

Frequently Asked Questions about Columbia's new Interim Title IX Policy and Gender-Based Misconduct Policy for Students

- **What is Title IX?**

Title IX of the Educational Amendments Act of 1972 ("Title IX") is the federal law that prohibits sex discrimination by any educational institution that receives federal funding. This law has been interpreted by courts and the U.S. Department of Education to require colleges and universities to take certain steps to prevent and respond to sexual harassment, sexual assault and other gender-based misconduct.

In May 2020 the Department of Education issued new regulations that changed Title IX's application to gender-based misconduct cases in colleges and universities.

- **Why does Columbia have an Interim Title IX Policy and a Gender-Based Misconduct Policy?**

On May 19, 2020, the U.S. Department of Education issued new regulations under Title IX that:

- Limit Title IX's coverage to certain forms of sexual assault and other gender-based misconduct, including certain misconduct that is "severe, pervasive and objectively offensive." The regulations also limit coverage to misconduct on campus and in similar settings; they exclude misconduct that takes place outside of the United States.
- Set out a detailed process that higher education institutions (including Columbia) must follow when investigating, adjudicating and imposing sanctions in cases involving misconduct under that definition.

These new regulations do not cover all of the types of misconduct or places in which misconduct occurs that Columbia believes must be addressed in keeping with our own commitments to an environment free from gender-based misconduct and our obligations under state and local law.

For this reason, the University now has two policies: the Interim Title IX Policy that addresses cases covered by the new regulations, and the Gender-Based Misconduct Policy that addresses gender-based misconduct not covered by the new regulations. Both are included in one document.

Columbia also prohibits faculty and staff members from engaging in gender-based misconduct and restricts faculty and staff from engaging in romantic and sexual relationships with undergraduate and graduate students. For more information about these policies, see [Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action](#).

- **How do I report an incident? Do I need to know which policy might apply?**

You can make a report online (see the "report an incident" button), in person, by mail, email (titleix@columbia.edu), or phone.

You do not need to know which policy might apply. Columbia's Title IX team will handle that.

- **What will happen if I make a report?**

When a report is made, a Case Manager from Student Conduct and Community Standards will contact you to discuss supportive and interim measures, and explain the processes available under the Gender-Based Misconduct Policy or the Interim Title IX Policy, depending on the nature of the incident(s) you report.

- **What are supportive and interim measures?**

Supportive and interim measures are designed to support students who may have experienced or be accused of gender-based misconduct. Examples include:

- Relocation of a student's residence;
- Adjusting a student's work schedule for University employment;
- Changing a student's academic schedule;
- Allowing a student to withdraw from or retake a class without penalty; and/or
- Providing access to tutoring or other academic support.

- **How does the University resolve reports of Policy violations?**

Students will learn about options for resolution in discussion with a case manager or investigator.

Depending on the case, options may include administrative resolution, mediation, restorative justice, or investigation and adjudication.

- **Will I need an attorney?**

You can choose to have an attorney if you are involved in a case that is being investigated and adjudicated under either Policy. You can choose your own attorney-advisor or the University can provide an attorney-advisor at no cost to you. Please see the Policies for details.

- **What happens during an investigation and a hearing?**

Columbia has two-person teams of investigators who will gather information and ask questions of anyone involved in the case. In some cases, there will also be a "hearing" at which students can speak to a three-member hearing panel about their experiences and respond to questions.

In cases under the Interim Title IX Policy, each Party's advisor is permitted to ask the other Party and any witnesses questions that are relevant to the facts in the case. This questioning is called "cross examination." It is monitored by the Hearing Panel Chair and is restricted by rules regarding relevance and rules of decorum designed to create a respectful and fair hearing environment.

- **What happens if someone is found responsible for violating the Gender-Based Misconduct Policy or the Interim Title IX Policy?**

Under both Policies, sanctions will depend on the nature of the violation. They can include Reprimand/Disciplinary Warning; Disciplinary Probation; Revocation of honors or awards; Restriction of access to University facilities or activities (student activities and campus organizations and buildings); Removal from and/or restricted participation in academic or extracurricular activities and/or University organizations, or restriction from University services; Dismissal or restriction from University employment; Removal from student housing; Admission revocation (for example, in the case of an undergraduate student admitted to a University graduate or professional program); Disciplinary Suspension; Expulsion; Withholding or deferral of issuance of degree; Revocation of degree; and/or Revocation of alumni privileges.

- **Where do I go if I have questions?**

Please write to titleix@columbia.edu. Someone from the University's Title IX team will be glad to get back to you.