

# School of Medicine Programs Student Mistreatment Reporting and Monitoring Policy

## I. Student Mistreatment Definition

As explained in our Abusive Conduct and Discrimination and Harassment policies, the School of Medicine is committed to maintaining an environment free from behavior that is abusive, discriminatory, or harassing (including sexual) or that involves the mistreatment (including retaliation) of students or others in the learning and working environment. For definitions and examples of conduct that would be considered mistreatment prohibited by the university, please refer to these policies. Please also be aware that some behaviors require mandatory reporting by certain members of the university community.

This document identifies the mechanisms and protocols for all School of Medicine students, including DBBS students on either campus or at partner institutions, to report mistreatment against them. It identifies mechanisms for bystanders to report student mistreatment they have observed. This document also outlines the systems in place aimed at monitoring, addressing, and preventing the mistreatment of students in the learning environment.

## II. Steps for Reporting Student Mistreatment

The School of Medicine strongly encourages students who feel they have experienced mistreatment — and those who feel they have witnessed the mistreatment of a student — to report it immediately, without fear of retaliation, using the following resources:

### 1. WashU Learner Mistreatment Incident Report

Students and other community members may submit a report through the WashU Learner Mistreatment Form, which can also be found on the Supporting a Fair Environment (SAFE) website. Washington University Human Resources receives all reports and will direct the report to the appropriate university or hospital administrator(s) for a prompt response. The reporting portal allows for individuals to submit concerns anonymously if preferred and allows for bidirectional communication through the portal via a password, even if the report is submitted anonymously.

### 2. Any of the following administrators:

- Program Directors (see the respective program website or handbook for details)
- Relevant Associate Dean
- Senior Associate Dean and Vice Chancellor for Medical Education

## Confidentiality and Anonymous Reporting

When receiving a confidential report, the university will strive to protect, to the greatest extent feasible, the confidentiality of persons reporting mistreatment and of those accused of mistreatment. Because of legal obligations, the university cannot guarantee complete confidentiality where it would conflict with the university's obligation to investigate meaningfully or, where warranted, take corrective action. For example, if a report identifies conduct that would fall within Title IX, the university may have an obligation to investigate and take further action that requires disclosure of all or part of the information contained in the report to the person accused as well as to the appropriate administrators. In addition, if a report identifies conduct that poses a significant threat to the health or safety of an individual, the university may also need to investigate and take further action that requires the disclosure of information contained in the report.

Even when some disclosure of the university's information or sources is necessary, it will be limited to the extent possible. The university will keep confidential all records of complaints, responses and investigations to the extent permitted by law.

**Anonymous reports may be submitted through the reporting portal. If a reporter wishes to remain anonymous, the university may be limited in its ability to respond and take action with respect to the report.**

## III. Options for Possible Resolution

Students who believe they have been subjected to mistreatment or other reporters who believe they have witnessed student mistreatment have several options available if they wish to seek resolution of a situation. At any time, they may consult with a Discrimination and Harassment Response Coordinator (see below), whose responsibilities include assisting students, faculty and staff with questions regarding university policies and options for addressing concerns about mistreatment.

If a student or observer feels comfortable dealing with a situation that does not violate university policy without assistance, they can communicate either orally or in writing with the person whose behavior is of concern. The most useful communication clearly describes the conduct of concern and its impact on the student, and it includes a request that the behavior should stop. Frequently, such a communication will cause the behavior to stop, particularly when the person may not be aware of its impact.

If a student or reporter would like to discuss a situation and possible options for resolution with the assistance of someone else, they may also consider the following:

1. Asking a trained WUSM Supporting A Fair Environment (SAFE) Committee member to meet with them or to speak to the person whose behavior is of concern; or
2. Consulting with one of the Student Advisors listed below about other potential options to remedy the situation.

As previously mentioned, these individuals may be obligated to report the incident or conduct disclosed to the university for further review (e.g., sexual assault or harassment, threat of harm to self or others).

Students may also initiate a more formal complaint process, which could involve a committee hearing, by contacting a Discrimination and Harassment Response Coordinator. If it has not already done so, the university will initiate an investigation into the allegations under the appropriate policy and, if substantiated, take disciplinary action as contemplated by the applicable procedures. For example, if a student asserts that a faculty member has engaged in mistreatment in the form of sexual harassment, the university's Discrimination and Harassment Policy would be followed.

The university will remain in communication with the student throughout the university's investigation and response. The university may be limited in its ability to disclose personnel or other action taken in response to a complaint. The university will only be able to return communication made by anonymous reporters if the reporter creates a password and logs back into the reporting portal to access information about the incident.

## IV. Monitoring and Education

The School of Medicine will provide ongoing education to promote a respectful and positive learning environment. The purpose of this education will be to communicate the School's standards of behavior and professionalism for an optimal learning environment and commit to informing students and educators about policies around behavioral expectations and processes for reporting mistreatment. The policies and reporting protocols will be posted in the *Bulletin* and in the course syllabi, and they will be reviewed with students during orientations.

Data from the reports submitted to the portal and to the Deans identified above will be aggregated for review by the SAFE Committee. The SAFE Committee will systematically review on a regular basis these data in addition to internal and external survey data when doing the following:

1. Assessing trends and the overall climate in learning areas at the School of Medicine;
2. Making any recommendations for changes to the policies and the reporting and response mechanisms in place; and
3. Developing action plans to implement targeted educational interventions based upon the data received.

The SAFE Committee will regularly report its findings and recommendations to the Academic Affairs Committee. Aggregate reports will also be regularly forwarded to program and/or department chairs for monitoring purposes.

## V. Student Advisors

The following is a list of offices and advisors who may provide guidance when addressing some of the potential issues discussed in the above guidelines:

- Gender Equity and Title IX Compliance Office
- Discrimination and Harassment Response Coordinator
- School of Medicine Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Program-specific advisors (see the respective program website or handbook for details)
- Relevant Associate Dean
- Senior Associate Dean and Vice Chancellor for Medical Education

## VI. Additional Resources

- School of Medicine Student Ombudsperson (confidential resource)
- Ombudsperson for Graduate Students (confidential resource)
- Medical Student Peer Advocates (medical students only)
- Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center (confidential resource)

*Last approved on May 19, 2023*