision

- No universal definition of “consent.”
- Each institution is permitted to adopt its own definition of “consent.”
- Thus, the scope of the second exception to the rape shield provision will turn, in part, on the definition of “consent” adopted by the institution.



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## Relevance Determinations

- At the hearing, the decision-maker will serve as the gatekeeper, making relevance determinations after each question
- The decision-maker may apply “[logic and common sense](#)” to reach any conclusions [but must explain their rationale](#)
- No “lengthy or complicated explanation” is necessary
  - For example, “the question is irrelevant because it calls for prior sexual behavior information without meeting one of the two exceptions”
  - For example, “the question asks about a detail that is not probative of any material fact concerning the allegations”

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## Challenging Relevancy Determinations

- Parties **must** be afforded the opportunity to [challenge relevance determinations](#). 85 FR 30249.
  - Erroneous relevancy determinations, if they affected the outcome of the hearing, may be [grounds for an appeal](#) as a “procedural irregularity”
- Institutions **may** (but are not required to) allow parties or advisors to discuss the relevance determination with the decision-maker [during the hearing](#). 85 FR 30343.

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*The Hearing Decision-Maker's Determination*

## THE OUTCOME

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## Outcome Determination

**At the conclusion of the hearing, the Decision-maker must make a determination regarding responsibility**

- Based on (at institution's discretion): Either the preponderance of the evidence or clear and convincing evidence standard. ***Your policy informs!***
  - Must apply the same standard to all Formal Complaints of sexual harassment – including those involving students, employees, faculty, and third parties. §106.45(b)(1)(vii), §106.45(b)(7)(i)

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## Assessing Evidence

- Decision-maker assigns weight & credibility to evidence
  - Ex. Where a cross-examination question is relevant, but concerns a party's character, the decision-maker *must consider* the evidence, but may proceed to *objectively evaluate* it by analyzing whether the evidence *warrants a high or low level of weight or credibility*
    - Evaluation must treat the parties equally by not, for instance, automatically assigning higher weight to exculpatory character evidence than to inculpatory character evidence

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## Outcome Determination

- **Important considerations:**
  - The Respondent must be **presumed not responsible** for the alleged conduct until the determination regarding responsibility is made. §106.45(b)(1)(iv).
  - Outcome must be based on an objective evaluation of all **relevant evidence**—including both inculpatory and exculpatory—and not taking into account the relative “skill” of the parties’ advisors. §106.45(b)(1)(ii); 85 FR 30332
  - **Credibility determinations** may not be based on a person’s status as a Complainant, Respondent, or witness. §106.45(b)(1)(ii).

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## Presumption of Non-Responsibility

- The respondent is **presumed not responsible** for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process. §106.45(b)(1)(iv).
- The decision-maker cannot draw any inference about the responsibility or non-responsibility of the respondent solely based on a party's failure to appear or answer cross-examination questions at a hearing. §106.45(b)(6)(i).

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## Notice of Decision

- Decision-maker must issue a **written determination regarding responsibility** and provide the written determination to the parties *simultaneously*. §106.45(b)(7)(ii)-(iii)
- The determination regarding responsibility becomes final either on the date that the recipient provides the parties with the written determination of the result of the appeal, if an appeal is filed, or if an appeal is not filed, the date on which an appeal would no longer be considered timely. §106.45(b)(7)(iii)

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## Written Determination - Key Elements

1. **Identification of the allegations** alleged to constitute sexual harassment as defined in § 106.30;
2. **The procedural steps taken** from receipt of the formal complaint through the determination regarding responsibility;
3. **Findings of fact** supporting the determination;
4. **Conclusions** regarding the application of the **recipient's code of conduct** to the facts;
5. The decision-maker's **rationale for the result** of each allegation, including rationale for the determination regarding responsibility;
6. **Any disciplinary sanctions** the recipient imposes on the respondent, and whether the recipient will provide **remedies** to the complainant; and
7. Information regarding the **appeals process**. § 106.45(b)(7)(ii)

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## Written Determination – Sanctions and Remedies

- The decision-maker(s) written determination **must** include a statement of, and rationale for, the result as to each allegation, including any **disciplinary sanctions imposed on the respondent**, and **whether remedies** will be provided by the recipient **to the complainant**. §106.45 (b)(7)(ii)(E).

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## Equitable treatment ≠ “Strictly equal treatment”

- “[W]ith respect to remedies and disciplinary sanctions, strictly equal treatment of the parties does not make sense . . .” 85 FR 30242.
- To treat the parties **equitably**, a complainant must be provided with remedies where the outcome shows the complainant was victimized by sexual harassment; and a respondent must be afforded a fair grievance process before disciplinary sanctioning. *Id.*

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## Remedies – Purpose

- Remedies must be designed to “restore or preserve equal access to the recipient’s education program or activity.”  
§106.45(b)(1)(i).

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## Remedies v. Sanctions

- The Department does not require or prescribe disciplinary sanctions after a determination of responsibility and leaves those decisions to the discretion of recipients, but recipients must effectively implement remedies. 85 FR 30063

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## Remedies Defined

- Final regs. do not provide a definition of “remedies.”
- May include the same services described as “supportive measures.” *See* 34 CFR § 106.30.
  - Unlike supportive measures, though, remedies may in fact burden the respondent, or be punitive or disciplinary in nature. § 106.45(b)(1)(i); 85 FR 30244.

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## Implementing Remedies

- The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for the “effective implementation of remedies.” 85 FR 30276.
- When remedies are included in the final determination, the complainant then communicates **separately** with the Title IX Coordinator to discuss appropriate remedies. 85 FR 30392.

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## Simultaneous Delivery

- The recipient must **provide the written determination to the parties simultaneously.**
- The determination regarding responsibility becomes final either on the date that the recipient provides the parties with the written determination of the result of the appeal, if an appeal is filed, or if an appeal is not filed, the date on which an appeal would no longer be considered timely.

106.45(b)(7)(iii)

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*Relevance and the role of advisors*

## **ADVISORS AND CROSS-EXAMINATION**

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## **Cross-Examination**

**Cross-examination**: Advisor asks other party and witnesses **relevant questions** and follow-up questions, including those challenging credibility

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## Cross-Examination

- Decision-maker must permit each party's **advisor** to **conduct cross-examination** of the other party and all witnesses
- Cross-examination may **not** be conducted by the parties themselves (only advisors)
- If a party does not have an advisor present at the hearing to conduct cross-examination, the institution **must provide an advisor** without fee or charge

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## Advisor Required

- Parties may have advisors throughout the process, and **must** have them at the hearing.
  - Advisor of choice
  - If a party does not select an advisor of choice, institution must assign an advisor for purposes of the hearing. 34 CFR § 106.45(b)(6)(i).

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## Advisor Required

- Institutions cannot:
  - impose any limit on who a party selects as an advisor of choice;
  - set a cost “ceiling” for advisors selected by parties; or
  - charge a party a cost or fee for an assigned advisor. 85 FR 30341.

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## Qualifications of Advisor

- **No** particular expectation of skill, qualifications, or competence. 85 FR 30340.
- Advisors are **not** subject to the same impartiality, conflict of interest, or bias requirements as other Title IX personnel.  
*Id.*

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## Qualifications of Advisors

- Institutions may not impose training or competency assessments on advisors of choice. 85 FR 30342.
- Regulations do not preclude institution from training and assessing the competency of its own employees whom it appoint as assigned advisors. *Id.*

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## Qualifications of Advisors

- If you decide you want to offer to train advisors of choice (whether internal or external) or require training of assigned advisors, topics to consider include:
  - *Scope of role*
  - *Relevance (incl. exceptions)*
  - *How questions are formulated*
  - *Hearing procedures*
  - *Rules of Decorum*

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## Qualifications of Advisor

- Department will not entertain ineffective assistance of counsel claims. 85 FR 30340.
- Department does not view advisors conducting cross as engaging in the unauthorized practice of law.

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## Advisor Required

- Regs **do not** preclude a rule regarding advance notice from parties about intent to bring an advisor of choice to the hearing. 85 FR 30342.
- If a party arrives at the hearing without an advisor, then *the institution would need to stop the hearing as necessary to assign an advisor to that party. Id.*

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## Basics: Assigned Advisor

- Assigned advisor may be, but is not required to be, an attorney (even if other party's advisor is an attorney). *Id.*; 85 F.R. 30332.
- Institutions are not required to pre-screen a panel of assigned advisors for a party to choose from at the live hearing. 85 FR 30341.
- Institution is not required to (but may) train assigned advisors. *Id.*
- Assigned advisor may be, but is not required to be, an attorney (even if other party's advisor is an attorney). *Id.*; 85 F.R. 30332.

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## Role of Advisor

- Advisor must conduct **cross-examination** on behalf of party. § 106.45(b)(6)(i).
  - Whether advisors also may conduct **direct examination** is left institution's discretion, but any rule to this effect must apply equally to both parties. 85 FR 30342.
- Cross must be conducted directly, orally, and in real time by the party's advisor and never by a party personally. § 106.45(b)(6)(i).

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## Role of Advisor

- Advisor may serve as proxy for party, advocate for party, or neutrally relay party's desired questions. 85 FR 30340.
- Whether a party views an advisor of choice as 'representing' the party during a live hearing or not, [§ 106.45(b)(6)(i)] only requires recipients to permit advisor participation on the party's behalf *to conduct cross-examination*; not to 'represent' the party at the live hearing." 85 CFR 30342

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## Role of Advisor

- Cross "on behalf of that party" is satisfied where the advisor poses questions on a party's behalf. 85 FR 30340.
- Regulations impose no more *obligation* on advisors than relaying a party's questions to the other parties or witnesses. 85 FR 30341.



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## Role of (Assigned) Advisor

- Assigned advisors are not required to assume that the party's version of events is accurate, but still must conduct cross-examination on behalf of the party. 85 FR 30341.

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## Mechanics of Questioning

- Questions asked → Must be **relevant**
  - “Ordinary meaning of relevance.” 85 FR 30247, n. 1012.
- Decision-maker determines whether question is relevant
  - And must explain its reasoning if a question is deemed not relevant. 85 FR 30343.

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## Questioning In Practice

- **Step 1, Question:** Advisor asks the question.
- **Step 2, Ruling:** Decision-maker determines whether question is relevant.
  - If not relevant, decision-maker must explain reasoning to exclude question.
  - If relevant, **Step 3:** Question must be answered.

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## Advisor at the Live Hearing

- Party cannot “fire” an assigned advisor during the hearing. 85 FR 30342.
- If assigned advisor refuses to conduct cross on party’s behalf, then institution is obligated to:
  - Counsel current advisor to perform role; or
  - Assign a new advisor. *Id.*

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## Advisor at the Live Hearing

- If a party refuses to work with an assigned advisor who is willing to conduct cross on the party's behalf, then that party has waived right to conduct cross examination. 85 FR 30342.
- *Consider hearsay rules. . .*

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## Limiting Advisor's Role

- Institutions may apply rules (equally applicable to both parties) restricting advisor's active participation in non-cross examination aspects of the hearing or investigation process. 34 CFR § 106.45(b)(5)(iv).
  - Department declines to specify what restrictions on advisor participation may be appropriate. 85 FR 30298.

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## **Options for Streamlining Hearing/Cross**

- Decision-maker may conduct direct exam
- Pre-hearing meeting to discuss/resolve hearing procedures in advance, e.g.:
  - Scheduling;
  - Identifying advisors and witnesses;
  - Witness and advisor participation at the live hearing;

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## **Options for Streamlining Hearing/Cross**

- Decorum rules to be followed at the hearing;
- Technology that will be used, and how to use that technology;
- Timing of the hearing and each subpart.

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## Decorum

- An institution cannot forbid a party from **conferring** with the party's advisor. 85 FR 30339.
- *But* institution does have discretion to adopt rules governing the conduct of hearings.
- Purpose of rules re: decorum is to make the hearing process respectful and professional

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## Examples of Optional Rules of Decorum

- Rules governing the timing and length of breaks requested by parties or advisors.
- Instructions that the parties and advisors remain seated at all times during the hearing, including during cross-examination.

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## Examples of Optional Rules of Decorum

- Requiring any participants in the hearing not involved in current questioning to refrain from disrupting the hearing, making gestures, facial expressions, audible comments, or the like, as manifestations of approval or disapproval during any testimony.

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## Examples of Optional Rules of Decorum

- Prohibiting a list of behaviors like yelling, verbal abuse, disruptive behavior, interrupting or talking over one another, name calling, or using profane or vulgar language (except where such language is relevant).

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## Examples of Optional Rules of Decorum

- Setting a rule that when cross-examining a party or witness, advisors shall not repeat, characterize, editorialize, or otherwise state any response to the answer given by the party or witness except to ask a follow up question to elicit relevant evidence.

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## Decorum

- If **advisor of choice** refuses to comply with a recipient's rules of decorum → institution may provide that party with an assigned advisor to conduct cross. 85 FR 30342.
- If **assigned advisor** refuses to comply with a recipient's rules of decorum → institution may provide that party with a different assigned advisor to conduct cross. *Id.*

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## Decorum

- Institutions are free to enforce their own codes of conduct with respect to conduct other than Title IX sexual harassment. 85 FR 30342.
- If a party or advisor breaks code of conduct during a hearing, then the institution retains authority to respond in accordance with its code, so long as the recipient is also complying with all obligations under § 106.45. *Id.*

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*Impact of declining to submit to cross-examination*

**“HEARSAY”**

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## Hearsay

- If a party or witness does not submit to cross-examination at the live hearing, then the **decision-maker cannot rely on any statement** of that party or witness in reaching a determination regarding responsibility.
- But, decision-makers cannot draw an inference as to responsibility based on a party or witness's refusal to answer.

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## “Statements”

- “Statements” has its ordinary meaning
- “Statements” do not include evidence (such as videos) that do not constitute a person's intent to make factual assertions
- Doesn't apply to evidence that doesn't contain statements
- Police reports, SANE reports, medical reports, other documents and records may not be relied upon to the extent they contain statements of a party who has not been cross-examined
- Not limited to statements made during the hearing

85 FR 30349

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## Hearsay

- Hearsay prohibition **does not apply** if the Respondent's statement, itself, constitutes the **sexual harassment at issue**.
  - The verbal conduct does not constitute the making of a factual assertion to prove or disprove the allegations of sexual harassment because the statement itself is the sexual harassment.

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## Hearsay

Exclusion of statements does not apply to a party or witness' refusal to answer questions ***posed by the decision-maker***. 85 FR 30349.

If a party or witness refuses to respond to a decision-maker's questions, the decision-maker is **not precluded** from relying on that party or witness's statements

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## Retaliation

- A party cannot “wrongfully procure” another party’s absence
  - If institution has notice of that misconduct, it must remedy retaliation, which may include rescheduling the hearing with safety measures.

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*After the Hearing & Notice of Decision*

## APPEALS

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## Mandatory & Equal Appeal Rights

- Institutions must offer both parties an appeal from a **determination regarding responsibility** and from an institution's **dismissal of a formal complaint** or any allegations therein (whether or not it is a mandatory or discretionary dismissal).  
§106.45(b)(8)(i)
- Parties must have an **equal opportunity** to appeal any dismissal decision

§ 106.45(b)(8)(i)-(ii)

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## Grounds for Appeals

- The University **must offer both parties** an appeal from a determination regarding responsibility, and from a recipient's dismissal of a formal complaint or any allegations therein on the following bases:
  - Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;
  - New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal was made, that could affect the outcome of the matter; and
  - The Title IX Coordinator, investigator(s), or decision-maker(s) had a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or the individual complainant or respondent that affected the outcome of the matter.
- A recipient **may offer** an appeal equally to both parties on additional bases.

§ 106.45(b)(8)(i)-(ii)

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## Requirements for Appeals

### Requirements for Appeals:

- Notify the other party in writing when an appeal is filed and implement appeal procedures equally for both parties;
- Ensure that the decision-maker(s) for the appeal is not the same person as the decision-maker(s) that reached the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal, the investigator(s), or the Title IX Coordinator;
- Ensure that the decision-maker(s) for the appeal complies with the standards set forth in paragraph (b)(1)(iii) of this section;
- Give both parties a reasonable, equal opportunity to submit a written statement in support of, or challenging, the outcome [of the initial determination];
- Issue a written decision describing the result of the appeal and the rationale for the result; and
- Provide the written decision simultaneously to both parties.

§106.45(b)(8)(iii)

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## Appeals: Written Determination

- Appellate Decision-maker must issue a **written decision** describing the result of the appeal and the rationale for the result
  - “[R]easoned written decisions describing the appeal results.” 85 FR 30397.
- Written decision must be issued **simultaneously** to both parties.

§106.45(b)(8)(iii)

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*Documenting Decisions & Record Keeping*

## **DOCUMENTATION**

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## **Documentation: The Requirements**

An institution **must** create and maintain records of any actions taken in response to a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment.

§106.45(b)(10)(ii)

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## Documentation: The Requirements

- Document . . .
  - the basis for conclusion that response was not deliberately indifferent; and
  - that measures taken were designed to restore or preserve equal access to the education program or activity.

§106.45(b)(10)(ii)

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## Documentation: Supportive Measures

- Requirement extends to decisions re: provision of supportive measures
- If an institution does not provide a complainant with supportive measures, then the institution must document the reasons why such a response was not “clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances.”
- Documentation of certain bases/measures does not limit the institution from providing additional explanations or detailing additional measures taken in the future.

§106.45(b)(10)(ii)

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## Document Retention

- The Department extended the three-year retention period to seven years. §106.45(b)(10)(i)
  - **Date of creation begins the seven-year period.**  
85 FR 30411
- Harmonizes recordkeeping requirements with the Clery Act. 85 CFR 30410
- Institutions are permitted to retain records for a longer period of time.
  - E.g. seven years from creation of the last record pertaining to the case

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## Document Retention

Must maintain records of:

- Investigation;
- Any determination regarding responsibility;
- Audio or visual recording or transcript;
- Any disciplinary sanctions imposed on the respondent; and
- Any remedies provided to the complainant designed to restore or preserve equal access to the institution's educational program or activity.

§106.45(b)(10)(i)(A)

- Any appeal and the result.
- Any informal resolution and the result.

§106.45(b)(10)(i)(B)-(C)

- All materials used to train Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process.

§106.45(b)(10)(i)(D)

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## Document Retention: Investigations

- Any record the institution creates to investigate an allegation, regardless of later dismissal or other resolution of the allegation, must be maintained.
  - Even those records from “truncated investigations” that led to no adjudication because the acts alleged did not constitute sex discrimination under Title IX (dismissal)

§106.45(b)(10)(i)(A); 85 FR 30411

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## Publication

- An institution must make training materials publicly available on its website.
  - If the institution does not maintain a website, the institution must make the materials available upon request for inspection by members of the public.
- *Goal:* Increase transparency and integrity of grievance process.

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# THANK YOU

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## Your Trainers



**Amy L. Piccola, Partner**

Amy.Piccola@saul.com | 215.972.8405

Amy routinely advises institutions of higher education on matters involving issues of compliance, policy and liability, particularly with regard to student conduct matters, Title IX and other civil rights and discrimination statutes, and the Clery Act.



**Carolyn M. Toll, Associate**

Carolyn.Toll@saul.com | 215.972.8391

Carolyn is a member of the Firm's Higher Education Practice and Litigation Department. She maintains a general litigation practice with a focus on higher education, and handles a variety of matters involving complex commercial disputes.



**Tricia M. Kazinetz, Associate**

Tricia.Kazinetz@saul.com | 215.972.1093

Similar to Carolyn, Tricia is a member of the Firm's Higher Education Practice and Litigation Department. She maintains a general litigation practice and handles a variety of matters involving complex commercial disputes.

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<p><b>Baltimore</b>                  Lockwood Place                  500 East Pratt Street, Suite 900                  Baltimore, MD 21202-3171                  T: 410.332.8600 • F: 410.332.8862</p>	<p><b>Boston</b>                  131 Dartmouth Street                  Suite 501                  Boston, MA 02116                  T: 617.723.3300 • F: 617. 723.4151</p>	<p><b>Chesterbrook</b>                  1200 Liberty Ridge Drive                  Suite 200                  Wayne, PA 19087-5569                  T: 610.251.5050 • F: 610.651.5930</p>	<p><b>Chicago</b>                  161 North Clark                  Suite 4200                  Chicago, IL 60601                  T: 312.876.7100 • F: 312.876.0288</p>
<p><b>Fort Lauderdale</b>                  200 E. Las Olas Blvd.                  Suite 1000                  Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301                  T: 954.713.7600 • F: 954.713.7700</p>	<p><b>Harrisburg</b>                  Penn National Insurance Plaza                  2 North Second Street, 7th Floor                  Harrisburg, PA 17101-1619                  T: 717.257.7500 • F: 717.238.4622</p>	<p><b>Miami</b>                  701 Brickell Avenue                  17<sup>th</sup> Floor                  Miami, FL 33131                  T: 305.428.4500 • F: 305.374.4744</p>	<p><b>Minneapolis</b>                  33 South Sixth Street, Suite 4750                  Minneapolis, MN 55402                  T: 612.217.7130 • F: 612.677.3844</p>
<p><b>New York</b>                  1270 Avenue of the Americas,                  Suite 2005                  New York, NY 10020                  T: 212.980.7200 • F: 212.980.7209</p>	<p><b>Newark</b>                  One Riverfront Plaza                  Newark, NJ 07102                  T: 973.286.6700 • F: 973.286.6800</p>	<p><b>Philadelphia</b>                  Centre Square West                  1500 Market Street, 38th Floor                  Philadelphia, PA 19102-2186                  T: 215.972.7777 • F: 215.972.7725</p>	<p><b>Pittsburgh</b>                  One PPG Place                  30th Floor                  Pittsburgh, PA 15222                  T: 412.209.2500 • F: 412.209.2570</p>
<p><b>Princeton</b>                  650 College Road East, Suite 4000                  Princeton, NJ 08540-6603                  T: 609.452.3100 • F: 609.452.3122</p>	<p><b>Washington</b>                  1919 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.                  Suite 550                  Washington, DC 20006-3434                  T: 202.333.8800 • F: 202.337.6065</p>	<p><b>West Palm Beach</b>                  515 N. Flagler Drive                  Suite 1400                  West Palm Beach, FL 33401                  T: 561.833.9800 • F: 561.655.5551</p>	<p><b>Wilmington</b>                  1201 North Market Street                  Suite 2300 • P.O. Box 1266                  Wilmington, DE 19899                  T: 302.421.6800 • F: 302.421.6813</p>

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