



Q: IS THERE ANYONE I CAN TALK TO ABOUT MY CONCERN?

Yes. The Office of Equal Opportunity and Access & Title IX can talk with you about any concerns you have about discrimination or harassment. The Office can explain our policies and procedures, talk about how you prefer to resolve your concerns, discuss measure that you may need. Our office is not a confidential resource. This means, that while we will maintain your privacy, there may be some people who have a “need to know” to whom we will share your information. If you prefer to speak to a confidential resource, meaning someone who typically cannot share any information you discuss without your written authorization, the University provides confidential support at the [University Counseling Center](#).

Q: AM I REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INVESTIGATION IF I DISCUSS MY CONCERN WITH THE OFFICE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND ACCESS & TITLE IX?

There is no time limit on reporting a concern, but individuals are encouraged to report any concerns as soon as possible. The passage of time can present obstacles to the ability of our office to effectively gather information, make factual determinations, or to refer matters to appropriate departments for corrective action. However, those obstacles will not preclude our office from investigating and/or resolving the matter to the best of our ability. You are not required to participate in an investigation. You also are not required to report an incident to Title IX. If you do report to a responsible employee/mandated reporter, the information will be shared with the Title office. An employee from the Equal Opportunity and Access Office will contact you to offer resources and share procedures for investigations. You may choose, at that time, to not pursue an investigation but just utilize resources offered.

Q: MAY I BRING SOMEONE ELSE WITH ME TO A MEETING OR INTERVIEW?

Yes. You may bring a support person and/or advisor, of your choice, to any meeting or interview with our office. The support person/advisor may be any person who does not have first-hand information that would be valuable to an investigation. While this person may provide you guidance, please note that the support person/advisor may not speak on your behalf.

Q: WILL THE OTHER PERSON KNOW THAT I AM DISCUSSING MY CONCERN WITH THE OFFICE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND ACCESS & TITLE IX?

Prospective respondents will generally not be notified if you request an informational meeting. However, if after the meeting, you decide to proceed with a formal investigation, the Office will have to share your name with the person responding to your complaint. As part of the investigative process, Respondents will also have the opportunity to view all relevant information, including your statement. A reporter or survivor may not remain confidential.

Q: CAN I CONTACT THE INVESTIGATOR(S) DIRECTLY, CAN THE INVESTIGATOR CONTACT ME DIRECTLY?

Advisors should only contact the Investigator(s) in the presence of the supported person. Attorneys who are acting as an Advisor to a Complainant or Respondent should contact the University’s [Office of General Counsel](#) rather than directly interacting with the Investigator(s). The Investigators communicate directly with the Complainant or Respondent. Because an advisor’s relationship may change through the course of an investigation, the Complainant or Respondent may switch advisors, or a Complainant or Respondent may no longer be working with a previous advisor, investigators do not copy advisors on communications with the Complainant or Respondent. It is the Complainant’s or Respondent’s responsibility to share communications with the advisor of their choice.

Q: IS A FORMAL INVESTIGATION THE ONLY WAY I CAN RESOLVE MY COMPLAINT?

No. There are a number of other options available to address concerns without conducting a formal investigation. In some instances, alternative resolutions allow our office to address concerns in an informal manner. Alternative resolutions may include education, training, mediation, non-disciplinary corrective action, mutual no contact orders, or other actions. These resolutions are not appropriate in every case and are best discussed on a case-by-case basis in an informational meeting with our Office. Attending such a meeting does not require the concerned individual to pursue any particular course of action.

Q: HOW LONG DOES A FORMAL INVESTIGATION TAKE?

There is no fixed time frame to complete an investigation. In previous years, the average time to complete an investigation has been about 60-90 days, but can take shorter or longer. A formal investigation begins from the date that a complainant submits his/her/their final statement. The Office strives to complete the investigation in a timely manner balancing principles of thoroughness and fundamental fairness with promptness. An investigation may take longer depending on the complexity of a case, the number of witnesses, volume of information provided by the parties, University breaks or vacations, or other factors. The Office will provide the parties periodic updates about the status of the investigation. You can contact the Investigator at any time to receive any update.

Q: (STUDENTS-ONLY) WILL I BE REFERRED TO THE OFFICE OF STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES (THE STUDENT CONDUCT OFFICE) IF THE INCIDENT THAT I AM DISCUSSING INVOLVED THE ILLEGAL USE OF ALCOHOL OR DRUGS?

No. Our foremost interest is to obtain as much relevant information as possible about the concern that is under investigation. The use of drugs or alcohol—whether voluntary or involuntary—is often relevant to our investigation. Accordingly, students will not be disciplined for candid disclosure of these facts in our process. However, the University may refer you to supportive services for mental health or substance use.

Q: (STUDENTS-ONLY) WILL MY PARENT/FAMILY MEMBER BE NOTIFIED IF I AM INVOLVED IN AN INVESTIGATION?

No. Information about the investigation is considered to be part of your private student record and will not be disclosed to your parent or family member without your written permission.

Q: WILL MY FRIENDS OR CO-WORKERS FIND OUT ABOUT THE INVESTIGATION?

It depends. The Investigators are obligated to seek the relevant information necessary to make an informed, factual determination. This information is often only available from close friends and/or co-workers. While these individuals may be contacted to share any information that they have, the Investigators will never share unknown or unnecessary information about the investigation with these individuals. They will also not be notified of the results of the investigation.

Q: (EMPLOYEES-ONLY) WILL A SUPERVISOR BE NOTIFIED IF I AM INVOLVED IN AN INVESTIGATION?

Usually, yes. If your concern pertains to an interaction with a co-worker, the Respondent's immediate supervisor will be notified that the investigation is pending. In the event that the investigation finds a policy violation to be more likely than not, the supervisor may be responsible for determining which corrective action is appropriate.

Q: IS THE RESPONDENT ALLOWED TO CONTACT ME DURING THE INVESTIGATION, AM I ALLOWED TO CONTACT THE RESPONDENT?

We generally recommend that parties not interact with one another while an investigation is ongoing. Additionally, any person may seek a no-contact order from the University, prohibiting or limiting contact for a specified period of time. We also encourage all individuals involved to inform the office if they feel that any interaction with an individual is retaliatory in nature, as defined by our procedures. Concerns of retaliation will be investigated separately as an independent policy violation.

Q: IF I PROVIDE INFORMATION FOR THE INVESTIGATION, WILL OTHERS BE ABLE TO VIEW IT OR OBTAIN COPIES OF THE INFORMATION THAT I PROVIDE?

If you are a student, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") generally prevents WIU from disclosing your Title IX or Equal Opportunity and Access records without your consent. However, all records are subject to lawful subpoena. Additionally, WIU may share these records with other University personnel who have an educational "need to know".

Q: WHERE CAN I ASK ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE INVESTIGATIVE PROCESS?

Investigations are supervised by the Director of Equal Opportunity and Access and Title IX Coordinator. They are available during business hours to answer any questions regarding the investigative process:

Director of Equal Opportunity
and Access and Title IX
Coordinator
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