

Webber International University

Grievance Policy for Addressing Formal Complaints of Sexual Harassment Under the Title IX Regulations

Updated 14 August 2020

1. Introduction

What is the purpose of the Title IX Grievance Policy?

Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 prohibits any person in the United States from being discriminated against on the basis of sex in seeking access to any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. The U.S. Department of Education, which enforces Title IX, has long defined the meaning of Title IX's prohibition on sex discrimination broadly to include various forms of sexual harassment and sexual violence that interfere with a student's ability to equally access our educational programs and opportunities.

On May 19, 2020, the U.S. Department of Education issued a Final Rule under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 that:

- Defines the meaning of "sexual harassment" (including forms of sex-based violence)
- Addresses how this institution must respond to reports of misconduct falling within that definition of sexual harassment, and
- Mandates a grievance process that this institution must follow to comply with the law in these specific covered cases before issuing a disciplinary sanction against a person accused of sexual harassment.

See, 85 Fed. Reg. 30026 (May 19, 2020). The full text of the Final Rule and its extensive Preamble are available here: <http://bit.ly/TitleIXReg>

Based on the Final Rule, Webber International University} will implement the following Title IX Grievance Policy, effective August 14, 2020.

How does the Title IX Grievance Policy impact other campus disciplinary policies?

In recent years, "Title IX" cases have become a short-hand for any campus disciplinary process involving sex discrimination, including those arising from sexual harassment and sexual assault. But under the Final Rule, Webber International University must narrow both the geographic scope of its authority to act under Title IX and the types of

“sexual harassment” that it must subject to its Title IX investigation and adjudication process. Only incidents falling within the Final Rule’s definition of sexual harassment will be investigated and, if appropriate, brought to a live hearing through the Title IX Grievance Policy defined below.

Webber International University remains committed to addressing any violations of its policies, even those not meeting the narrow standards defined under the Title IX Final Rule.

Specifically, our campus has:

- A Code of Conduct that defines certain behavior as a violation of campus policy, including {identify sections addressing Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Stalking, and related sex-based offenses}

Harassment, Including Sexual Harassment

For the purpose of this policy, “harassment” is defined as sexual harassment or harassment due to race, color, religion, gender, gender identity, age, national origin, mental or physical disability, marital status, medical condition, veteran status, citizenship or sexual orientation. Inappropriate and illegal verbal, physical or electronic conduct constitutes harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment, academic advancement or campus involvement;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions, academic decisions, or residential and other campus involvement opportunities affecting such individual; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive living, working, academic, or campus involvement environment.

Harassment, including sexual harassment, while taking many forms, would include, but not be limited to, the following types of conduct:

Verbal: Inappropriate noises, remarks or jokes; negative stereotyping; unwelcome remarks about a person’s body, color, physical characteristics or appearance; sexual propositions; sexual innuendoes or sexual remarks about clothing, body or sexual activities.

Nonverbal: Demeaning or offensive pictures, posters, calendars, objects, cartoons, cards, inappropriate gestures or offensive notes or letters. No messages with

derogatory or inflammatory remarks about an individual's or group's race, religion, national origin, physical attributes, disability, age, gender, or sexual preference will be tolerated or transmitted; unwanted, protracted staring or leering are also forms of nonverbal sexual harassment.

Physical: Aggressive or violent touching, imitating or exaggerating another's physical characteristics, threatening or intimidating behavior; touching, hugging, patting, or pinching that is uninvited and/or unwanted.

Retaliatory: Assigning low grades, changing work assignments, or refusing to cooperate with a person who has complained about or resisted harassment or discrimination; denying participation, membership; making retaliating verbal or physical threats to a person who has reported or resisted harassment or discrimination; imposing physical, social, or emotional sanctions on a person who has reported or resisted harassment or discrimination (see also section on Retaliation and Reprisals, below).

Harassment, including sexual harassment, includes harassment of women by men, men by women, women by women and men by men. It can occur between teachers and students, teachers and staff, staff and students, and those at different levels of management, as well as between persons of the same University status, i.e., student-student, faculty-faculty, and staff-staff. Harassment, including sexual harassment, can also occur between any Webber International University community member (student, faculty, or staff) and a third party. It may be found in a single episode, as well as in persistent behavior.

Many times, the person accused of harassment is unaware that behavior is inappropriate, coercive or misunderstood. Even the accusation of harassment can have a destructive impact on the academic community.

Sexual Misconduct

Sexual misconduct occurs in the absence of consent, including when the person is unable to refuse to participate, or despite a person's refusal to participate in the activity. Sexual misconduct activities would include, but are not limited to:

- Giving sedative or "date rape" drugs such as GHB or Rohypnol to someone;
- Obscene or indecent behavior such as exposing one's genitals/breasts without Consent or despite refusal;
- Deliberate observation, photography, or other forms of recording of others for sex-related reasons, including posting such images without Consent or despite refusal;
- Possessing or distributing illegal or unwanted pornographic images;

- Intentional transmission of HIV or other sexually transmittable diseases (STDs);
- Prostitution;
- Being an accomplice in the commission of sexual misconduct;
- Attempting sexual misconduct.

Sexual Violence

In alignment with the U.S. Department of Justice, the University defines sexual violence as occurring when someone is forced to take part in a sex act when this person has not provided consent, including when the person is unable to refuse to participate, or despite a person's refusal to participate in the activity. "Force" includes the use of threatening words, gestures, or weapons to convey the intent to harm in order to intimidate someone into having sexual contact. Sexual Violence would include, but would not be limited to:

- Sexual Assault: Any offense that meets the definition of rape, fondling, incest, or statutory rape;
- Non-Consensual Sexual Intercourse: Sexual intercourse of any duration, using any object (animate or inanimate), imposed upon a person without their consent or despite their refusal. The FBI Summary Definition of rape is: "Penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim";
- Non-Consensual Sexual Touching: Also called "fondling", any sexual touching (for example, of another person's genitals/breasts/mouth) of any duration, including the use of an object (animate or inanimate), imposed upon a person without their consent or despite their refusal. This includes making one person sexually touch another person against her/his will;
- Continuing sexual activity of any sort after one person has clearly communicated, through words or actions that she/he does not wish to continue the sexual contact;
- Sexual contact with a minor or child;
- Being an accomplice to sexual violence; and
- Attempting acts of sexual violence

Dating Violence

The U.S. Department of Justice and the University define Dating Violence as... violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or

intimate nature with the victim; and where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors:

- The length of the relationship
- The type of relationship
- The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship

The State of Florida defines Dating Violence as abuse or the reasonable fear of abuse by someone you have had a continuing and significant romantic or intimate relationship with in the past six months. It does not apply to casual or merely social relationships.

Dating Violence is not limited to male-female heterosexual relationships but can occur between couples of any sex or gender-identity partnership.

Dating Violence behaviors can include, but would not be limited to:

- Controlling behavior, such as not allowing a partner to socialize with friends or family, texting/phoning a partner excessively, dictating attire, conversation and activities, and insisting on continuously being together;
- Verbally/emotionally abusive behavior, such as repeatedly speaking to a partner in a degrading or belittling way, an abuser threatening to harm a partner, a partner's loved one, or the abuser him/herself if the abuser's needs are not met, and unreasonable or excessive jealousy.
- Physically abusive behavior including pinching, striking, hair pulling, shoving, or strangling.

Domestic Violence

The U.S. Department of Justice and the University define Domestic Violence as “a pattern of abusive behavior that is used by an intimate partner to gain or maintain power and control over the other intimate partner. Domestic violence can be physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. This includes any behaviors that intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, coerce, threaten, blame, hurt, injure, or wound someone.”

A Domestic partner could include:

- A current or former spouse or intimate partner
- A person related to you by blood or marriage such as a cousin, parent-in-law, etc...

- Any person who has lived in the same home with you as “part of the family”, including a roommate or boyfriend/girlfriend
- The parent of your child, even if you have never been married or lived together tolerate any form of discrimination or harassment, or false accusations of such.

Stalking

- The U.S. Department of Justice and the University define stalking as a “pattern of repeated and unwanted attention, harassment, contact, or any other course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear” for their own or another’s safety or to experience emotional distress. Additionally, along with the State of Florida, the University identifies stalking if a person “willfully, maliciously, and repeatedly follows, harasses, or cyberstalks another person and makes a credible threat to that person”.

To the extent that alleged misconduct falls outside the Title IX Grievance Policy, or misconduct falling outside the Title IX Grievance Policy is discovered in the course of investigating covered Title IX misconduct, the institution retains authority to investigate and adjudicate the allegations under the policies and procedures defined within the {Code of Conduct/ Non-Title IX Sexual Misconduct Policy} through a separate grievance proceeding. Please see the Webber International University Student Handbook/Webber International University Employee Handbook.

The elements established in the Title IX Grievance Policy under the Final Rule have no effect and are not transferable to any other policy of the College for any violation of the Code of Conduct, employment policies, or any civil rights violation except as narrowly defined in this Policy. This Policy does not set a precedent for other policies or processes of the College and may not be cited for or against any right or aspect of any other policy or process.

How does the Title IX Grievance Policy impact the handling of complaints?

Our existing Title IX office and reporting structure remains in place. What has changed is the way our Title IX office will handle different types of reports arising from sexual misconduct, as detailed in full throughout Section 2.

Table of Contents

General Rules of Application	8
Definitions	8
Making a Report Regarding Covered Sexual Harassment to the Institution	12
Non-Investigatory Measures Available Under the Title IX Grievance Policy	13
The Title IX Grievance Process	14
Investigation	19
Hearing	21
Determination Regarding Responsibility	25
Appeals	28
Retaliation	29

2. The Title IX Grievance Policy

General Rules of Application

Effective Date

This Title IX Grievance Policy will become effective on August 14, 2020, and will only apply to formal complaints of sexual harassment brought on or after August 14, 2020. Complaints brought prior to August 14, 2020 will be investigated and adjudicated according to the Title IX Grievance Policy if a case is not complete by that date.

Revocation by Operation of Law

Should any portion of the Title IX Final Rule, 85 Fed. Reg. 30026 (May 19, 2020), be stayed or held invalid by a court of law, or should the Title IX Final Rule be withdrawn or modified to not require the elements of this policy, this policy, or the invalidated elements of this policy, will be deemed revoked as of the publication date of the opinion or order and for all reports after that date, as well as any elements of the process that occur after that date if a case is not complete by that date of opinion or order publication. Should the Title IX Grievance Policy be revoked in this manner, any conduct covered under the Title IX Grievance Policy shall be investigated and adjudicated under the existing {Code of Conduct/ Sexual Misconduct Policy}.

Non-Discrimination in Application

The requirements and protections of this policy apply equally regardless of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or other protected classes covered by federal or state law. All requirements and protections are equitably provided to individuals regardless of such status or status as a Complainant, Respondent, or Witness. Individuals who wish to file a complaint about the institution's policy or process may contact the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights using contact information available at <https://ocrcas.ed.gov/contact-ocr>.

Definitions

Covered Sexual Harassment

For the purposes of this Title IX Grievance Policy, "covered sexual harassment" includes any conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. An employee conditioning educational benefits on participation in unwelcome sexual conduct (i.e., quid pro quo);

2. Unwelcome conduct that a reasonable person would determine is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the educational institution's education program or activity;
3. Sexual assault (as defined in the Clery Act), which includes any sexual act directed against another person, without the consent of the victim including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent;
4. Dating violence (as defined in the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) amendments to the Clery Act), which includes any violence committed by a person: (A) who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and (B) where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors: (i) The length of the relationship; (ii) The type of relationship; (iii) The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.
5. Domestic violence (as defined in the VAWA amendments to the Clery Act), which includes any felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim, by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common, by a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner, by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under {your state(s)} domestic or family violence laws or by any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person's acts under the domestic or family violence laws of Florida.
6. Stalking (as defined in the VAWA amendments to the Clery Act), meaning engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to-- (A) fear for their safety or the safety of others; or (B) suffer substantial emotional distress.

Note that conduct that does not meet one or more of these criteria may still be prohibited under the CODE OF CONDUCT.

Consent

Consent must be informed, voluntary, and mutual, and can be withdrawn at any time. There is no consent when there is force, expressed or implied, or when coercion, intimidation, threats, or duress is used. Whether a person has taken advantage of a position of influence over another person may be a factor in determining consent. Silence or absence of resistance does not imply consent.

Consent in terms of sexual conduct is freely and actively agreeing together, with clear understanding, to engage in mutually agreed-upon sexual activities. Persons who can never provide Consent include:

- Minors (in Florida, this is anyone under the age of 18);
- People with cognitive or social limitations that render them incapable of providing Consent;
- Incapacitated persons. Incapacitation can occur through excessive alcohol or drug use or for other reasons such as unconsciousness, being asleep, or being otherwise physically unable to respond fully and effectively to the environment, such that they cannot make a knowing agreement to sexual activity
- In the case of drugs, alcohol or other impairing substances, incapacitation is determined by how the person's decision-making ability is affected and the ability of the person to make informed judgments. The relevant standard for review is whether the person alleged to have engaged in sexual misconduct knew, or a sober, reasonable person in the same position should have known, the reporting party was incapacitated.

Consent is dynamic and ongoing throughout any given sexual encounter. It can be revoked by either party. It does not "carry over" to future encounters. If one person's response is unclear or ambiguous, it is the other person's responsibility to confirm Consent.

Finally, intoxication is not the same as incapacitation. Thus, the use of alcohol or other drugs does not release anyone from the requirement to seek and provide Consent.

Education Program or Activity

For the purposes of this Title IX Grievance Policy, Webber International University "education program or activity" includes:

- Any on-campus premises
- Any off-campus premises that Webber International University has substantial control over. This includes buildings or property owned or controlled by a recognized student organization.
- Activity occurring within computer and internet networks, digital platforms, and computer hardware or software owned or operated by, or used in the operations of Webber International University's programs and activities over which the institution has substantial control.

Formal Complaint

For the purposes of this Title IX Grievance Policy, “formal complaint” means a document – including an electronic submission - filed by a complainant with a signature or other indication that the complainant is the person filing the formal complaint, or signed by the Title IX Coordinator, alleging sexual harassment against a respondent about conduct within Webber International University education program or activity and requesting initiation of the procedures consistent with the Title IX Grievance Policy to investigate the allegation of sexual harassment.

Complainant

For the purposes of this Title IX Grievance Policy, Complainant means any individual who has reported being or is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute covered sexual harassment as defined under this policy.

Relevant evidence and questions

“Relevant” evidence and questions refer to any questions and evidence that tends to make an allegation of sexual harassment more or less likely to be true.

“Relevant” evidence and questions do not include the following types of evidence and questions, which are deemed “irrelevant” at all stages of the Title IX Grievance Process:

- Evidence and questions about the complainant’s sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior unless:
 - They are offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the conduct alleged by the complainant, or
 - They concern specific incidents of the complainant’s prior sexual behavior with respect to the respondent and are offered to prove consent. 34 C.F.R. § 106.45(6)(i).
- Evidence and questions that constitute, or seek disclosure of, information protected under a legally-recognized privilege.
- Any party’s medical, psychological, and similar records unless the party has given voluntary, written consent. 85 Fed. Reg. 30026, 30294 (May 19, 2020).

Respondent

For the purposes of this Title IX Grievance policy, Respondent means any individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute covered sexual harassment as defined under this policy.

Privacy vs. Confidentiality

Consistent with {CODE OF CONDUCT}, references made to confidentiality refer to the ability of identified confidential resources to not report crimes and violations to law enforcement or college officials without permission, except for extreme circumstances, such as a health and/or safety emergency or child abuse. References made to privacy mean {Institution} offices and employees who cannot guarantee confidentiality but will maintain privacy to the greatest extent possible, and information disclosed will be relayed only as necessary to investigate and/or seek a resolution and to notify the Title IX Coordinator or designee, who is responsible for tracking patterns and spotting systemic issues. Webber International University will limit the disclosure as much as practicable, even if the Title IX Coordinator determines that the request for confidentiality cannot be honored.

Disability Accommodations

This Policy does not alter any institutional obligations under federal disability laws including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Parties may request reasonable accommodations for disclosed disabilities to the Title IX Coordinator at any point before or during the Title IX Grievance Process that do not fundamentally alter the Process. The Title IX Coordinator will not affirmatively provide disability accommodations that have not been specifically requested by the Parties, even where the Parties may be receiving accommodations in other institutional programs and activities.

Making a Report Regarding Covered Sexual Harassment to the Institution

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), in person, by mail, by telephone, or by electronic mail, using the contact information listed for the Title IX Coordinator, or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person's verbal or written report.

Contact Information for the Title IX Coordinator:

Name: Dr. Elfie Farchmin

Title: Associate Dean of Title IX Compliance

Office Address: Conn Building/Academic Affairs

Email Address: farchminel@webber.edu

Telephone Number: 863-638-2939

Such a report may be made at any time (including during non-business hours) by using the telephone number or electronic mail address, or by mail to the office address listed for the Title IX Coordinator.

Confidential Reporting

The following Officials will provide privacy, but not confidentiality, upon receiving a report of conduct prohibited under this policy:

- Dr. Elfie Farchmin
- Mr. Jay Culver

Non-Investigatory Measures Available Under the Title IX Grievance Policy

Supportive Measures

Complainants (as defined above), who report allegations that could constitute covered sexual harassment under this policy, have the right to receive supportive measures from Webber International University regardless of whether they desire to file a complaint, which may include as appropriate. Supportive measures are non-disciplinary and non-punitive.

Supportive Measures suggested by the Preamble: As appropriate, supportive measures may include, but not be limited to:

- Counseling
- Extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments
- Modifications of work or class schedules
- Campus escort services
- Restrictions on contact between the parties (no contact orders)
- Changes in work or housing locations
- Leaves of absence
- Increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus

See 85 Fed. Reg. 30401.

Emergency Removal

Webber International University retains the authority to remove a respondent from Webber International University program or activity on an emergency basis, where Webber International University (1) undertakes an individualized safety and risk analysis and (2) determines that an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual arising from the allegations of covered sexual harassment justifies a removal.

If Webber International University determines such removal is necessary, the respondent will be provided notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal. *{Define Institution's procedure here; note that the individual who hears the challenge to the removal determination should not be involved in any decision regarding responsibility or appeal of that decision regarding responsibility}*.

Administrative Leave

Webber International University retains the authority to place a non-student employee respondent on administrative leave during the Title IX Grievance Process, consistent with *{Relevant Employee handbook/code of conduct}*.

The Title IX Grievance Process

Filing a Formal Complaint

The timeframe for the Title IX Grievance Process begins with the filing of a Formal Complaint. The Grievance Process will be concluded within a reasonably prompt manner, and no longer than ninety (90) business days after the filing of the Formal Complaint, provided that the Process may be extended for a good reason, including but not limited to the absence of a party, a party's advisor, or a witness; concurrent law enforcement activity; or the need for language assistance or accommodation of disabilities. The procedure for applying for extensions is described below.

To file a Formal Complaint, a complainant must provide the Title IX Coordinator a written, signed complaint describing the facts alleged. Complainants are only able to file a Formal Complaint under this Policy if they are currently participating in, or attempting to participate in, the education programs or activities of Webber International University including as an employee. For complainants who do not meet this criteria, Webber International University will utilize existing policy in the Code of Conduct and/or Webber International University Employee Handbook.

If a complainant does not wish to make a Formal Complaint, the Title IX Coordinator may determine a Formal Complaint is necessary. Webber International University will

inform the complainant of this decision in writing, and the complainant need not participate in the process further but will receive all notices issued under this Policy and Process.

Nothing in the Title IX Grievance *Policy* {or *Code of Conduct*} prevents a complainant from seeking the assistance of state or local law enforcement alongside the appropriate on-campus process.

A complainant who files a Formal Complaint may elect, at any time, to address the matter through the Institution's Informal Resolution Process.

Multi-Party Situations

The institution may consolidate Formal Complaints alleging covered sexual harassment against more than one respondent, or by more than one complainant against one or more respondents, or by one party against the other party, where the allegations of covered sexual harassment arise out of the same facts or circumstances.

Determining Jurisdiction

The Title IX Coordinator will determine if the Title IX Grievance Process should apply to a Formal Complaint. The Process will apply when all of the following elements are met, in the reasonable determination of the Title IX Coordinator:

1. The conduct is alleged to have occurred on or after August 14, 2020;
2. The conduct is alleged to have occurred in the United States;
3. The conduct is alleged to have occurred in {institution's} education program or activity; and
4. The alleged conduct, if true, would constitute covered sexual harassment as defined in this policy.

If all of the elements are met, Webber International University will investigate the allegations according to the Grievance Process.

Allegations Potentially Falling Under Two Policies

Option 1: If the alleged conduct, if true, includes conduct that would constitute covered sexual harassment and conduct that would not constitute covered sexual harassment, the Title IX Grievance Process will be applied in the investigation and adjudication of all of the allegations.

Option 2: If the alleged conduct, if true, includes conduct that would constitute covered sexual harassment and conduct that would not constitute covered sexual

harassment, the Title IX Grievance Process will be applied to investigation and adjudication of only the allegations that constitute covered sexual harassment.

Mandatory Dismissal

If any one of these elements are not met, the Title IX Coordinator {or, as consistent with your policy, another appropriate official without a conflict of interest or bias} will notify the parties that the Formal Complaint is being dismissed for the purposes of the Title IX Grievance Policy. Each party may appeal this dismissal using the procedure outlined in “Appeals,” below.

Discretionary Dismissal

The Title IX Coordinator may dismiss a Formal Complaint brought under the Title IX Grievance Policy, or any specific allegations raised within that Formal Complaint, at any time during the investigation or hearing, if:

- A complainant notifies the Title IX Coordinator in writing that they would like to withdraw the Formal Complaint or any allegations raised in the Formal Complaint;
- The respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by Webber International University or,
- If specific circumstances prevent Webber International University from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination regarding the Formal Complaint or allegations within the Formal Complaint.

Any party may appeal a dismissal determination using the process set forth in “Appeals,” below.

Notice of Dismissal

Upon reaching a decision that the Formal Complaint will be dismissed, the institution will promptly send written notice of the dismissal of the Formal Complaint or any specific allegation within the Formal Complaint, and the reason for the dismissal, simultaneously to the parties through their institutional email accounts. It is the responsibility of parties to maintain and regularly check their email accounts.

Notice of Removal

Upon dismissal for the purposes of Title IX, Webber International University retains discretion to utilize *the Code of Conduct and/or Webber International University Student Handbook and/or Webber International University Employee Handbook* has

occurred. *If so*, Webber International University will promptly send written notice of the dismissal of the Formal Complaint under the Title IX Grievance Process and removal of the allegations to the conduct process.

Notice of Allegations

The Title IX Coordinator will draft and provide the Notice of Allegations to any party to the allegations of sexual harassment. Such notice will occur as soon as practicable, but no more than 14 days after the institution receives a Formal Complaint of the allegations, if there are no extenuating circumstances.

The parties will be notified by their institutional email accounts if they are a student or employee and by other reasonable means if they are neither.

The institution will provide sufficient time for the parties to review the Notice of Allegations and prepare a response before any initial interview.

The Title IX may determine that the Formal Complaint must be dismissed on the mandatory grounds identified above, and will issue a Notice of Dismissal. If such a determination is made, any party to the allegations of sexual harassment identified in the Formal Complaint will receive the Notice of Dismissal in conjunction with, or in separate correspondence after, the Notice of Allegations.

Contents of Notice

The Notice of Allegations will include the following:

- Notice of the institution's Title IX Grievance Process *{OPTIONAL: including any informal resolution process}* and a hyperlink to a copy of the process.
- Notice of the allegations potentially constituting covered sexual harassment, and sufficient details known at the time the Notice is issued, such as the identities of the parties involved in the incident, if known, including the complainant; the conduct allegedly constituting covered sexual harassment; and the date and location of the alleged incident, if known.
 - A statement that the respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct and that a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process.
 - A statement that the parties may have an advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney, as required under 34 C.F.R. § 106.45(b)(5)(iv);

- A statement that before the conclusion of the investigation, the parties may inspect and review evidence obtained as part of the investigation that is directly related to the allegations raised in the Formal Complaint, including the evidence upon which the institution does not intend to rely in reaching a determination regarding responsibility, and evidence that both tends to prove or disprove the allegations, whether obtained from a party or other source, as required under 34 C.F.R. § 106.45(b)(5)(vi);

Ongoing Notice

If, in the course of an investigation, the institution decides to investigate allegations about the complainant or respondent that are not included in the Notice of Allegations and are otherwise covered "sexual harassment" falling within the Title IX Grievance Policy, the institution will notify the parties whose identities are known of the additional allegations by their institutional email accounts or other reasonable means.

The parties will be provided sufficient time to review the additional allegations to prepare a response before any initial interview regarding those additional charges.

Advisor of Choice and Participation of Advisor of Choice

Webber International University will provide the parties equal access to advisors and support persons; any restrictions on advisor participation will be applied equally.

The University has a long-standing practice of requiring students to participate in the process directly and not through an advocate or representative. Students participating as Complainant or Respondent in this process may be accompanied by an Advisor of Choice to any meeting or hearing to which they are required or are eligible to attend. The Advisor of Choice is not an advocate. Except where explicitly stated by this Policy, as consistent with the Final Rule, Advisors of Choice shall not participate directly in the process as per standard policy and practice of Webber International University.

Webber International University will not intentionally schedule meetings or hearings on dates where the Advisors of Choice for all parties are not available, provided that the Advisors act reasonably in providing available dates and work collegially to find dates and times that meet all schedules.

Webber International University's obligations to investigate and adjudicate in a prompt timeframe under Title IX and other college policies apply to matters governed under this Policy, and Webber International University cannot agree to extensive delays solely to accommodate the schedule of an Advisor of Choice. The determination of what is reasonable shall be made by the Title IX Coordinator or designee.

Webber International University will not be obligated to delay a meeting or hearing under this process more than five (5) days due to the unavailability of an Advisor of Choice, and may offer the party the opportunity to obtain a different Advisor of Choice or utilize one provided by Webber International University

Notice of Meetings and Interviews

Webber International University will provide, to a party whose participation is invited or expected, written notice of the date, time, location, participants, and purpose of all hearings, investigative interviews, or other meetings with a party, with sufficient time for the party to prepare to participate.

Delays

Each party may request a one-time delay in the Grievance Process of up to five (5) days for good cause (granted or denied in the sole judgment of the Title IX Coordinator provided that the requestor provides reasonable notice and the delay does not overly inconvenience other parties.

For example, a request to take a five day pause made an hour before a hearing for which multiple parties and their advisors have traveled to and prepared for shall generally not be granted, while a request for a five day pause in the middle of investigation interviews to allow a party to obtain certain documentary evidence shall generally be granted.

The Title IX Coordinator shall have sole judgment to grant further pauses in the Process.

Investigation

General Rules of Investigations

The Title IX Coordinator and/or an investigator designated by the Title IX Coordinator will perform an investigation under a reasonably prompt timeframe of the conduct alleged to constitute covered sexual harassment after issuing the Notice of Allegations.

Webber International University and not the parties, has the burden of proof and the burden of gathering evidence, i.e. the responsibility of showing a violation of this Policy has occurred. This burden does not rest with either party, and either party may decide not to share their account of what occurred or may decide not to participate in an investigation or hearing. This does not shift the burden of proof away from Webber International University and does not indicate responsibility.

Webber International University cannot access, consider, or disclose medical records without a waiver from the party (or parent, if applicable) to whom the records belong or of whom the records include information. Webber International University will provide an equal opportunity for the parties to present witnesses, including fact and expert witnesses, and other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence, (i.e. evidence that tends to prove and disprove the allegations) as described below.

Inspection and Review of Evidence

Prior to the completion of the investigation, the parties will have an equal opportunity to inspect and review the evidence obtained through the investigation. The purpose of the inspection and review process is to allow each party the equal opportunity to meaningfully respond to the evidence prior to conclusion of the investigation.

Evidence that will be available for inspection and review by the parties will be any evidence that is directly related to the allegations raised in the Formal Complaint. It will include any:

1. Evidence that is relevant, even if that evidence does not end up being relied upon by the institution in making a determination regarding responsibility;
2. Inculpatory or exculpatory evidence (i.e. evidence that tends to prove or disprove the allegations) that is directly related to the allegations, whether obtained from a party or other source.

All parties must submit any evidence they would like the investigator to consider prior to when the parties' time to inspect and review evidence begins. See, 85 Fed. Reg. 30026, 30307 (May 19, 2020).

The institution will send the evidence made available for each party and each party's advisor, if any, to inspect and review [through an electronic format or a hard copy.] The Institution is not under an obligation to use any specific process or technology to provide the evidence and shall have the sole discretion in terms of determining format and any restrictions or limitations on access.

The parties will have five (5) business days to inspect and review the evidence and submit a written response by email to the investigator. The investigator will consider the parties' written responses before completing the Investigative Report. Parties may request a reasonable extension as their designated extension request.

The institution will provide copies of the parties' written responses to the investigator to all parties and their advisors, if any. See, 85 Fed. Reg. 30026, 30307 (May 19, 2020).

Any evidence subject to inspection and review will be available at any hearing, including for purposes of cross-examination.

The parties and their advisors must sign an agreement not to disseminate any of the evidence subject to inspection and review or use such evidence for any purpose unrelated to the Title IX grievance process. See, 85 Fed. Reg. 30026, 30435 (May 19, 2020).

The parties and their advisors agree not to photograph or otherwise copy the evidence. See, 85 Fed. Reg. 30026, 30435 (May 19, 2020).

Inclusion of Evidence Not Directly Related to the Allegations

Evidence obtained in the investigation that is determined in the reasoned judgment of the investigator not to be directly related to the allegations in the Formal Complaint will be included in the appendices to the investigative report.

Investigative Report

The Title IX Coordinator and/or an investigator designated by the Title IX Coordinator will create an Investigative Report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence, will and provide that Report to the parties at least ten (10) business days prior the hearing {in an electronic format or a hard copy} for each party's review and written response.

The Investigative Report is not intended to catalog all evidence obtained by the investigator, but only to provide a fair summary of that evidence.

Only relevant evidence (including both inculpatory and exculpatory – i.e. tending to prove and disprove the allegations - relevant evidence) will be referenced in the Investigative Report.

The investigator may redact irrelevant information from the Investigative Report when that information is contained in documents or evidence that is/are otherwise relevant. See, 85 Fed. Reg. 30026, 30304 (May 19, 2020).

Hearing

General Rules of Hearings

Webber International University will not issue a disciplinary sanction arising from an allegation of covered sexual harassment without holding a live hearing unless otherwise resolved through an informal resolution process.

The live hearing may be conducted with all parties physically present in the same geographic location, or, at Webber International University discretion, any or all parties, witnesses, and other participants may appear at the live hearing virtually through *Zoom or Teams*. This technology will enable participants simultaneously to see and hear each other. At its discretion, Webber International University may delay or adjourn a hearing based on technological errors not within a party's control.

All proceedings will be recorded audiovisual recording or transcript. That recording or transcript will be made available to the parties for inspection and review.

Continuances or Granting Extensions

Webber International University may determine that multiple sessions or a continuance (i.e. a pause on the continuation of the hearing until a later date or time) is needed to complete a hearing. If so, Webber International University will notify all participants and endeavor to accommodate all participants' schedules and complete the hearing as promptly as practicable.

Participants in the live hearing

Live hearings are not public, and the only individuals permitted to participate in the hearing are as follows:

Complainant and Respondent (The Parties)

- The parties cannot waive the right to a live hearing.
- The institution may still proceed with the live hearing in the absence of a party, and may reach a determination of responsibility in their absence, including through any evidence gathered that does not constitute a "statement" by that party. 85 Fed. Reg. 30026, 30361 (May 19, 2020).
 - For example, A verbal or written statement constituting part or all of the sexual harassment itself is not a "prior statement" that must be excluded if the maker of the statement does not submit to cross-examination about that statement. In other words, a prior statement would not include a document, audio recording, audiovisual reading, and digital media, including but not limited to text messages, emails, and social media postings, that constitute the conduct alleged to have been the act of sexual harassment under the formal complaint. See, OCR Blog (May 22, 2020), available at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/blog/20200522.html>
 - Webber International University will not threaten, coerce, intimidate or discriminate against the party in an attempt to secure the party's participation. See 34 C.F.R. § 106.71; see also 85 Fed. Reg. 30026, 30216 (May 19, 2020).

- If a party does not submit to cross-examination, the decision-maker cannot rely on any prior statements made by that party in reaching a determination regarding responsibility, but may reach a determination regarding responsibility based on evidence that does not constitute a “statement” by that party.
- The decision-maker cannot draw an inference about the determination regarding responsibility based solely on a party’s absence from the live hearing or refusal to answer cross examination or other questions. See 34 C.F.R. §106.45(b)(6)(i).
- The parties shall be subject to the institution’s Rules of Decorum [*Link to Rules of Decorum*].

The Decision-maker

- The hearing body will consist of a single decision-maker.
- No member of the hearing body will also have served as the Title IX Coordinator, Title IX investigator, or advisor to any party in the case, nor may any member of the hearing body serve on the appeals body in the case.
- No member of the hearing body will have a conflict of interest or bias in favor of or against complainants or respondents generally, or in favor or against the parties to the particular case.
- The hearing body will be trained on topics including how to serve impartially, issues of relevance, including how to apply the rape shield protections provided for complainants, and any technology to be used at the hearing.
- The parties will have an opportunity to raise any objections regarding a decision-maker’s actual or perceived conflicts of interest or bias at the commencement of the live hearing.

Advisor of choice

- The parties have the right to select an advisor of their choice, who may be, but does not have to be, an attorney.
- The advisor of choice may accompany the parties to any meeting or hearing they are permitted to attend, but may not speak for the party, except for the purpose of cross-examination [optional: and direct examination].
- The parties are not permitted to conduct cross-examination; it must be conducted by the advisor. As a result, if a party does not select an advisor, the institution will select an advisor to serve in this role for the limited purpose of conducting the cross-examination at no fee or charge to the party.

- The advisor is not prohibited from having a conflict of interest or bias in favor of or against complainants or respondents generally, or in favor or against the parties to the particular case.
- The advisor is not prohibited from being a witness in the matter.
- If a party does not attend the live hearing, the party's advisor may appear and conduct cross-examination on their behalf. 85 Fed. Reg. 30026, 30340 (May 19, 2020).
- If neither a party nor their advisor appear at the hearing, {the institution} will provide an advisor to appear on behalf of the non-appearing party. See, 85 Fed. Reg. 30026, 30339-40 (May 19, 2020).
- Advisors shall be subject to the institution's Rules of Decorum, and may be removed upon violation of those *Rules* [[Link to Rules of Decorum](#)].

Witnesses

- Witnesses cannot be compelled to participate in the live hearing, and have the right not to participate in the hearing free from retaliation. See, 85 Fed. Reg. 30026, 30360 (May 19, 2020).
- If a witness does not submit to cross-examination, as described below, the decision-maker cannot rely on any statements made by that witness in reaching a determination regarding responsibility, including any statement relayed by the absent witness to a witness or party who testifies at the live hearing. 85 Fed. Reg. 30026, 30347 (May 19, 2020).
- Witnesses shall be subject to the institution's Rules of Decorum

Hearing Procedures

For all live hearings conducted under this Title IX Grievance Process, the procedure will be as follows:

- Decision-maker will open and establish rules and expectations for the hearing;
- The Parties will each be given the opportunity to provide opening statements;
- Decision-maker will ask questions of the Parties and Witnesses;
- Parties will be given the opportunity for live cross-examination after Decision-maker conducts its initial round of questioning; During the Parties' cross-

examination, the decision-maker will have the authority to pause cross-examination at any time for the purposes of asking decision-maker's own follow up questions; and any time necessary in order to enforce the established rules of decorum.

- Should a Party or the Party's Advisor choose not to cross-examine a Party or Witness, the Party shall affirmatively waive cross-examination through a written or oral statement to the Decision-maker. A Party's waiver of cross-examination does not eliminate the ability of the Decision-maker to use statements made by the Party.

Live Cross-Examination Procedure

Each party's advisor will conduct live cross-examination of the other party or parties and witnesses. During this live-cross examination the advisor will ask the other party or parties and witnesses relevant questions and follow-up questions, including those challenging credibility directly, orally, and in real time.

Before any cross-examination question is answered, the decision-maker will determine if the question is relevant. [*Link to Model Relevance Policy*]. Cross-examination questions that are duplicative of those already asked, including by the decision-maker may be deemed irrelevant if they have been asked and answered.

Review of {Transcript/Recording}

The recording or transcript of the hearing will be available for review by the parties within five (5) business days, unless there are any extenuating circumstances. The recording/transcript of the hearing will not be provided to parties or advisors of choice.

Determination Regarding Responsibility

Standard of Proof

Webber International University uses the preponderance of the evidence standard for investigations and determinations regarding responsibility of formal complaints covered under this Policy. This means that the investigation and hearing determines whether it is more likely than not that a violation of the Policy occurred.

General Considerations for Evaluating Testimony and Evidence

While the opportunity for cross-examination is required in all Title IX hearings, determinations regarding responsibility may be based in part, or entirely, on documentary, audiovisual, and digital evidence, as warranted in the reasoned judgment of the Decision-maker.

Decision-makers shall not draw inferences regarding a party or witness' credibility based on the party or witness' status as a complainant, respondent, or witness, nor shall it base its judgments in stereotypes about how a party or witness would or should act under the circumstances.

Generally, credibility judgments should rest on the demeanor of the party or witness, the plausibility of their testimony, the consistency of their testimony, and its reliability in light of corroborating or conflicting testimony or evidence.

Still, credibility judgments should not rest on whether a party or witness' testimony is non-linear or incomplete, or if the party or witness is displaying stress or anxiety.

Decision makers will afford the highest weight relative to other testimony to first-hand testimony by parties and witnesses regarding their own memory of specific facts that occurred. Both inculpatory and exculpatory (i.e. tending to prove and disprove the allegations) evidence will be weighed in equal fashion.

Except where specifically barred by the Title IX Final Rule, a witness' testimony regarding third-party knowledge of the facts at issue will be allowed, but will generally be accorded lower weight than testimony regarding direct knowledge of specific facts that occurred.

The Final Rule requires that Webber International University allow parties to call "expert witnesses" for direct and cross examination. If accurate: Webber International University does not provide for expert witnesses in other proceedings. While the expert witness will be allowed to testify and be crossed as required by the Final Rule, the decision-maker will be instructed to afford lower weight to non-factual testimony of the expert relative to fact witnesses, and any expert testimony that is not directed to the specific facts that occurred in the case will be afforded lower weight relative to fact witnesses, regardless of whether the expert witness testimony is the subject of cross examination and regardless of whether all parties present experts as witnesses.

The Final Rule requires that Webber International University allow parties to call character witnesses to testify. If accurate: Webber International University} does not provide for character witnesses in other proceedings. While the character witnesses will be allowed to testify and be crossed as required by the Final Rule, the decision-maker will be instructed to afford very low weight to any non-factual character testimony of any witness.

The Final Rule requires that Webber International University admit and allow testimony regarding polygraph tests ("lie detector tests") and other procedures that are outside of standard use in academic and non-academic conduct processes. While the

processes and testimony about them will be allowed to testify and be crossed as required by the Final Rule, the decision-maker will be instructed to afford lower weight to such processes relative to the testimony of fact witnesses.

Where a party or witness' conduct or statements demonstrate that the party or witness is engaging in retaliatory conduct, including but not limited to witness tampering and intimidation, the Decision-maker may draw an adverse inference as to that party or witness' credibility.

Components of the Determination Regarding Responsibility

The written Determination Regarding Responsibility will be issued simultaneously to all parties through their institution email account, or other reasonable means as necessary. The Determination will include:

1. Identification of the allegations potentially constituting covered sexual harassment;
2. A description of the procedural steps taken from the receipt of the formal complaint through the determination, including any notifications to the parties, interviews with parties and witnesses, site visits, methods used to gather other evidence, and hearings held;
3. Findings of fact supporting the determination;
4. Conclusions regarding which section of *the [Code of Conduct]*, if any, the respondent has or has not violated.
5. For each allegation:
 - a. A statement of, and rationale for, a determination regarding responsibility;
 - b. A statement of, and rationale for, any disciplinary sanctions the recipient imposes on the respondent; and
 - c. A statement of, and rationale for, whether remedies designed to restore or preserve equal access to the recipient's education program or activity will be provided by the recipient to the complainant; and
6. The recipient's procedures and the permitted reasons for the complainant and respondent to appeal (described below in "Appeal").

Timeline of Determination Regarding Responsibility If there are no extenuating circumstances, the determination regarding responsibility will be issued by

Webber International University within ten (10) business days of the completion of the hearing.

Finality

The determination regarding responsibility becomes final either on the date that the institution provides the parties with the written determination of the result of the appeal, if an appeal is filed consistent with the procedures and timeline outlined in “Appeals” below, or if an appeal is not filed, the date on which the opportunity to appeal expires.

Appeals

Each party may appeal (1) the dismissal of a formal complaint or any included allegations and/or (2) a determination regarding responsibility. To appeal, a party must submit their written appeal within five (5) business days of being notified of the decision, indicating the grounds for the appeal.

The limited grounds for appeal available are as follows:

- Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter (i.e. a failure to follow the institution’s own procedures);
- 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;
- The Title IX Coordinator, investigator(s), or decision-maker(s) had a conflict of interest or bias for or against an individual party, or for or against complainants or respondents in general, that affected the outcome of the matter.
- Institutions may add other grounds for appeal, e.g. severity of sanctions.

The submission of appeal stays any sanctions for the pendency of an appeal. Supportive measures and remote learning opportunities remain available during the pendency of the appeal.

If a party appeals, the institution will as soon as practicable notify the other party in writing of the appeal, however the time for appeal shall be offered equitably to all parties and shall not be extended for any party solely because the other party filed an appeal.

Appeals may be no longer than 700 words or 4 pages (including attachments). Appeals should be submitted in electronic form using ARIAL or TIMES NEW ROMAN, 12 point font, and single-spaced. Appeals should use footnotes, not endnotes. Appeals that do not meet these standards may be returned to the party for correction, but the time for appeal will not be extended unless there is evidence that technical malfunction caused the appeal document not to meet these standards.

Appeals will be decided by Dr. H. Keith Wade, President and CEO. Outcome of appeal will be provided in writing simultaneously to both parties, and include rationale for the decision.

Retaliation

Webber International University will keep the identity of any individual who has made a report or complaint of sex discrimination confidential, including the identity of any individual who has made a report or filed a Formal Complaint of sexual harassment under this Title IX Grievance Policy, any Complainant, any individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of sex discrimination, any Respondent, and any witness, except as permitted by the FERPA statute, 20 U.S.C. 1232g, or FERPA regulations, 34 CFR part 99, or as required by law, or to carry out the purposes of 34 CFR part 106, including the conduct of any investigation, hearing, or judicial proceeding under this Title IX Grievance Policy.

No person may intimidate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 or its implementing regulations.

No person may intimidate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any individual because the individual has made a report or complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation, proceeding or hearing under this Title IX Grievance Policy.

Any intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination, for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX or its implementing regulations constitutes retaliation. This includes any charges filed against an individual for code of conduct violations that do not involve sex discrimination or sexual harassment, but that arise from the same facts or circumstances as a report or complaint of sex discrimination or a report or Formal Complaint of sexual harassment.

Complaints alleging retaliation may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator.

