Title IX Policy

Effective August 14, 2020

Effective August 14, 2020, the University will implement the specific procedural requirements described below to address complaints of sexual harassment as defined under Title IX. These procedures apply equally to both parties, whether the party is a University student, faculty, staff member or other individual participating or seeking to participate in a University education program or activity. Parties to a matter are encouraged to contact the Title IX Coordinator directly with any questions or concerns regarding the application of these procedures or rights contained herein.

PURPOSE

To establish The Pennsylvania State University’s (“Penn State” or the “University”) policy prohibiting sexual harassment and misconduct, including, but not limited to, acts of sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking, in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (“Title IX”). This Policy references other University policies which may be implicated in University disciplinary procedures related to conduct that falls outside the scope of this Policy.

I. NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Penn State is committed to equal access to programs, facilities, admission and employment for all persons. It is the policy of the University to maintain an environment free of harassment and free of discrimination against any person because of age, race, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, creed, service in the uniformed services (as defined in state and federal law), veteran status, sex, sexual orientation, marital or family status, pregnancy, pregnancy-related conditions, physical or mental disability, gender, perceived gender, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information or political ideas. Discriminatory conduct and harassment, as well as sexual misconduct and relationship violence, violates the dignity of individuals, impedes the realization of the University’s educational mission, and will not be tolerated. Gender-based and sexual harassment, including sexual violence, are forms of gender discrimination in that they deny or limit an individual’s ability to participate in or benefit from University programs or activities.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

Conduct prohibited by this Policy may also violate Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as well as other applicable federal and state laws. It is the responsibility of the University’s Title IX Coordinator to ensure that the University meets its obligations under Title IX. Title IX is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in public and private educational institutions that receive Federal funds. Because Penn State is a recipient of Federal funds, the University must fully comply with the provisions of Title IX and its regulations.

The University will provide regular, mandatory training for all University employees related to issues covered under this Policy. All University employees will be required to complete Title IX training within the first 30 days of employment at the University. In addition, all University
employees will be required to complete an annual Compliance Training as a reminder of
reporting requirements and procedures.

The University will publish training materials on titleix.psu.edu which are up to date and reflect the
latest training provided to Title IX personnel.

III. APPLICABILITY

All students, faculty, staff, affiliates, and other individuals participating or attempting to
participate in University programs and activities are subject to this Policy. This Policy applies to
conduct which occurs within the United States, either on Penn State property or off campus in a
Penn State-sanctioned education program or activity.

IV. FREE EXPRESSION AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The University is committed to its long-standing tradition of academic freedom and free
expression. The University is an institution whose members may express themselves, while
protecting and respecting the rights of others to learn, to conduct research, and to carry out the
essential functions of the University free from interference or obstruction. When addressing
complaints of alleged violations of this Policy, the University will take all permissible actions to
respond appropriately while respecting the rights of free expression and academic freedom. See
Penn State Policies AC64, AC47 and AD51.

V. AMNESTY FOR STUDENTS

The University strongly encourages students to report incidents that may violate Title
IX. Therefore, students who act responsibly by reporting to the appropriate authorities
information about conduct violating this Policy typically will not face University disciplinary
action for their own drug or alcohol possession or consumption in connection with the reported
incident.

VI. RETALIATION PROHIBITED & CORRECTIVE ACTION

This Policy prohibits intimidation, threats, coercion, and discrimination against any individual
for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX, or 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.

Pursuant to Penn State Policy AD67 and this Policy, Retaliation is, in itself, a violation of this
Policy and the law, and is a serious separate offense. See Penn State Policy AD67. Complaints
alleging Retaliation for exercising rights pursuant to or engaging in the process set forth in this
Policy shall be handled in accordance with the grievance procedures set forth herein.
Furthermore, the Title IX Coordinator will ensure that prompt corrective action is taken if either party experiences retaliation or if the complainant is subjected to further violations or if the original sanctions imposed on the Respondent are ineffective to protect the safety and well-being of the Complainant or other members of the University community. The Title IX Coordinator will also take reasonable steps to eliminate any hostile environment that has been created, such as overseeing the implementation of trainings and disseminating informational materials.

VII. FALSE REPORTS

Willfully making a false report of Title IX Prohibited Conduct is a violation of University Policy and is a serious offense. Any person who willfully makes or participates in making a false or frivolous report under this Policy may be subject to disciplinary action. False reporting may also violate state criminal statutes and civil defamation laws.

VIII. PRIVACY AND DISCLOSURE

To provide an orderly process for the presentation and consideration of relevant information without undue intimidation or pressure, the Title IX process is not open to the general public. Accordingly, documents prepared in anticipation of the hearings (including the Formal Complaint, the investigative report, the notices of hearing, and any prehearing submissions referenced above) and documents, testimony, or other information introduced at the hearings may not be disclosed outside of the hearing process, except as may be required or authorized by law or legal proceedings. In particular, in order to respect the reasonable privacy of all participants, no party, Advisor, or witness may record Title IX hearing(s) or disclose any recording of the hearing(s) or any portion thereof. A recording of the hearing will be created and maintained by the University. Any violation of these confidentiality requirements may result in sanctions.

Neither party will be required to abide by a nondisclosure agreement, in writing or otherwise, that would prevent the re-disclosure of information related to the final outcome of the grievance process or appeal process.

IX. TITLE IX TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

a. Advisor

An individual who has agreed to serve as an informal provider of support and advice for a Complainant or Respondent. Both parties may select an individual of their choice to serve as their Advisor. Both parties have the right to have their Advisor present during any grievance proceeding or any related meeting, who may be, but need not be, an attorney. The University will appoint an Advisor for parties who have not selected their own. The role of the Advisor is to assist and guide the party during all related University Title IX proceedings. The Advisor, upon a party’s request may (1) accompany the party in any related meeting/proceeding, (2) advise the party in the preparation and presentation of sharing of information, (3) conduct cross-examination in Title IX hearings on behalf of the party they represent, and (4) advise the party in the preparation of any appeals. The Advisor shall not
perform any function in the process other than advising the party and may not make a presentation or represent the party, other than at the Title IX hearing. If, at any point, an Advisor becomes disruptive or fails to follow the rules for participation as set forth in this Policy, the University reserves the absolute and non-appealable right to remove the Advisor from the proceeding, and, if appropriate, any future meetings/proceedings. If a party’s Advisor is removed, that party may choose another Advisor or otherwise will have one appointed for them by the University. For additional information on the role of an Advisor, see Section XIII of this Policy.

b. **Complainant**
A Complainant is an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute Title IX Prohibited Conduct. A Complainant who files a Formal Complaint must be participating in, or attempting to participate in, the education program or activity of the University.

c. **Consent**
Consent is a knowing, voluntary, and mutual decision among all participants to engage in sexual activity. Consent must be informed, freely given and mutual. If intimidation, threats, or physical force are used there is no consent. If a person is mentally or physically incapacitated so that such person cannot understand the fact, nature or extent of the sexual situation, there is no consent. This includes incapacitation due to alcohol or drug consumption, or being asleep or unconscious, where the respondent knew or reasonably should have known that the person was incapacitated. Inducement of incapacitation of another with the intent to affect the ability of an individual to consent or refuse to consent to sexual contact almost always, if not always, negates consent. Silence, in and of itself, cannot be interpreted as consent. Consent can be given by words or actions, as long as those words or actions consist of an affirmative, unambiguous, conscious decision by each participant to engage in mutually agreed-upon sexual activity. Consent can be limited, meaning consent to any one form of sexual activity cannot automatically imply consent to any other forms of sexual activity. Consent is revocable, meaning consent can be withdrawn at any time. Thus, consent must be ongoing throughout a sexual encounter. Whether a person has taken advantage of a position of influence over an alleged victim may be a factor in determining consent.

d. **Days**
Days refer to business days, excluding weekends and those days which are designated as holidays by the official University calendar or by action of the University President or Provost, unless otherwise specified herein.

e. **Education Program or Activity**
Education Program or Activity includes locations, events, or circumstances over which the University exercises substantial control over both the Respondent and the context in which the Title IX Prohibited Conduct occurs, and also includes any building owned or controlled by a student organization that is officially recognized by the University.

f. **Emergency Removal**
The University may remove a Respondent from the University’s education program or activity, on an emergency basis, after undertaking an individualized safety and risk analysis, if such analysis determines that there is an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student, employee or other individual (including the Respondent themselves) arising from the allegations of Prohibited Conduct. In the case of such removal, the University will provide the Respondent with notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal.

The process for an emergency removal of students is described in the Office of Student Conduct’s Interim Suspension procedures document. The process for administrative leave for employees will be managed consistent with HR and departmental policies.

g. **Formal Complaint**
A document filed by a Complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging Prohibited Conduct (as defined herein) against a Respondent and requesting that the University investigate the allegation of Prohibited Conduct. At the time of filing a Formal Complaint, a Complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in one of the University’s programs or activities. A Formal Complaint filed by a Complainant may be a document or electronic submission (such as by e-mail or through an online portal) but must contain the Complainant’s physical or digital signature, or otherwise indicate that the Complainant is the person filing the Formal Complaint.

h. **Hearing Panel**
The mixed-gender, three (3)-person panel who are members of the University’s Title IX Hearing Board (i.e., the full pool of trained Title IX hearing officers) charged with adjudicating alleged violations of this Policy. Only individuals who have participated in Title IX Hearing Panel training conducted by Penn State or comparable in-depth panel training will be permitted to serve on Title IX Hearing Panels. Students are not permitted to serve on Title IX Hearing Panels.

i. **Notice Triggering the University’s Response Obligation**
Notice to the Title IX Coordinator, or to an official with authority to institute corrective measures on the University’s behalf, triggers the University’s response obligations under this Policy. Such officials include the Title IX Coordinator, Deputy Title IX Coordinators, the Office of Sexual Misconduct Prevention & Response, the Office of Student Conduct, the Affirmative Action Office, Human Resources, and other employees with Supervisory Authority.

j. **Prohibited Conduct**
Sexual harassment under Title IX (“Prohibited Conduct”) means conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive and objectively offensive that it denies a person equal access to the University’s Education Program or Activity (“Title IX Sexual Harassment”).
2. An employee of the University conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the University on an individual’s participation in unwelcome sexual conduct (“Quid Pro Quo Harassment”).

3. Sexual Assault, Dating Violence, Domestic Violence, or Stalking:
   (i) *Sexual Assault* (as defined in Clery Act - 20 U.S.C. § 1092(f)(6)(A)(v)). The term “sexual assault” means any nonconsensual sexual act proscribed by Federal, tribal, or State law, including when the victim lacks capacity to consent.

   (ii) *Dating Violence* (as defined in VAWA - 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(10)). The term “dating violence” means 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; and,
   (iii) the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.

   (iii) *Domestic Violence* (as defined in VAWA - 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(8)). The term “domestic violence” includes 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 the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction receiving grant monies, 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 the jurisdiction.

   (iv) *Stalking* (as defined in VAWA - 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(30)). The term “stalking” means 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.

k. **Remedies**

   Remedies are provided to a Complainant where a determination of responsibility for Prohibited Conduct has been made against the Respondent, following a grievance process that complies with this Policy. Remedies must be designed to restore or preserve access to the University’s Education Program or Activity. Remedies may include disciplinary sanctions or other actions against a Respondent, such as individualized Supportive Measures as defined below; however, Remedies need not be non-disciplinary or non-punitive and need not avoid burdening the Respondent.
The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for ensuring effective implementation of any Remedies.

l. **Respondent**
A Respondent is an individual who has been alleged to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute Title IX Prohibited Conduct.

m. **Retaliation.**
Retaliation means any adverse action taken by a member of the University faculty, staff, or student body against any individual on the basis of a complaint made by such individual, or on the basis of such individual’s participation in an investigation, hearing, or inquiry by the University, or participation in a court proceeding relating to suspected Prohibited Conduct at the University. Retaliation shall include, but not be limited to, harassment, discrimination, threats of physical harm, job termination, punitive work schedule or research assignments, decrease in pay or responsibilities, or negative impact on academic progress. See Penn State Policy AD67.

n. **Supervisor / Supervisory Authority.**
A University employee who has the power to control or influence another person’s academic advancement, employment, or extracurricular participation, including but not limited to, admission, grades, assignments, evaluations, hiring, athletic participation, work conditions, compensation, promotion, discipline, supervision of dissertations/theses, recommendations, financial support, or participation in extracurricular programs.

o. **Supportive Measures**
Supportive Measures are non-disciplinary, non-punitive, individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge to the Complainant or the Respondent before or after the filing of a Formal Complaint or where no Formal Complaint has been filed. Supportive Measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to the University’s Education Program or Activity without unreasonably burdening the other party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or the University’s educational environment, or to deter Prohibited Conduct.

p. **Time Periods**
The University will make every reasonable effort to resolve complaints in reasonably prompt timeframes. Stated timelines are not binding and create no rights for the parties. The University can extend the deadlines at its discretion.

There is no time limit on a Complainant’s decision to bring a report or file a Formal Complaint, but at the time of filing a Formal Complaint, a Complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in the University’s education program or activity.

X. **REPORTING**

The Title IX Coordinator is the individual designated by the University to coordinate its efforts to comply with Title IX responsibilities.
Any person may report sex discrimination, including sexual harassment (whether or not the individual 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 email, using the contact information listed below. Such a report may be made at any time, including during non-business hours, by using the telephone number or email address, or by mail to the office address, listed for the Title IX Coordinator.\footnote{Note that due to shelter-in-place and other restrictions related to Covid-19, currently in-person access is restricted. Please contact the Title IX Coordinator by any of the other methods listed.}

**Title IX Coordinator**
Chris Harris, Title IX Coordinator
328 Boucke Building
University Park, PA 16802
(814) 863-0471
titleix@psu.edu

**Deputy Title IX Coordinators**
The Title IX Coordinator may delegate responsibility for handling a report to a Deputy Title IX Coordinator, as appropriate, or may refer the matter to another office or individual in the event the matter reported falls outside of the scope of this Policy:

**Title IX Matters Involving Student Respondents**
Office of Sexual Misconduct Prevention & Response
220 Boucke Building
University Park, PA 16802
(814) 867-0099

**Title IX Matters Involving Employees (faculty and staff) or Third-Party Respondents**
Affirmative Action Office
328 Boucke Building
University Park, PA 16802
(814) 863-0471

**Reports to Law Enforcement**
If you are in immediate danger, or if you believe there could be an ongoing threat to you or the community, please call 911. For conduct that could also constitute a crime under Pennsylvania law, a Complainant is encouraged—but not required—to contact the police by dialing 911 or the local police agency in the jurisdiction in which the alleged incident occurred. Contacting law enforcement to make a report allows for forensic evidence to be collected, including a SART exam if needed, which may be helpful if a decision is made to pursue criminal charges. University officials will assist you in contacting local law enforcement authorities, if you request assistance. If you believe that there is an ongoing threat to your safety from a particular individual, you may request an emergency Protection from Abuse Order (PFA) or Sexual Violence Protection Order (SVPO). If the alleged incident occurred on the Penn State campus
campus (and the alleged incident is not ongoing), individuals may contact Penn State University Police and Public Safety at its non-emergency telephone number (814) 863-1111.

A. Supportive Measures

Throughout the processes and procedures outlined in this Policy, the Complainant(s) and Respondent(s) shall be offered appropriate Supportive Measures and protection from retaliation. See Penn State Policy AD67. The Complainant(s) shall also be informed by the Title IX Coordinator or their designee how to make a Formal Complaint to the University under Title IX, and/or a criminal report, and how to file a complaint with the appropriate state or federal agency. Supportive Measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to the University’s education programs and activities without unreasonably burdening the other party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or the University’s educational environment, or deter sexual harassment. Upon notice that any person has allegedly experienced actions that could constitute Title IX Prohibited Conduct, the Title IX Coordinator or their designee will respond promptly by offering Supportive Measures and an explanation of the Complainant’s option to file a Formal Complaint that will initiate a formal investigation.

The party is not required to file a Formal Complaint to receive Supportive Measures. The provision of Supportive Measures will not be conditioned on the Complainant’s participation in any formal investigation, whether the investigation is initiated by a Formal Complaint made by the Complainant or by the Title IX Coordinator. Additionally, the Complainant may report the alleged conduct solely for the purposes of receiving Supportive Measures and may choose to file a Formal Complaint at a later date, if at all.

Supportive Measures are not designed or permitted to be punitive or disciplinary measures (sanctions) imposed against a Respondent. The Respondent is presumed to be not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination is made at the conclusion of the grievance process. Both a Complainant and a Respondent may have good-faith bases for requesting Supportive Measures. The University will consider the request of either party for Supportive Measures and implement them where it is deemed reasonable and appropriate.

Supportive Measures may include emotional support and counseling with a confidential resource, extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments, modifications of work or class schedules, campus escort services, mutual restrictions on contact between the parties, changes in work or housing locations, leaves of absence, increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus, no-contact directives, emergency removal and other similar measures. The University must maintain as confidential any Supportive Measures provided to the Complainant or Respondent, to the extent that maintaining such confidentiality would not impair the ability of the University to provide the Supportive Measures.

The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the effective implementation of Supportive Measures.

B. Emergency Removal / Individualized Safety and Risk Analysis
In rare circumstances, the University may remove a Respondent from the University’s education program or activity, on an emergency basis but only after undertaking an individualized safety and risk analysis and only if such analysis determines that there is an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student, employee or other individual arising from the allegations of Prohibited Conduct (including the Respondent themselves). In matters that involve student Respondents, the Senior Director, Office of Student Conduct, will complete the individualized safety and risk assessment. If the Senior Director or designee reasonably believes that such a threat is posed, an interim suspension may be assigned. In the case of such removal the University will provide the student Respondent with notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal. See Interim Suspension procedures.

For matters involving employee Respondents, the Affirmative Action Office (AAO), in consultation with the employee’s Supervisor and other relevant University officials, will undertake an individualized safety and risk analysis to determine whether the allegations indicate the Respondent poses an imminent threat to the physical health or safety of any person arising from the allegations of Prohibited Conduct. If the University determines administrative leave is appropriate, the employee Respondent will be provided with notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal.

C. Informal Report

Notice to a Title IX Coordinator or to an official with authority to institute corrective measures on the University’s behalf triggers the University’s response obligations.

Upon receipt of notice of an allegation of Prohibited Conduct (which may come from any individual), the Title IX Coordinator or their designee will promptly contact the Complainant to discuss the availability of Supportive Measures, consider the Complainant’s wishes with respect to Supportive Measures, inform the Complainant of the availability of Supportive Measures with or without the filing of a Formal Complaint, and explain to the Complainant the process for filing a Formal Complaint. A Complainant’s wishes with respect to whether the University investigates should be respected unless the Title IX Coordinator determines that signing a Formal Complaint over the wishes of the Complainant is not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances.

D. Formal Complaint

A Formal Complaint alleges Prohibited Conduct against a Respondent and requests that the University investigate the allegation. There is no deadline for a Complainant to file a Formal Complaint alleging Prohibited Conduct and requesting that the University invoke the formal investigatory process; however, the Complainant must be participating or attempting to participate in the University’s education program or activity at the time the Formal Complaint is filed. The passage of time may impact the University’s ability to gather information related to the incident.

A Formal Complaint must be signed and must include a description of the alleged Prohibited Conduct, including the name or names of persons allegedly responsible for the alleged
misconduct, the time, date and location of the alleged misconduct, if known, and the names of
any potential witnesses, if known. The Formal Complaint can be submitted in person, online via
e-mail or by using the University’s online reporting form: https://titleix.psu.edu/. The signature
on the Formal Complaint can be electronic (i.e., an email signature containing the first and last
name of the Complainant). The signature can be on a written document submitted in person to
the Title IX Coordinator. In some circumstances, it is the Title IX Coordinator who will file the
Formal Complaint. Under those circumstances, the Title IX Coordinator will sign the Formal
Complaint.

i. Initial Assessment.

The Title IX Coordinator shall make an initial assessment as to whether the Formal Complaint
on its face alleges an act of Prohibited Conduct and whether the Prohibited Conduct is covered
by this Policy. If not, Title IX requires that the University dismiss the matter as described below.
If such a determination is reached, the Complainant will receive an explanation in writing,
including information regarding the appeal process, referrals to other appropriate administrative
units, University officials, or resources to assist the Complainant. A required dismissal under
Title IX does not mean that the University cannot or will not review and respond to the alleged
behavior under other applicable federal regulations or University policies. These include Title
VII and relevant University policies such as the Code of Conduct and the University’s
Discrimination, Harassment, and Related Inappropriate Conduct Policy (Penn State Policy
AD91). In those cases, the Title IX Coordinator will refer the matter to the appropriate office for
management.

ii. Dismissal Prior to Investigation

a. Mandatory
   If the initial assessment determines that the conduct alleged in the Formal Complaint
would not constitute Prohibited Conduct even if true, did not occur in the University’s
Education Program or Activity, or did not occur against a person in the United States,
then the University must dismiss the Formal Complaint with regard to that conduct
for purposes of this Policy as required by Title IX.

i. Written Notice of Dismissal before Investigation. Upon dismissal, the
   University shall promptly send written notice of the dismissal, rationale, and
   information regarding the appeal process simultaneously to the parties.

ii. Referral. Dismissal does not preclude action under another applicable University
   Policy. In the event of dismissal for purposes of this Policy, the Title IX
   Coordinator may refer the matter to the appropriate office for consideration under
   another University Policy. Matters will be referred as follows:
   (a) Matters in which the Respondent is a student will be referred to the Office
       of Student Conduct.
   (b) Matters in which the Respondent is an employee (faculty and staff) or third
       party will be referred to Affirmative Action Office.

b. Discretionary
The Complainant may request a dismissal of the Formal Complaint. The Complainant must notify the Title IX Coordinator in writing that they wish to withdraw the Formal Complaint or any allegation(s) therein. Upon receipt and review of the request for dismissal, the Title IX Coordinator may dismiss the Formal Complaint. A Complainant may re-file the complaint at a later date and request a continuation of the formal investigation process or voluntarily agree to an informal resolution process.

Under certain circumstances, the Title IX Coordinator may determine that a Complainant’s request for a dismissal cannot be granted because of the presence of aggravating factors. In those circumstances, the University may choose to proceed with the investigation despite the request by the Complainant(s) for a dismissal of the Formal Complaint. If such a decision is made, the Complainant(s) will be notified in writing regarding the reason(s) for the decision. Aggravating factors include, but are not limited to:

- the nature and scope of the alleged conduct, including whether the reported behavior involves the use of a weapon;
- the respective ages and roles of the Complainant and Respondent;
- the role of drugs and/or alcohol in the incident;
- the risk posed to any individual or to the campus community by not proceeding, including the risk of additional harassment or violence;
- whether there have been other reports of misconduct or other verified misconduct by the Respondent;
- whether the report reveals a pattern of related misconduct (e.g., via illicit use of drugs or alcohol) at a given location or by a particular group;
- whether the University possesses other means to obtain relevant evidence;
- fairness considerations for both the Complainant and the Respondent;
- the University’s obligation to provide a safe and non-discriminatory environment; and,
- any other available and relevant information.

A Formal Complaint also may be dismissed if the Respondent is no longer enrolled at or employed by the University, or if there are specific circumstances that prevent the University from gathering evidence necessary to make a determination or carry out the grievance process (for example, the identities of the people involved are not known). In all cases, the Title IX Coordinator will notify the parties in writing regarding any dismissal, including the reason(s) for the dismissal and the parties’ right to appeal.

iii. Appeal from Dismissal

If a Formal Complaint is dismissed, both parties will have the equal right to appeal consistent with the procedures outlined in Section XVI of this Policy.
XI. VOLUNTARY INFORMAL RESOLUTION

At any time after a Formal Complaint has been submitted, but before a final determination regarding responsibility has been made, the parties may enter a voluntary, informal resolution process. A Formal Complaint must be filed before informal resolution can be considered. An informal resolution process cannot be applied in matters where an employee is accused of sexually harassing a student. If the parties agree to participate in an informal resolution process, it is the University’s responsibility to ensure that the matter is resolved within a reasonably prompt timeframe. Further, the University cannot compel a party to participate in an informal resolution process.

To participate in a voluntary informal resolution process, both parties must:

- Provide voluntary written consent acknowledging that they are willingly entering into an informal resolution process.
- Agree, in writing, that all sanctions or other conditions designed to address the behavior will be applied by the Respondent’s immediate Supervisor and/or the Associate Vice President for Affirmative Action in consultation with the Title IX Coordinator for all employee and third-party matters. For cases that involve student Respondents, the sanctions or other conditions designed to address the behavior will be applied by the Senior Director, Office of Student Conduct, in consultation with the Title IX Coordinator.
- Acknowledge, in writing, that they are aware of their right to withdraw from the informal resolution process and resume the formal investigation process at any time prior to agreeing to a resolution.

The voluntary informal resolution process will be managed by the Affirmative Action Office (AAO) for employee and third party-related matters and by the Office of Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response (OSMPR) for student-related matters.

XII. INVESTIGATION OF FORMAL COMPLAINT

The University must conduct an adequate, reliable, objective, and impartial investigation of all Formal Complaints. This means that the University is committed to providing both parties with appropriate and adequate notice at all phases of the process and an equal opportunity to provide information to the investigator(s) during the investigatory process and review documents gathered as part of the investigation. Each party will be provided with an equal opportunity to review and respond to such information. In all cases, the Respondent is presumed to be not responsible for the alleged conduct unless and until a determination is made of responsibility at the conclusion of the grievance process.

During the investigative process, the University investigator(s) will gather and review all relevant evidence, taking into consideration both the inculpatory (incriminating) and exculpatory (information that demonstrates no wrongdoing) aspects of that information prior to rendering a final decision. While the parties are encouraged to provide all pertinent information to the investigators, the burden of gathering evidence remains at all times on the University. Such information may include the names of potential witnesses and documentary evidence such as...
emails, text messages or other similar electronic communications. The information may also include, in some cases, medical, psychological, or other treatment records, provided that the party provides the investigator with written consent to consider and include the treatment records in the investigation. If the party provides the investigator with written consent, the treatment documents will become part of the evidentiary file, which both parties have the right to review.

The University will take reasonable steps to gather initial facts and evidence by providing both parties with an opportunity to meet with the investigator. The investigator may request additional interviews with a party or parties based on information gathered during the investigation. During every interview, the Complainant and Respondent will have opportunities to provide the investigator with their recollection of the alleged incident(s), the names of witnesses and copies of documents. Providing information to the investigator, whether submitted verbally or by the submission of documents, or both, is voluntary for all parties. The University cannot compel a party or witness to answer any questions during the interview or submit documents or otherwise make any statements; however, the parties are encouraged to provide relevant information to the investigator. A party or witness’s decision not to participate in the investigation, in whole or in part, will be documented in the investigative report.

The University will seek to complete the investigation and any additional necessary processes within a prompt and reasonable amount of time, typically not to exceed 120 days. This timeline is not binding and creates no rights for the parties. The University can extend deadlines at its discretion. If temporary delays occur, the Complainant and Respondent will be notified in writing regarding the reason(s) for the delay. The parties will be notified, in writing, when the investigation resumes, if there was a temporary pause.

The University may, in its discretion, consolidate Formal Complaints where the allegations arise out of the same facts. The University will investigate the allegations in any Formal Complaint not subject to dismissal. The Title IX Coordinator will designate an individual (who will not be the Title IX Coordinator) to conduct an investigation of a Formal Complaint, when a decision is made not to dismiss such complaint and when informal resolution is not appropriate or both parties do not give voluntary, informed, written consent to informal resolution in accordance with the processes below. The burden of gathering evidence and the burden of proof is on the University.

Both parties have the right to have their Advisor present during any grievance proceeding or any related meeting, who may be, but need not be, an attorney. An Advisor should not be selected with the actual or effective purpose of disrupting or attempting to disrupt the Title IX grievance process, or of causing emotional distress to any party. Parties may consult with their Advisors quietly or in writing during any meetings, but the Advisor may not speak on behalf of the advisee or directly participate otherwise in the proceedings, other than at the Title IX hearing. Delays in the conduct process will not normally be allowed due to scheduling conflicts with Advisors.

A. Investigation Process

   i. Notice of Allegations and Investigation
Both parties will simultaneously receive written notification of the allegations and notice that the University has initiated a formal investigation. The “Notice of Allegations and Investigation” will include:

1) A reasonably detailed description of the alleged behavior including the names of relevant parties, description of the alleged offending behavior(s) and the date, time, and locations of the incident(s), if known. It will also include 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.

2) A statement regarding the standard of evidence to be used in considering the facts and evidence. A “preponderance” standard means that it is more likely than not, based upon the totality of all relevant evidence and reasonable inferences from the evidence, that the Respondent engaged in the Prohibited Conduct.

3) A statement apprising the party of their opportunity to present relevant facts and witnesses. In all formal investigations, both parties will have an equal opportunity to present information to the investigator, including the names of witnesses and other relevant information.

4) A description of the University’s investigative procedures and a list of the parties’ rights, including the right to inspect and review all evidence obtained by the investigator(s) (including evidence upon which the University does not intend to rely in reaching a determination regarding responsibility), and the right for each party to have an Advisor of their choice present at any grievance proceeding or any related meeting.

5) The range of possible sanctions and remedies.

6) The bases for appeal and procedures associated with the appeal process.

7) Information regarding Supportive Measures available to both Complainants and Respondents.

8) A statement regarding the University Policy prohibiting Retaliation (See Penn State Policy AD67).

9) A statement regarding the University’s requirement for all parties that they will not make false statements or knowingly submit false information as prohibited by University rules and regulations.

Within five days of receipt of the Notice of Allegations and Investigation, both parties shall provide the Title IX Coordinator written notice of their Advisor’s name and contact information.

ii. Amended Notice

If, during the course of the investigation, the University acquires information previously unknown or unavailable to the investigator at the time of the original notice (e.g. names of previously unknown relevant parties, dates of incident(s), the times or locations of incident(s), or additional allegations of misconduct involving the Respondent), the University will revise the Notice of Allegations and Investigation to include this information and simultaneously provide the parties with an amended copy of the notice.

If the University acquires information that suggests that additional Title IX Prohibited Conduct may have occurred, in addition to the alleged Title IX Prohibited Conduct raised in
the initial complaint, the University may investigate the additional allegations concurrently with the initial allegation. All parties will be provided with a reasonable amount of time to respond to the new allegations, including the right to present relevant information to the investigator.

iii. Preliminary Investigative Report

At the conclusion of the initial investigation, the investigator will draft a preliminary investigative report that includes all evidence gathered, including the evidence upon which the University does not intend to rely in reaching a determination regarding responsibility and all inculpatory and exculpatory evidence, and all evidence obtained as a part of the investigation that is directly related to the allegations in the formal complaint. The investigator will send the preliminary investigative report to the Title IX Coordinator for review within five (5) days of receipt. The investigator will send the preliminary investigative report to each party and their Advisors in an electronic format other than email, such as a secure file-sharing platform of the University’s choosing, with at least ten (10) days for the parties to submit a written response. The parties and their Advisors will not be permitted to download, copy, photograph or take other measures designed to retain copies of the preliminary investigative report.

At the conclusion of the review period, the University will remove the parties’ electronic access to the preliminary investigative report. If the University is unable to provide the parties access to the materials due to extraordinary and unforeseen circumstances, the investigator will provide the parties with a hard copy of the evidence in person or, if the distance between the parties and the investigator prohibits such delivery, a copy will be sent to the parties using registered mail requiring the recipient’s signature. Parties who receive a hard copy of the preliminary investigative report by registered mail will be required to return the copy to the investigator at the conclusion of the review period by using registered mail requiring a signature by the recipient.

The investigator will consider the parties’ responses to the preliminary investigative report and, if warranted, shall conduct additional investigation based thereon. The parties recognize that such additional information may cause the timelines for the completion of the investigation and grievance process to be extended.

iv. Final Investigative Report

The investigator, after reviewing and considering the parties’ responses to the preliminary investigative report and conducting any additional investigation, will complete the final Investigative report that fairly summarizes the relevant evidence and will send the report to the Title IX Coordinator.

Within five (5) days of receipt of the final investigative report, the Title IX Coordinator will make a determination that: (1) the University will convene a hearing before an impartial fact-finding Hearing Panel who will hear testimony from the parties and relevant witnesses, review the relevant evidence, and make a determination as to responsibility OR (2) the matter will be dismissed because the investigation revealed facts that either: (a) require a dismissal under
Title IX (e.g., the conduct alleged would not constitute Title IX Prohibited Conduct, even if true, did not occur in the University’s Education Program or Activity, or did not occur in the United States); or, (b) allow for a dismissal (e.g., if the Complainant notifies the Title IX Coordinator in writing that they would like to withdraw the Formal Complaint, the Respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by the University, or specific circumstances prevent the investigator from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination as to the Formal Complaint or allegations therein). If a determination is made to dismiss the Formal Complaint, the parties may exercise their right to appeal using one or more of the bases for appeal set forth below. In the absence of a dismissal, the matter will be forwarded to the appropriate University Hearing Panel for disposition.

The investigator will send to each party and their Advisors the final investigative report (including the Title IX Coordinator’s determination) for their inspection and review using a secure file-sharing platform of the University’s choice.

The parties and their Advisors will not be permitted to download, copy, photograph or take other measures designed to retain copies of the final investigative report. If the University is unable to provide the parties access to the materials due to extraordinary and unforeseen circumstances, a hard copy of the evidence will be provided to the parties in person or, if the distance between the parties and the investigator prohibits such delivery, a copy will be sent to the parties using registered mail requiring the recipient’s signature. The same restrictions regarding copying, photographing or otherwise making attempts to retain a copy of the preliminary investigative report apply to the final investigative report. Parties who receive a hard copy of the final investigative report by registered mail will be required to return the copy to the investigator at the conclusion of the review period by using registered mail requiring a signature by the recipient.

XIII. FORMAL HEARING PROCESS

A. Receipt of Final Investigative Report. Within five (5) days of receipt of the final investigative report, the Title IX Coordinator or their designee will select the members of the Title IX Hearing Panel and will provide a copy of the final investigative report to the members of the Hearing Panel. Promptly after selection of the Hearing Panel members, the Title IX Coordinator or their designee will provide concurrent written notice to the parties of the date, time and location of the hearing.

B. Responsibilities of Hearing Panel & Parties. The Hearing Panel is required to objectively evaluate all relevant evidence both inculpatory and exculpatory, and to independently reach a determination regarding responsibility. The University may provide an attorney from its Office of General Counsel, or outside counsel, to advise the Hearing Panel.

Responsibilities of the Hearing Panel:

i. Ensure that only relevant cross-examination questions must be answered by a party or witness before the party or witness answers. The Hearing Panel may exclude questions that are irrelevant or duplicative.
ii. Ensure that the hearing process is administered in a fair and impartial manner and that all participants observe basic standards of decorum and that all questions are asked and answered in a respectful, non-argumentative, and non-abusive way. The Hearing Panel will be responsible for ensuring that all parties and witnesses are protected from answering questions designed to be harassing, intimidating, or abusive.

iii. Render a decision using a preponderance of the evidence standard using the facts as presented through careful examination of the final investigative report, witness testimony, including cross-examination, and the review of all relevant evidence.

Responsibilities of the Parties at the Hearing (Complainant and Respondent):
   i. Truthfully answer questions posed by the Hearing Panel.
   ii. Truthfully answer relevant questions posed by the other party via their Advisor.
   iii. Attend the hearing in its entirety, being present for all witness testimony.
   iv. Adhere to basic standards of decorum by answering questions posed by the Hearing Panel or a party’s Advisor in a respectful, non-argumentative, and non-abusive way.

C. General Rules for the Hearing

1. Technical rules of process and evidence, such as those applied in criminal or civil court, are not used in these proceedings. Evidence permitted at the live hearing is limited to only that which is relevant to the allegations in the Formal Complaint. Evidence is relevant if: (a) it has any tendency to make a fact more or less probable than it would be without the evidence; and, (b) the fact is of consequence in determining the action. Evidence not previously provided in advance of the hearing may be accepted for consideration at the discretion of the Hearing Panel.

2. Per Title IX requirements for live cross-examination, parties have the right to cross-examine any witness, including the investigator, and present both fact and expert witnesses which may include investigators. Only Advisors can conduct cross-examination on behalf of a party; there is no right of self-representation, however, the party should be an active participant in informing the questions posed by their Advisor.

3. Cross-examination is designed to allow a party to challenge the consistency, accuracy, memory and credibility of the opposing party or witness. Cross-examination must be relevant, respectful, and conducted in a non-abusive way. The University retains discretion under Title IX to apply rules of decorum at a live hearing that require participants (including parties, witnesses, and Advisors) to refrain from engaging in abusive, aggressive, or disruptive behavior. Failure to adhere to the rules outlined by the Hearing Panel may result in a decision to cease the hearing and reconvene once the disruptive behavior has been addressed.

4. Parties, through their Advisors, will ask each question one at a time and allow the Hearing Panel to determine the relevance of the question before the other party or witness is asked to answer. This process will be strictly adhered to throughout the entire hearing process. Submission of written questions for the purpose of ascertaining relevance is not permitted.

5. At the request of one or both parties, the Complainant and Respondent will be permitted to participate in the hearing in separate rooms, assisted by technology that allows each party to see, hear, and ask questions of the other party live and in real-time. Witnesses may also
appear in separate rooms, but also must be clearly visible and audibly clear to the Hearing Panel, the parties, and their Advisors.

6. All witnesses will be considered the University’s witnesses. Names of witnesses may be provided by either party or others who may have been involved with the case. To assist this process, those who have not met with the investigator will be requested to provide a brief statement to the Title IX Coordinator or their designee outlining the relevant information they will share at least three (3) days in advance of the hearing.

7. There shall be a single audio record of all Title IX hearings which will be available to the parties for inspection and review. The parties are not permitted to record the hearing. The recording shall be the property of the University and will be maintained with all records of any actions, including any Supportive Measures, taken in response to a report or Formal Complaint of Prohibited Conduct for no fewer than seven (7) years. Accordingly, documents prepared in anticipation of the hearings (including the Formal Complaint, the preliminary investigative report, the final investigative report, the notices of hearing, and any prehearing submissions) and documents, testimony, or other information introduced at the hearings may not be disclosed outside of the hearing process, except as may be required or authorized by law or legal proceeding. In particular, to respect the reasonable privacy of all participants, no party (or representative), nor any witness, may record the hearing or disclose any recording of the hearing or any portion thereof. Any violation of privacy requirements shall constitute a violation of this Policy, which may result in disciplinary action.

8. Per Title IX requirements, if a party or witness, with notice, does not appear before the Hearing Panel, the hearing will take place in their absence. All statements previously made by the absent party or witness as part of the investigation or contained in evidence gathered during the investigation, will be stricken from the record, and cannot be relied upon by the Hearing Panel in making a finding. If a party or witness, with notice, appears at the hearing but refuses to answer questions posed to them by the other party’s Advisor, all statements provided by that party will be stricken and the Hearing Panel will not be permitted to consider the information in making a finding. The Hearing Panel will reach the determination using the remaining evidence available to them even if a party or witness refuses to undergo cross-examination. The Hearing Panel may not draw any inference as to the responsibility of the Respondent based on any party or witness’s absence or refusal to undergo cross-examination. If a party’s Advisor does not appear at the time of the hearing, the University will provide an Advisor for that party without fee or charge, to conduct cross-examination on behalf of that party.

9. If the matter involves more than one Respondent, the Title IX Coordinator, in their discretion, may permit the hearing concerning each Respondent to be conducted either jointly or separately.

D. Conclusion of the Hearing. Following the conclusion of the hearing, the Hearing Panel will confer and by majority vote determine whether the evidence (including the information provided in and by the final investigative report, the parties’ written statements, if any, the evidence presented at the hearing, and the testimony of the parties and witnesses) establishes that it is more likely than not that the Respondent committed a violation of this Policy. The Hearing Panel will typically submit its finding of responsibility or non-responsibility and rationale in writing to the Title IX Coordinator within five (5) days of the hearing. Decisions made by the Hearing Panel are final pending the normal review and appeal process.
XIV. SANCTIONS

Within five (5) days of receipt of the Hearing Panel’s finding, the Title IX Coordinator or their designee will review the finding and provide a copy of the finding to the appropriate sanctioning authority, if applicable. The sanctioning body will assign sanctions within five (5) days of receipt of the finding in both student cases and employee cases.

A. For Student Respondents. If the Respondent is found to be responsible for the Prohibited Conduct as an outcome of the hearing, the Senior Director, Office of Student Conduct, will assign sanctions, giving consideration to whether a sanction will (a) bring an end to the violation in question, (b) reasonably prevent a recurrence of a similar violation, and (c) remedy the effects of the violation. Sanctions for a finding of responsibility will depend upon the nature and gravity of the misconduct, and any record of prior student discipline, if applicable. Sanctions may include, without limitation, written reprimand, conduct probation, suspension or expulsion from the University, expulsion from campus housing, mandated counseling, and/or other educational sanctions as deemed appropriate, including No Contact orders. Imposition of the appropriate remedy and/or sanction will be implemented only after all appeals have been exhausted.

B. For Employee Respondents. If the Respondent is found to be responsible for the Prohibited Conduct as an outcome of the hearing, the Title IX Coordinator or their designee will provide a copy of the Hearing Panel’s finding to the Associate Vice President for Affirmative Action, the Respondent’s immediate Supervisor, and other appropriate University officials. The Supervisor, in consultation with the relevant University officials will determine the appropriate remedy and/or sanction to be imposed. If disciplinary action is imposed, the Supervisor will notify the Affirmative Action Office, Human Resources, and other University officials, as appropriate, when such action has been completed (i.e., training, probation, suspension). Sanction(s) may include written warning, loss of privileges, mandatory training or education, No Contact order, loss of salary increase, administrative leave, recommended revocation of tenure, and/or termination of employment depending on the circumstances and severity of the violation.

When the Respondent is an employee subject to the terms of a collective bargaining agreement, the matter shall be referred to Labor and Employee Relations to ensure that any discipline and/or sanctions are imposed in accordance with the collective bargaining agreement applicable to the Respondent.

When the Respondent is a tenured or tenure-eligible faculty member, and the sanction imposed is recommended dismissal of the Respondent’s employment and/or revocation of tenure, the matter shall be referred to the appropriate academic administrator to initiate dismissal pursuant to Penn State Policy AC70.

XV. WRITTEN NOTICE OF OUTCOME AND SANCTIONS
Within five (5) days of receipt of the notice of sanctions issued by the sanctioning body, the Title IX Coordinator will review the decision of the Hearing Panel and the sanctions, if applicable, and will send written notice (“Notice of Outcome”) of both simultaneously to the parties. The Notice of Outcome from the Title IX Coordinator or their designee will include:

1. If the Respondent is found responsible, the specific behaviors concluded to be Title IX Prohibited Conduct.
2. 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 the application of the University’s Student Code of Conduct (for student-related matters) or employee handbooks and other applicable University policies (for employee-related matters).
5. Statement of, and rationale for, the result of each allegation, including a determination regarding responsibility, and whether remedies designed to restore or preserve equal access to the University’s education program or activity will be provided by the University to Complainant.
6. Sanctions, if applicable.
7. Procedures and bases for the Complainant and Respondent to appeal.

**XVI. APPEAL RIGHTS OF PARTIES**

The University offers to both parties appeal rights from either: (a) a determination regarding responsibility, or (b) the University’s dismissal of a Formal Complaint or any allegations therein at any stage.

For **students**, appeals must be grounded in one or more of the following rationales:

1. Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;
2. New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the determination regarding responsibility was made has come to light that could affect the outcome of the matter;
3. 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 parties in particular, and that bias affected the outcome of the matter; and/or,
4. The sanction(s) imposed was/were outside the University’s sanction range for such violations and/or not justified by the nature of the violation.

For **employees and third parties**, appeals must be grounded in one or more of the following rationales:

1. Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;
2. New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the determination regarding responsibility was made has come to light that could affect the outcome of the matter;
3. 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 parties in particular, and that bias affected the outcome of the matter.

Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Title IX Coordinator or their designee within five (5) business days of the date of the Notice of Outcome or Notice of Dismissal. The Title IX Coordinator or their designee shall immediately provide notice of the appeal to the non-appealing party, who has five (5) days to submit a written response to the appeal which addresses solely the ground(s) alleged for the appeal. The non-appealing party shall be limited to one and only one written response to the appeal. Upon receipt of the non-appealing party’s response to the appeal, the Title IX Coordinator or their designee will submit the appeal and the non-appealing party’s response to the appeal officer, who shall not be the same individual who issued the Dismissal, Finding of Responsibility, or Sanction.

The appeal officer for undergraduate students is the Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Education or their designee.

The appeal officer for graduate students is the Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School or their designee.

The appeal officer for staff is the Vice President for Human Resources or their designee.

The appeal officer for faculty and postdoctoral scholars/fellows is the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs or their designee.

The appeal officer’s review will be based only on the written record, which shall consist of the final investigative report, Notice of Outcome, written appeal and written appeal response (if any), and will not include meetings or discussions with the parties or Title IX personnel directly involved in the investigation. Therefore, the appealing party should include any supporting documents with their written appeal, including any alleged new evidence that was not available at the time of the hearing that may have affected the outcome. The appeal officer may consult with the Title IX Coordinator regarding matters of procedure, as appropriate.

For an appeal related to the dismissal of a Formal Complaint based on the limited grounds above, the appeal officer will decide whether to approve or reject the decision of the Title IX Coordinator. If rejected, the appeal officer will return the Formal Complaint to the Title IX Coordinator, and the complaint process shall proceed consistent with Section XII of this Policy. If approved, the matter is closed.

For the appeal of a finding of the Title IX Hearing Panel based on the limited grounds above, the appeal officer will decide whether to approve, reject, or modify the decision and/or sanctions or to remand the case to the Hearing Panel for clarification or a completely new hearing. The appeal officer’s decision will confirm and correct any identified procedural irregularities, conflicts of interest or bias, and/or ensure that any newly discovered evidence is included in their decision.
Within five (5) days of receipt of the appeal packet, the appeal officer will issue a final written decision simultaneously to both parties and the Title IX Coordinator describing the result of the appeal and the rationale for the result. The decision of the appeal officer is final.

XVII. RECORD-KEEPING PROVISION

The University will retain a full record of all complaints filed under these provisions for a period of no less than seven (7) years from the date of the initial report or Formal Complaint, whichever is earlier. This includes records of any actions, including any supportive measures, taken in response to a report or Formal Complaint of Prohibited Conduct. The parties may request to inspect and review the records for a closed matter at any time during the retention period. The University will provide the parties with access to the records within a reasonable timeframe, not to exceed forty-five (45) days from the date of the request.

XVIII. OCR REVIEW RIGHTS

Although parties are encouraged to resolve their grievances related to Title IX matters by utilizing this Policy, they have the right to file a complaint directly with the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR). Information regarding applicable timelines and procedures is available from OCR. You may call 1-800-421-3481 to obtain further information about filing a complaint with OCR.