

# Discrimination and Harassment Policy

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## Policy Statement

Slippery Rock University's discrimination and harassment policy seeks to provide an environment that is free from discrimination, including the form of discrimination recognized as harassment based upon race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, religion, age, disability, or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

## Legal Authority

Discrimination is currently prohibited under federal law by Titles IV, VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and under state law by the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act. Other statutes that may be involved in this area are the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act. Applicability of any of these statutes to the university is subject to future legislative or court actions.

## Definitions

Under this policy, the university definition of discrimination is intended at all times to be construed in accordance with applicable laws. As such, discrimination is generally defined as actions taken based upon the factor of the person's or group's race, gender, national origin, religion, age, disability or other protected class status. There are generally two types of discrimination recognized: disparate treatment and disparate impact. Disparate treatment involves a person being treated differently because of race, gender, disability or other protected class status. Disparate impact discrimination involves a practice that has a greater negative effect on members of a particular protected class than those not in the protected class.

Harassment is a form of discrimination and is generally understood as being serious and persistent or pervasive conduct that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's ability in the work, learning or other university environment.

## Enforcement

It is the policy of Slippery Rock University that discrimination is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. The university

## Prompt Reporting

Because it is in the best interest of all concerned to expeditiously deal with allegations of discrimination and harassment, complainants are strongly encouraged to make reports or complaints as soon as possible. To the extent possible, complaint investigations and recommendations of findings will be completed within 180 days of the receipt of the complaint. The university may, however, extend this 180-day period in appropriate circumstances such as the unavailability of witnesses. Both the complainant and the accused will be informed of the outcome upon completion of the process.

## Complaints Against Students

Any complaint against a student should be directed to the attention of the office of the vice president for student life and dean of students and will be handled in accordance with the procedures of the student code of conduct. Complaints against all other individuals will be handled in accordance with the procedures stated in this policy.

## Voluntary Meetings

During an informal or formal complaint process, any face-to-face meeting between the complainant and the accused will be on a voluntary basis only.

## Confidentiality

In recognition of the seriousness of the matters under this policy, the investigation and proceedings will be confidential to the extent possible with disclosures limited to those individuals who need to know in order to resolve matters. The complainant and the accused will be encouraged to maintain confidentiality consistent with this provision. In appropriate cases, the university may need to proceed over the objection of the complainant.

## Informal Complaint Procedure

Informal procedures involve efforts to mediate a resolution through the agreement of the complainant and respondent. No investigation, formal findings or discipline will result from an informal procedure.

