

Policy 943 Nondiscrimination

Policy Number: 943

Effective Date: 11/09/2020

Revised Date: 04/24/2025; 07/31/2025

Scope

This Policy on Nondiscrimination applies to faculty, staff, students, program participants, and applicants (“Covered Individuals”) of The Graduate School of the Stowers Institute for Medical Research (“School”).

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to establish the School’s commitment to providing equal opportunities for all persons.

Policy

I. Statement

The School welcomes persons from all backgrounds and beliefs to join our community. We seek to create and foster a sense of community that facilitates the development, both personal and professional, of all our members, including students, summer scholars, computational biology scholars, applicants, faculty, staff, and other program participants.

The School is committed to providing equal opportunities for all persons and does not discriminate or retaliate on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, pregnancy, national or ethnic origin, age, sex, disability, military status, marital status, or any other status protected by law (“protected status”). This Policy extends to admissions, employment (as set forth in the Equal Employment Policy), housing, services, and in the other educational programs and activities that the School operates (collectively “programs and activities”). Harassment, whether verbal, non-verbal, or physical, that is based on any protected status constitutes a form of discrimination if it denies or limits a person’s ability to participate in or benefit from the School’s programs and activities. This Policy covers employees, students, summer scholars, computational biology scholars, applicants for employment or admission, contractors, vendors, visitors, guests, and participants in School sponsored programs and activities (collectively, the “School Community”). The academic or work relationship sometimes extends beyond the School’s campus. Therefore, in some situations, this Policy may apply to allegations of discrimination or retaliation that occur off campus or during after-hour functions sponsored by the School.

The School complies with federal, state, and local equal opportunity laws and strives to keep the workplace free from all forms of illegal discrimination and retaliation.

As part of its commitment to equal opportunity, the School is committed to providing reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities. Any applicant or employee who requires reasonable accommodation to complete the application process, and/or to perform the essential functions of the job, should contact the School’s Human Resources Officer. Any student, summer

scholar, or computational biology scholar with a disability, who requires assistance to ensure access to educational opportunities, should contact the Dean for Student Affairs.

The School has designated its Title IX Coordinator to coordinate compliance with discrimination laws, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Act, Title VI, and the Americans With Disabilities Act.

Questions or concerns arising out of this Nondiscrimination Policy can also be raised with a supervisor, the Human Resources Officer, or the Dean. Students, summer scholars, or computational biology scholars who have questions or concerns should contact the Dean for Student Affairs. Additionally, a person can file a complaint of sex discrimination with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights by visiting their website at www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintintro.html or by calling 1-800-421-3481.

II. Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation

The purpose of this Policy is to uphold the School's mission in preserving the fundamental dignity and rights of all individuals involved in School programs and activities. Discrimination, harassment and retaliation on the basis of protected status, defined above, are strictly prohibited. Such conduct is contrary to the education and employment values of the School. Persons who engage in such conduct are subject to discipline up to and including termination or dismissal.

Preventing prohibited discrimination, harassment and retaliation is the responsibility of all members of the School Community. Faculty, staff and third parties should report a potential violation of this Policy as soon as possible to the Human Resources Officer:

Marlana Dickerson
MDickerson@stowers.org
816-926-4019
1000 East 50th Street, Kansas City, MO 64110

Students, summer scholars, and computational biology scholars should report a potential violation of this Policy as soon as possible to a School Official:

Karla Terrazas, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs
KTerrazas@stowers.edu
816-926-4036
1000 East 50th Street, Kansas City, MO 64110

or

Jennifer Gerton, Dean
JEG@stowers.edu
816-926-4443
1000 East 50th Street, Kansas City, MO 64110

The School will respond to reports of perceived prohibited conduct in a reasonable, thorough, and prompt manner.

This Policy applies to reports of discrimination, harassment and retaliation on the basis of protected status (with the exception of Sexual Harassment, as noted below). This Policy governs reports of discrimination, harassment and retaliation in all the School's programs and activities and applies to all members of the School Community. It applies to discrimination, harassment and retaliation that occurs on campus, during or at an official School program or activity (regardless of location) and to off campus conduct when the conduct could deny or limit a person's ability to participate in or benefit from School's programs and activities.

Regardless of other language in this Policy, Sexual Harassment (including Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking), as defined in the Sexual Harassment Policy, will be governed exclusively by the Sexual Harassment Policy and processes stated therein. All other forms of sex-based discrimination are governed by this Policy, including sex-based harassment, as defined in this Policy, that does not rise to the level of Sexual Harassment as defined in the Sexual Harassment Policy.

Conduct that is initially raised through a Formal Complaint under the Sexual Harassment Policy may also be addressed under this Policy, in the School's discretion, when: (i) the conduct, or some part of it, may amount to a violation of this Policy regardless of whether it meets the definition of Sexual Harassment under the Sexual Harassment Policy; (ii) the formal complaint, or some part of it, has been dismissed under the Sexual Harassment Policy; or (iii) a final determination of a formal complaint has been made under the Sexual Harassment Policy and separate or additional action may be necessary to enforce this Policy.

IV. Prohibited Conduct

Discrimination

Discrimination is material, adverse treatment of an individual based on protected status. It is a violation of this Policy to discriminate on the basis of a protected status in any of the School's programs and activities. A list of protected statuses is located in Section I above.

Harassment

Harassment consists of unwelcome verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct on the basis of protected status that explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with the work performance of, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment for an employee, student, summer scholar, computational biology scholar, or other member of the School Community, including third-parties, because of protected status.

A person's subjective belief that behavior is intimidating, hostile, or offensive does not make that behavior harassment. The behavior must create a hostile environment from both a subjective and objective perspective and must be so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it unreasonably interferes with, limits, or deprives a member of the community of the ability to participate in or to receive benefits, services, or opportunities from the School's education or employment programs and/or activities. In determining whether a hostile environment exists, the School examines the context, nature, scope, frequency, duration, and location of incidents, as well as the relationships of the persons involved.

Examples of conduct prohibited by this Policy may include, but are not limited to, jokes or pranks that are hostile or demeaning with regard to a person's protected status or have the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, abusive or offensive working or academic environment.

Retaliation

The School prohibits retaliation against anyone for reporting discrimination or harassment, assisting in making a report, cooperating in an investigation, or otherwise exercising their rights or responsibilities under this Policy and applicable federal, state, and local laws. Retaliation prohibited by this Policy consists of materially adverse action, such as disparaging comments, uncivil behavior, or other negative treatment of an employee, student, summer scholar, research scholar, computational biology scholar, or other member of the School Community because a report has been made pursuant to this Policy or because an individual otherwise cooperated with the School's investigation.

V. Investigation and Resolution Procedures

Reports Alleging Misconduct By A Student or Summer Scholar

If a report of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation alleging misconduct on the part of a student, summer scholar, or computational biology scholar is received, the report will be referred to the Dean for Student Affairs for investigation and resolution pursuant to the process for handling other types of student and summer scholar misconduct as contained in Policy 900, Academic Conduct.

Reports Alleging Misconduct By Any Other Person

When a report of discrimination, harassment or retaliation alleging misconduct on the part of any other person is received, a School official will be designated to investigate the report. During the investigation, both the complainant and respondent will have the opportunity to identify witnesses and evidence. Investigations will be handled discreetly, with information shared only with those persons who need to know the information in order for there to be a full and fair investigation. The investigator may impose interim measures during the pendency of the investigation to protect and separate the parties. The investigator will prepare a written report summarizing the results of the investigation and deliver it to the Human Resources Officer. The Human Resources Officer will review the report, consult with other School administrators and officials as the Human Resources Officer deems appropriate, and issue a determination as to whether or not the report is substantiated and, if so, what remedial measures will be taken to address the misconduct, including discipline for the respondent or initiation of disciplinary proceedings pursuant to other applicable School policies. Substantiated incidents of conduct prohibited by this Policy can lead to discipline up to and including termination or dismissal. The Human Resources Officer's determination is not subject to appeal or further review.

This Policy was approved by the GSSIMR Board of Directors on November 09, 2020.

This Policy was reviewed and amended by the GSSIMR Board of Directors on September 18, 2024.

This Policy was reviewed and amended by the GSSIMR Board of Directors on September 18, 2025.

This policy will be reviewed again by the GSSIMR Board according to the annual policy review schedule.