

Title IX & Fellowships

What Title IX is

Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs, services and activities that receive Federal financial assistance (grants) from the federal government. Title IX regulations and guidance apply to any entity that receives financial assistance and operate education programs. Virginia Sea Grants provides financial assistance in the form of grants and cooperative agreements host offices for fellowship opportunities. As a participant in a fellowship, you are protected by Title IX.



What Discrimination & Harassment Are

There are three forms of discrimination: sex-based discrimination (disparate treatment, disparate impact), sexual harassment, and gender-based harassment. **Sexual harassment** is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. It includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. **Gender-based harassment** is unwelcome conduct based on a person's actual or perceived sex. It includes slurs, taunts, stereotypes, or name-calling, as well as gender-motivated physical threats, attacks or other hateful conduct.

What You Should Know

Virginia Sea Grant fellows work in variety of host offices across the state, region and country. As an employee, you have a right to expect professional conduct from everyone with the host office, including supervisor, peers and subordinates. As a fellow, you have the right to resources and support from the institution if you report unwelcome conduct. The Title IX Coordinator at VIMS/William & Mary can assist in answering questions and addressing concerns with contacts at your host office.



Potentially Harassing Conduct

For harassing conduct to create a hostile environment and be a violation of Title IX, it must be severe or pervasive. Severe conduct, such as sexual assault, fondling or sexual violence, typically only needs to occur one time to be severe. Pervasive conduct can rise to harassment depending on the number of times an individual is subjected to the offensive conduct or the number of different individuals who are subjected to one or more incidents by an offender. Examples of potential unwelcome conduct:

- Telling off-color jokes or making teasing comments of a sexual nature
- Using language or phrases that are offensive and/or imply inferiority of another
- Sexual Innuendos
- Displaying sexually explicit materials
- Derogatory remarks about irrelevant personal factors (e.g. sex, gender, age, race)
- Subtle or overt pressure for sexual activity
- Obscene gestures
- Any physical contact that is not consensual and is sexual in nature (e.g. putting a hand on your knee, massaging your shoulders)

RESOURCES

VIMS/W&M Title IX Coordinator

Pamela Mason
phmaso@wm.edu
757-221-3146

Virginia Sea Grants Administration

Troy Hartley (Director)
804-684-7248
thartley@vaseagrant.org

Sabine Rogers (External Relations Coord.)
804-684-7335
sarogers@vaseagrant.org

William & Mary Police
757-221-4596

Special Form of Sexual Harassment: QUID PRO QUO

"Conditioning an educational or employment decision or benefit on submission to sexual conduct."

REPORTING

What if I Experience Harassment?

If you experience harassment from an employee at the host office, you may report to the Title IX Coordinator or the Virginia Sea Grants Administration. While William & Mary and Virginia Sea Grants typically will not be able to investigate the misconduct directly, our offices can assist you in many ways:

- Filing a report with your supervisor or Human Resources of your home office
- Ensuring authorities at the home office investigate and address your report
- Reassigning your fellowship placement within the same home office or to a new home office
- Providing relief from the fellowship without financial or reputational penalties
- Providing academic support if continuing at VIMS as a graduate student

Unwelcome conduct that does not rise to severe or pervasive can still be addressed and the offender can be told to cease engaging in the conduct. The Title IX Coordinator can assist in asking the Human Resources Director at the home office for discretion in addressing the report and ensuring there are retaliation protections in place for you if you experience adverse action for making the report.



Reporting Obligations of Others

W&M Personnel: Virginia Sea Grant Administrators and VIMS faculty and staff are responsible employees, which mean they are required to report sexual misconduct relating to a participant in the fellowship programs to the Title IX Coordinator. If the reported sexual misconduct involves another participant in the program, or a William & Mary affiliated employee, then the Title IX Coordinator could take action to address a hostile environment if necessary. Addressing the hostile environment does not require investigation in every case, and all cases will be handled discretely and in consideration of the victim's wishes.

Non-William & Mary Personnel: Host offices not affiliated with William & Mary typically have not requirement to share or report information to William & Mary officials. Students impacted by sexual harassment or sexual misconduct in a host office who wish to make a report to the institution should do so directly with the Title IX Office.

OTHER REPORTING OPTIONS

Comments and concerns about Title IX or file a Title IX complaint may be addressed to the U.S. Department of Justice or the U.S. Department of Education.

U.S. Department of Justice

U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Educational Opportunities Section, PHB
Washington, D.C. 20530
Email: education@usdoj.gov
(202) 514-4092 or 1-877-292-3804 (toll-free)
(202) 514-8337 (fax)

U.S. Department of Education

U.S. Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights
Lyndon Baines Johnson Department of Education Bldg.
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-1100
Telephone: (800) 421-3481
FAX: (202) 453-6012; TDD: (800) 877-8339
Email: OCR@ed.gov