TITLE IX
SEXUAL HARASSMENT
Training Materials for Investigators
AND Decision-makers

Requirement
The new Title IX regulations require that all Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution must receive training. See 106.45(b)(1)(iii).

New Title IX Regulations Require Training on:
1. The definition of sexual harassment in § 106.30
2. The scope of the recipient’s education program or activity
3. How to conduct an investigation and grievance process including hearings, appeals, and informal resolution processes, as applicable
4. How to serve impartially, including by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest, and bias
5. Issues of relevance of questions and evidence, including when questions and evidence about the complainant’s sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant, as set forth in paragraph (b)(6) of this section
6. Issues of relevance to create an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence, as set forth in paragraph (b)(2)(iv) of this section
1. The Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment, Type 1

Sexual harassment means conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. A school employee conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the recipient on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct
   This is the quid pro quo (something for something else) type.

Sexual Harassment, Type 2

Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the recipient's education program or activity

- With the 3rd prong covering most everything physical, this prong is focused on verbal or written/electronic forms of harassment.
- Standard is subjective with respect to the unwelcome-ness of the conduct (i.e., whether the complainant viewed the conduct as unwelcome), but as to elements of severity, pervasiveness, objective offensiveness, and denial of equal access, determinations are made by a reasonable person in the shoes of the complainant.
Why severe “and” pervasive?

Violence for perpetuating a hostile work environment due to any severe or pervasive sexual harassment that occurs within an employment context or as a result of the social and developmental growth of young students, learning how to interact with peers in the elementary and secondary school setting and fostering certain behaviors of growth, ideas, and habits in a college setting. Then, the Department of Education, deciding the definition of sexual harassment under Title IX and Title VI, further the purpose of Title IX in benefitting students and employees participating in educational programs or activities.

In other words, U.S. Dept. of Education thinks the nature of education means a higher quantity of low grade offensive speech must be tolerated as part of free expression.

While severe harassment of students' harassment was unacceptable impact a person, and school can't authority to address such behavior. This is focused on the discrimination that perpetuates structural harm.

In other words, U.S. Dept. of Education thinks non-based conduct toward students must be severe to rise to the level of sexual harassment.

Sexual Harassment, Type 3

"Sexual assault" (as defined by the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act at 20 USC 1092 (3)(3)(A)(v));

"dating violence" (as defined by the Violence Against Women Act at 34 USC 13591 (a)(10));

"domestic violence" (as defined by the Violence Against Women Act at 34 USC 13591 (a)(9)); or

"stalking" (as defined by the Violence Against Women Act at 34 USC 13591 (a)(90)).

More on SH Type 3

- "Fondling," defined under the Clery Act (referring to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting system), as "the touching private body parts of another person for the purpose of sexual gratification, without the consent of the victim," is the only type of sexual harassment that depends on the intent or purpose of the perpetrator or victim.

- While the sexual harassment definition does not identify "grooming behaviors" as a distinct category of misconduct, some grooming behaviors may constitute sexual harassment, and behaviors that do not constitute sexual harassment may still be deemed inappropriate behavior addressed under other areas of policy, procedure, and/or handbook.
2. The Scope of the Recipient's Education Program or Activity

Educational Program or Activity
34 CFR 106.44(a)

Schools must respond when sexual harassment occurs in the school's education program or activity, against a person in the United States.

Education program or activity includes locations, events, or circumstances over which the school exercised substantial control over both the respondent and the context in which the sexual harassment occurs, and also includes any building owned or controlled by a student organization that is officially recognized by a postsecondary institution.

Triggering Title IX

- Off-campus incidents invo: Title IX response:
  1. if the off-campus incident occurs as part of the recipient's "operations" pursuant to 20 U.S.C. §647 and 34 CFR 106.23;
  2. if the respondent exercised substantial control over the context in which the sexual harassment occurred pursuant to §106.44(a);
  3. if a sexual harassment incident occurs at an off-campus building owned or controlled by a student organization officially recognized by a postsecondary institution pursuant to §106.44(a).

- If complaint is no longer enrolled when the complaint is filed, or if the perpetrator is no longer enrolled or employed, no reason for the school to do a investigation because the school can't do anything.
Example of Defining Scope

For the purposes of Title IX, the scope of the Corporation's educational program or activities includes locations, events, or circumstances over which the Corporation exercises substantial control over both the respondent and the context in which the sexual harassment occurs [only for postsecondary; and also includes any building owned or controlled by a student organization that is officially recognized by a postsecondary institution]. This includes all activities taking place within a school building or on Corporation property; any athletic, extracurricular, or co-curricular activity officially recognized by the Corporation and led by a Corporation employee; computer and internet networks, digital platforms, and computer hardware or software owned or operated by, or used in the operations of, the Corporation.

3. How to Conduct an Investigation and Grievance Process

Non-Disclosure Agreement
Interview Complainant

- Identify – who, what, when, where.
- Specific descriptions of incident(s)
- Similar experiences in the past
- Determine what offended Complainant
- Impact on Complainant
- Discuss complainant’s response
- Identify Witnesses
- What relief is being requested

Other Interviews

Potential witnesses named by Complainant
- Purpose for interview – investigating allegations against (Individual)
- Complainant indicated you might have information
- Who/when/why/how of what you did or did not witness or hear
- Ask that they not discuss the interview (NDA)
- Explain no retaliation for telling the truth

In closing
- Any other information?
- Contact me if you remember anything, or if observe anything relevant.

Respondent Interview

- Define the allegation at issue
- Ask to identify situations where he/she harassed others or engaged in behavior in violation of rule
- Confront with general allegations
- Confront with more specifics
- Note responses
- Permit him/her to offer evidence/witnesses
- Ask that they not discuss the interview (NDA)
- Explain no retaliation against complainant
Other Interviews

- Potential witnesses named by Respondent
- Same general questions as other witnesses
- Ask that they not discuss the interview (NDA)
- Explain no retaliation against complainant
- Complainant and/or Respondent (Follow Up)
  - If necessary
  - Clarify allegations and inconsistencies
  - Gather additional information

Review of Records and Evidence

Review Personnel/Student Files
  Look for patterns
  Prior relationships

Review other Contemporaneous Evidence
  Video
  Log Sheets
  Phone and e-mail records
  Records made at the time of allegations

Analyzing the Evidence

Credibility Decisions
  Bias
  History of Similar Conduct
  Corroboration
  Other Discipline
  Eye contact, voice tone, demeanor during interviews.

Determine if Substantiated
  Review notes, statements and other evidence
Inspection and Review of Evidence

Must provide all evidence, even that not relied upon to the parties for inspection, parties have 10 days to respond

Evidence must be "directly related to the allegations"
- Non-treatment records and information, such as a party's financial or sexual history, must be directly related to the allegations at issue in order to be reviewed by the other party.
- School has discretion on how to provide the evidence.
- May redact information not directly related to the allegations.
- "Confidential" information may not be redacted if directly related to the allegations.

106.45(b)(2)(vi)

Investigative Report

"Create an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence and, at least 10 days prior to a hearing (if a hearing is required under this section or otherwise provided) or other time of determination regarding responsibility, send to each party and the party's advisor, if any, the investigative report in an electronic format or a hard copy, for their review and written response."

106.45(b)(3)(vi)

- The regulations do not prescribe how to incorporate the parties' response into the final determination.

Submission of Written Questions

After the recipient has sent the investigative report to the parties pursuant to paragraph (b)(3)(vi) of this section and before reaching a determination regarding responsibility, the decision-maker(s) must afford each party the opportunity to submit written, relevant questions that a party wants asked of any party or witness, provide each party with the answers, and allow for additional, limited follow-up questions from each party.

106.45(b)(6)(i)
Determination

Must include:
- Identification of the allegations potentially constituting sexual harassment;
- A description of the procedures used from the initial to the final stage of the investigation, including any affidavits to the parties, witnesses, and evidence; and
- Findings of fact supporting the determination;
- Conclusions regarding the application of the recipient's code of conduct to the facts;
- A statement of and rationale for the result for each allegation, including a determination, regarding sexual harassment, any corrective action that the recipient imposes on the respondent, and whether students enrolled in the recipient's special education program will be found to be provided by the recipient to the complainant, and
- The recipient's procedures and permissible bases for the complainant and respondent to appeal.

Optional Hearing

"For recipient[s] that are elementary and secondary schools, and other recipients that are not postsecondary institutions, the recipient's grievance process may, but need not, provide for a hearing." 106.45(5)(b)(5)

- May, but need not provide a hearing for K-12.
- Footnote in comments indicate decision to hold a hearing could be made on a case-by-case basis.

It's All About the Process

OCR and Courts will generally not second-guess the outcome of an investigation, as long as the investigation is done according to policy and appropriate standards.

READ, RE-READ, ASK QUESTIONS, FOLLOW THE POLICY + PROCEDURES
Follow Up!

- Retain documentation (7 years)
- Complete notes and reports
- Ensure everything signed and dated
- Check in with Complainant
- Check in with Respondent (if still employed)
- Review policies and procedures

4. How to Serve Impartially

Role of Title IX Coordinator

Impartial Investigator and Consultant

- Trained to understand Title IX, analyze whether something rises to level of substantiation
- Title IX Coordinator's delegates (building administrators, counselors, etc.) conduct "on the ground" investigation at her delegation
- Determines if harassment is substantiated based on preponderance of the evidence, writes formal report
- Coordinates with legal counsel as necessary
Single Investigatory Model Prohibited

"The decision-maker(s), who cannot be the same person(s) as the Title IX Coordinator or the investigator(s), must issue a written determination regarding responsibility." 106.4(d)(9)(i).

Title IX Coordinator not required to investigate, but cannot be the decision maker.

Conflicts of Interest

- Two types: Legal conflicts (less common in this situation) and Perceived conflicts (more common)
- Person named as Harasser or Witness ≠ Member of investigatory team
- If district-level administrator, board member, or Title IX Coordinator is named as Harasser or Witness, good idea to call in outside investigator

5. Issues of Relevance of Questions and Evidence
Evidence that Must Be Deemed Irrelevant, with Exceptions

Questions and evidence about a Complainant's sexual predisposition must always be deemed irrelevant, and therefore excluded.

Questions and evidence about a Complainant's prior sexual history must be deemed irrelevant, and therefore excluded—with two limited exceptions:

1. Where Respondent contends that someone other than the respondent committed the misconduct
2. Where the question(s) or evidence concern incidents between the Complainant and Respondent and are offered to prove consent.

6. Issues of Relevance to Create an Investigative Report that Fairly Summarizes Recent Evidence

Issues of Relevance to Create an Investigative Report

- Evidence is relevant if it has "any tendency" to make a fact that is "of consequence" to the determination of sexual harassment "more or less probably that it would be without the evidence."
  - The evidence must be directed to a matter of consequence, essentially the definition of sexual harassment.
  - The evidence must be probative – it must make something more or less probable. It does not have to be in dispute. Whether something is more or less likely is guided by logic and human experience.
Issues of Relevance to Create an Investigative Report

Example: Defendant in bank robbery case was overheard saying he wanted to rob the bank, human experience tells us that when someone says they will do something, they are more likely to do it.