

Policy on Equal Opportunity

GOVERNANCE AND LEGAL

Effective Date:

December 7, 2001

Date Revised: December
18, 2018

Supersedes: N/A

Related Policies:

Policy on Equal
Opportunity (CA)

Policy on Rights and
Responsibilities Under
Title IX

Policy on Sexual
Harassment

Responsible

Office/Department:

Office for University
Equity and Compliance

Keywords:

Discrimination; Equal

Opportunity;

Harassment;

Retaliation; Title IX

I. Purpose and Scope

Northeastern University is committed to providing a living, learning and working environment free of discrimination and harassment. This policy applies to all members of the university community, including students, faculty, staff, affiliates, and volunteers when acting on behalf of the university, whether on or off campus, as well as to contractors, parents, and visitors when they are on university property.

II. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy and related procedures:

Complainant is the person alleging they were subjected to discrimination or harassment.

Complaint is an allegation(s) of discrimination, harassment and/or retaliation, filed in good faith and in accordance with the Policy on Equal Opportunity.

Discrimination means inequitable treatment by the university of a person based on one or more of that person's protected category, excepting any treatment permitted or required by law. Discrimination also includes, but is not limited to unwelcome conduct, including threats, intimidation, harassment, coercion or violence directed against a person based on one or more of that person's protected category, which conduct is so severe or pervasive that it interferes with an individual's employment, academic performance or participation in university programs or activities, and creates a working, learning, program or activity environment that a reasonable person would find intimidating, hostile or offensive.

Employees are Northeastern University faculty and staff members.

Protected Categories are race, color, religion, religious creed, genetic information, sex (including pregnancy or pregnancy related condition), gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, national origin, ancestry, veteran or disability status.

Supervisor refers to any person who has authority to undertake or recommend tangible employment decisions affecting an employee or academic decisions affecting a student; or to direct an employee's work activities or a student's academic activities. Examples include faculty members to whom work-study students report or employees who, from time to time, monitor other employees' performance or direct their work.

Respondent is the university community member against whom a complaint is filed.

Retaliation is any intentional or attempted adverse or negative act against a person who in good faith makes a report, serves as a witness, or participates in an investigation or adjudication process regarding an alleged violation of a university policy. Retaliation includes threatening, intimidating, harassing, coercing or any other conduct that would discourage a reasonable person from engaging in activity protected under this policy. Retaliation does not include good faith actions lawfully pursued in response to a report of an alleged violation of a university policy.

III. Policy

Northeastern University prohibits Discrimination and Retaliation on the basis of protected categories. All forms of Discrimination or discriminatory harassment within the university community are unacceptable and will be sanctioned appropriately.

Further, university policy and applicable law prohibit Retaliation against those who, in good faith, bring or cooperate in the investigation of complaints of Discrimination or Retaliation.

All members of the Northeastern University community are obligated to be immediately available to investigators and to be truthful and forthcoming. Lack of cooperation may subject the individual to disciplinary action. If parties refuse to cooperate and/or respond in a timely manner, the Office for University Equity and

Compliance (OUEC) may take any specific action it deems necessary and appropriate to address the situation based on the information available. Failure to cooperate in the review of a complaint of Discrimination or Retaliation may be grounds for a recommendation of discipline, up to and including suspension or termination.

Reports of Title IX Prohibited Offenses involving students such as sexual assault, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, intimate partner violence, dating violence, stalking, Retaliation and/or sex or gender-based harassment are addressed by the University's Policy on Rights and Responsibilities Under Title IX and separate procedures referenced in that policy, which outline the investigation and resolution of claims of Prohibited Offenses. Reports of Prohibited Offenses can be reported to OUEC by completing the form available at: [Reporting to OUEC](#) or in person at OUEC. OUEC's policy, as well as other helpful information can be found at <https://www.northeastern.edu/titleix/>

The university reserves the right to address any behavior which it considers inappropriate or inconsistent with university expectations, policies, standards or values, even though such behavior may not rise to the level of Discrimination under this policy or under state or federal law. Nothing in this policy is intended to limit the authority of the university to take appropriate action against any individual who violates university rules or policies, whether or not the conduct constitutes a violation of the Policies. The university may assume the role of a Complainant and pursue a report or complaint of Discrimination either informally or formally.

IV. Additional Information

Any university faculty, staff, students, and certain third-parties may file a complaint directly with OUEC against a student, staff or faculty member, or university volunteer, vendor, contractor or visiting professor who is believed to have engaged in behavior constituting Discrimination as outlined in applicable university policies. Complaints may be filed against individuals or units, departments, organizations recognized or affiliated with the university, or other organizational components of the university.

Northeastern University also uses an independent third party company, EthicsPoint, to provide an anonymous compliance "hotline" for all members of the university community. For more information or to make a report, click here <https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/32115/index.html>.

The University's Policy on Equal Opportunity is available online at <http://www.northeastern.edu/policies/> and the university's nondiscrimination policies and related grievance procedures are available at <https://www.northeastern.edu/ouec/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/EOComplaintProcedurePOSTEDDec2018-.pdf> and in the Office for University Equity and Compliance which is located in 125 Richards Hall.

Students or employees may also contact the following agencies directly with their concerns:

- The Regional Director, Office for Civil Rights, United States Department of Education, 5 Post Office Square, 8th Floor, Boston, MA 02109-4557;
- Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD), One Ashburton Place, Suite 601, Boston, Massachusetts 02108-1518;
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, John F. Kennedy Federal Building, 475 Government Center, Boston, Massachusetts 02203

V. Contact Information

Inquiries regarding the university's nondiscrimination policies may be directed to the university's Assistant Vice President for University Equity and Compliance.

Office for University Equity and Compliance
360 Huntington Avenue, 125 Richards Hall
Boston, MA 02115
Phone: (617) 373-4644

EthicsPoint Compliance Hotline: 1-855-350-9390