

WSR 21-09-053

EMERGENCY RULES

WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

[Filed April 16, 2021, 7:53 a.m., effective April 16, 2021, 7:53 a.m.]

Effective Date of Rule: Immediately upon filing.

Other Findings Required by Other Provisions of Law as Precondition to Adoption or Effectiveness of Rule: Western Washington University is adopting a third emergency rule per RCW 34.05.350(2), while actively pursuing adoption of a permanent rule as evidenced by the Preproposal statement of inquiry, CR-101 filed on August 21, 2020, as WSR 20-18-011 as well as continuing to draft revisions, seek legal review and seek feedback from the campus community.

Purpose: Update student conduct code to be in compliance with new Title IX federal regulations from the Department of Education. The new rules went into effect August 14, 2020.

Citation of Rules Affected by this Order: New WAC 516-21-291, 516-21-292, 516-21-293, 516-21-294, 516-21-295, 516-21-296, 516-21-297, 516-21-298, and 516-21-299; and amending WAC 516-21-240 and 516-21-270.

Statutory Authority for Adoption: RCW 28B.35.120(12); 20 U.S.C. 1681-1688 (Title IX Education Amendments of 1972).

Under RCW 34.05.350 the agency for good cause finds that state or federal law or federal rule or a federal deadline for state receipt of federal funds requires immediate adoption of a rule.

Reasons for this Finding: Federal Title IX regulations require this be implemented by August 14, 2020.

Number of Sections Adopted in Order to Comply with Federal Statute: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; Federal Rules or Standards: New 9, Amended 2, Repealed 0; or Recently Enacted State Statutes: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted at the Request of a Nongovernmental Entity: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted on the Agency's own Initiative: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted in Order to Clarify, Streamline, or Reform Agency Procedures: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted using Negotiated Rule Making: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; Pilot Rule Making: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; or Other Alternative Rule Making: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Date Adopted: April 2, 2021.

Jennifer L. Sloan
Rules Coordinator

OTS-2535.1

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 17-05-100, filed 2/15/17, effective 3/18/17)

WAC 516-21-240 Student conduct system. (1) The vice president for enrollment and student services is responsible for administration of the code. Supervision of the code has been delegated by the vice president to the dean of students.

(2) A conduct officer(s) shall be appointed and supervised by the dean of students or their authorized designee. A conduct officer has the authority to consider complaints, make findings, and administer sanctions for violations of the code. In complaints alleging (~~dis-~~ ~~crimination or sexual violence, which includes sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking or any other type of sexual misconduct or gender-based discrimination, an investigation and written report of findings from Western Washington University's equal opportunity office (or their designee) will be provided to a conduct officer in lieu of the conduct officer's investigation)) a violation of any type of sexual misconduct or gender-based discrimination including Title IX sexual harassment which encompasses quid pro quo harassment, hostile environment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking or sexual assault which includes nonconsensual sexual intercourse, non-consensual sexual contact, incest or statutory rape, complaints should be made to Western Washington University's office of civil rights and Title IX compliance. A final investigation report from Western Washington University's office of civil rights and Title IX compliance (or their designee) will be provided to the conduct officer in lieu of the conduct officer's investigation. The conduct officer will then consider this report and make a finding as to whether the code was violated and impose sanction(s).~~

(3) Appeal board members shall be appointed to consider appeals of a conduct officer's findings and sanctions. Appeal board members shall include a pool of the following:

(a) Four faculty members, appointed by the faculty senate;

(b) Six student members, appointed by the associated students board of directors and/or residence hall association. Student board members must:

(i) Have a cumulative grade point average above 2.0;

(ii) Not currently be under an active sanction of the conduct code or have had previous conduct violations during the current academic year; and

(iii) Be confirmed by the dean of students; and

(c) Four staff members, generally but not exclusively from the division of enrollment and student services, confirmed by the dean of students.

(4) An appeals board shall be composed of five members and any three persons constitute a quorum of a board. Generally an appeals board will be comprised of faculty, staff, and students, but in some instances may only be comprised of members from two of the three groups. The dean of students, or their designee, will appoint a chair from this pool for each board. Board members may not have been involved in consideration of the complaint, or involved in the complaint. Board members must be properly trained in accordance with state and/or federal guidance. The dean of students or their designee will have final authority to approve all of those serving on a board. The dean of students, or their designee, will work to ensure that any board is balanced and representative.

(5) A staff member appointed by the dean of students may advise the board on technical details of the code and its procedures.

(6) Conduct officers, the appeals board, and the dean of students or authorized designees have full authority to administer a decision under the code.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.35.120, chapter 34.05 RCW, and 20 U.S.C. 1681-1688. WSR 17-05-100, § 516-21-240, filed 2/15/17, effective

3/18/17. Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.35.120(12) and 20 U.S.C. 1681-1688. WSR 12-01-021, § 516-21-240, filed 12/9/11, effective 1/9/12.]

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 17-05-100, filed 2/15/17, effective 3/18/17)

WAC 516-21-270 Proceedings for violations of the code. (1) Any member of the university community may file a complaint against a student for a violation of the student conduct code. A complaint should be made in writing to the office of student life. Additionally, information received from any source (police report, third party, online, etc.) may be considered a complaint.

(2) After a consideration of the complaint, a conduct officer may take any of the following actions:

(a) Review the complaint, investigate and make a finding whether the code was violated and impose sanction(s);

(b) Terminate the proceeding and enter a finding that there is no violation of the code and/or that the respondent is not responsible for the alleged conduct violation; or

(c) Dismiss the investigation, which may be reopened at a later date if relevant information that was unknown to the conduct officer arises.

(3) In complaints alleging (~~discrimination and/or sexual violence, including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking or any other type of sexual misconduct or gender-based discrimination, complaints should be made to Western Washington University's equal opportunity office. An investigation and written report of findings from Western Washington University's equal opportunity office~~) a violation of any type of sexual misconduct or gender-based discrimination including Title IX sexual harassment which encompasses quid pro quo harassment, hostile environment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking or sexual assault which includes non-consensual sexual intercourse, nonconsensual sexual contact, incest or statutory rape, complaints should be made to Western Washington University's office of civil rights and Title IX compliance. A final investigation report from Western Washington University's office of civil rights and Title IX compliance (or their designee) will be provided to the conduct officer in lieu of the conduct officer's investigation. The conduct officer will then consider this report and make a finding as to whether the code was violated and impose sanction(s).

(4) Any student charged by a conduct officer with a violation of the student code is provided at least three days written notice of the student's meeting date, time and location. Any request to extend the time and/or date of the conduct officer meeting should be addressed to the conduct officer. The written notice shall include:

(a) A brief summary of the complaint, including the sections of the code allegedly violated;

(b) The approximate time and place of the alleged behavior that forms the factual basis for the charge of violation;

(c) The time, date, and place of the meeting;

(d) A copy of, or link to, the code.

(5) The respondent and complainant (if applicable) are notified in writing of the determination made by the conduct officer, including

the basis for any findings and sanctions. The notice includes information regarding the right to request an appeal.

(6) All notifications under the code are delivered by electronic mail to the students' university email account. Any notifications sent via regular U.S. mail (for instance, to students not currently enrolled) may be sent to the party's last known address or the address on file with the university registrar. Students are responsible for maintaining an updated mailing address on file with the registrar. Deadlines described in the code begin the date the notification is sent via electronic means.

(7) Upon written request to the dean of students office, staff will be available to the respondent and complainant (if applicable) to assist in understanding the student conduct process.

(8) A conduct officer's determinations and findings are made on the basis of a "preponderance of the evidence," that is, whether it is more likely than not that the respondent violated the code.

(9) Evidence is relevant if it tends to make existence of a fact more or less probable. A conduct officer, appeal board chair, or dean of students shall have the discretion to determine admissibility of evidence.

(10) If respondent or complainant (if applicable) to whom notice of a meeting or hearing has been sent does not appear before a conduct officer or appeals board, the complaint may be considered in their absence, and the conduct officer or appeals board may issue a decision based upon that information.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.35.120, chapter 34.05 RCW, and 20 U.S.C. 1681-1688. WSR 17-05-100, § 516-21-270, filed 2/15/17, effective 3/18/17. Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.35.120(12) and 20 U.S.C. 1681-1688. WSR 12-01-021, § 516-21-270, filed 12/9/11, effective 1/9/12.]

NEW SECTION

WAC 516-21-291 Order of precedence under Title IX. This supplemental procedure applies to allegations of sexual harassment subject to Title IX jurisdiction pursuant to regulations promulgated by the United States Department of Education. See 34 C.F.R Part 106. To the extent these supplemental hearing procedures conflict with Western Washington University's standard disciplinary procedures, WAC 516-21-240 and 516-21-270, these supplemental procedures shall take precedence.

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NEW SECTION

WAC 516-21-292 Jurisdiction under Title IX. (1) This supplemental procedure applies only if the alleged misconduct:

(a) Occurred in the United States;

(b) Occurred during a Western Washington University educational program or activity; and

(c) Meets the definition of sexual harassment as that term is defined in this supplemental procedure.

(2) For purposes of this supplemental procedure, an "educational program or activity" is defined as locations, events, or circumstances over which the Western Washington University exercised substantial control over both the respondent and the context in which the alleged sexual harassment occurred. This definition includes any building owned or controlled by a student organization that is officially recognized by Western Washington University.

(3) Proceedings under this supplemental procedure must be dismissed if the decision maker determines that one or all of the requirements of subsection (1)(a), (b), and (c) of this section have not been met. Dismissal under this supplemental procedure does not prohibit Western Washington University from pursuing other disciplinary action based on allegations that the respondent violated other provisions of Western Washington University's student conduct code, chapter 516-21 WAC.

(4) If the Title IX coordinator determines the facts in the investigation report are not sufficient to support Title IX jurisdiction and/or pursuit of a Title IX violation, the Title IX coordinator will issue a notice of dismissal in whole or part to both parties explaining why some or all of the Title IX claims have been dismissed.

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NEW SECTION

WAC 516-21-293 Prohibited conduct under Title IX. Pursuant to RCW 28B.50.140(13) and Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, 20 U.S.C. Sec. 1681, Western Washington University may impose disciplinary sanctions against a student who commits, attempts to commit, or aids, abets, incites, encourages, or assists another person to commit, an act(s) of "sexual harassment."

For purposes of this supplemental procedure, "sexual harassment" encompasses the following conduct:

(1) Quid pro quo harassment. A Western Washington University employee conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of Western Washington University on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct.

(2) Hostile environment. Unwelcome conduct that a reasonable person would find to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to Western Washington University's educational programs or activities, or employment.

(3) Sexual assault. Sexual assault includes the following conduct:

(a) Nonconsensual sexual intercourse. Any actual or attempted sexual intercourse (anal, oral, or vaginal), however slight, with any object or body part, by a person upon another person, that is without consent and/or by force. Sexual intercourse includes anal or vaginal penetration by a penis, tongue, finger, or object, or oral copulation by mouth to genital contact or genital to mouth contact.

(b) Nonconsensual sexual contact. Any actual or attempted sexual touching, however slight, with any body part or object, by a person upon another person that is without consent and/or by force. Sexual touching includes any bodily contact with the breasts, groin, mouth,

or other bodily orifice of another individual, or any other bodily contact in a sexual manner.

(c) Incest. Sexual intercourse or sexual contact with a person known to be related to them, either legitimately or illegitimately, as an ancestor, descendant, brother, or sister of either wholly or half related. Descendant includes stepchildren and adopted children under the age of eighteen.

(d) Statutory rape. Consensual sexual intercourse between someone who is eighteen years of age or older and someone who is under the age of sixteen.

(4) Domestic violence. Physical violence, bodily injury, assault, the infliction of fear of imminent physical harm, sexual assault, or stalking committed by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common, by a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse, by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the state of Washington, or by any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person's acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the state of Washington, RCW 26.50.010.

(5) Dating violence. Physical violence, bodily injury, assault, the infliction of fear of imminent physical harm, sexual assault, or stalking committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors:

- (a) The length of the relationship;
- (b) The type of relationship; and

(c) The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.

(6) Stalking. Engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for their safety or the safety of others or suffer substantial emotional distress.

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NEW SECTION

WAC 516-21-294 Initiation of discipline under Title IX. (1)

Upon receiving the Title IX final investigation report from the Title IX coordinator, the student conduct officer will independently review the report to determine whether there are sufficient grounds to pursue a disciplinary action against the respondent for engaging in prohibited conduct under Title IX.

(2) If the student conduct officer determines that there are sufficient grounds to proceed under these supplemental procedures, the student conduct officer will initiate a Title IX disciplinary proceeding by filing a written disciplinary notice with the chair of the student conduct committee and serving the notice on the respondent and the complainant, and their respective advisors. The notice must:

- (a) Set forth the basis for Title IX jurisdiction;
- (b) Identify the alleged Title IX violation(s);
- (c) Set forth the facts underlying the allegation(s);

(d) Identify the range of possible sanctions that may be imposed if the respondent is found responsible for the alleged violation(s);

(e) Explain that the parties are entitled to be accompanied by their chosen advisors during the hearing and that:

(i) The advisors will be responsible for questioning all witnesses on the party's behalf;

(ii) An advisor may be an attorney; and

(iii) Western Washington University will appoint the party an advisor of Western Washington University's choosing at no cost to the party, if the party fails to do so.

(3) Explain that if a party fails to appear at the hearing, a decision of responsibility may be made in their absence.

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NEW SECTION

WAC 516-21-295 Prehearing procedure under Title IX. (1) Upon receiving the disciplinary notice, the chair of the student conduct committee will send a hearing notice to all parties, in compliance with WAC 516-21-250. In no event will the hearing date be set less than ten days after the Title IX coordinator provided the final investigation report to the student conduct officer.

(2) A party may choose to have an attorney serve as their advisor at the party's own expense. This right will be waived unless, at least five days before the hearing, the attorney files a notice of appearance with the committee chair with copies to all parties and the student conduct officer.

(3) In preparation for the hearing, the parties will have equal access to all evidence gathered by the investigator during the investigation, regardless of whether the Western Washington University intends to offer the evidence at the hearing.

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NEW SECTION

WAC 516-21-296 Rights of parties under Title IX. (1) Western Washington University's student conduct procedures, WAC 516-21-250 and 516-21-270 and this supplemental procedure shall apply equally to all parties.

(2) Western Washington University bears the burden of offering and presenting sufficient testimony and evidence to establish that the respondent is responsible for a Title IX violation by a preponderance of the evidence.

(3) The respondent will be presumed not responsible until such time as the disciplinary process has been finally resolved.

(4) During the hearing, each party shall be represented by an advisor who will conduct all questioning on the party's behalf. The parties are entitled to an advisor of their own choosing and the advisor may be an attorney. If a party does not choose an advisor, then the Title IX coordinator will appoint an advisor of Western Washington University's choosing on the party's behalf at no expense to the party.

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NEW SECTION

WAC 516-21-297 Evidence under Title IX. The introduction and consideration of evidence during the hearing is subject to the following procedures and restrictions:

(1) **Relevance:** The committee chair shall review all questions for relevance and shall explain on the record their reasons for excluding any question based on lack of relevance.

(2) **Relevance** means that information elicited by the question makes facts in dispute more or less likely to be true.

(3) Questions or evidence about a complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant and must be excluded, unless such question or evidence:

(a) Is asked or offered to prove someone other than the respondent committed the alleged misconduct; or

(b) Concerns specific incidents of prior sexual behavior between the complainant and the respondent, which are asked or offered on the issue of consent.

(4) **Cross-examination required:** If a party or witness does not submit to cross-examination during the live hearing, the committee must not rely on any statement by that party or witness in reaching a determination of responsibility.

(5) **No negative inference:** The committee may not make an inference regarding responsibility solely on a witness's or party's absence from the hearing or refusal to answer questions.

(6) **Privileged evidence:** The committee shall not consider legally privileged information unless the holder has effectively waived the privilege. Privileged information includes, but is not limited to, information protected by the following:

(a) Spousal/domestic partner privilege;

(b) Attorney-client and attorney work product privileges;

(c) Privileges applicable to members of the clergy and priests;

(d) Privileges applicable to medical providers, mental health therapists, and counselors;

(e) Privileges applicable to sexual assault and domestic violence advocates; and

(f) Other legal privileges identified in RCW 5.60.060.

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NEW SECTION

WAC 516-21-298 Initial conduct order under Title IX. (1) In addition to complying with WAC 516-21-250 and 516-21-270, the student conduct committee will be responsible for conferring and drafting an initial conduct order that:

(a) Identifies the allegations of sexual harassment;

(b) Describes the grievance and disciplinary procedures, starting with filing of the formal complaint through the determination of responsibility, including notices to parties, interviews with witnesses

and parties, site visits, methods used to gather evidence, and hearings held;

(c) Makes findings of fact supporting the determination of responsibility;

(d) Reaches conclusions as to whether the facts establish whether the respondent is responsible for engaging in sexual harassment in violation of Title IX;

(e) Contains a statement of, and rationale for, the committee's determination of responsibility for each allegation;

(f) Describes any disciplinary sanction or conditions imposed against the respondent, if any;

(g) Describes to what extent, if any, complainant is entitled to remedies designed to restore or preserve complainant's equal access to Western Washington University's educational programs or activities; and

(h) Describes the process for appealing the initial conduct order.

(2) The committee chair will serve the initial conduct order on the parties simultaneously.

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NEW SECTION

WAC 516-21-299 Appeals under Title IX. (1) The parties shall have the right to request a review from the initial conduct order's determination of responsibility and/or dismissal of an allegation(s) of sexual harassment in a formal complaint. The right to request a review will be subject to the same procedures and time frames set forth in WAC 516-21-290 (5)(c). Appeals of initial conduct orders under Title IX move directly to the review stage of the student conduct code's proceedings.

(2) The vice president of enrollment and student services or their delegate will determine whether the grounds for a request for review have merit, provide the rationale for this conclusion, and state whether the disciplinary sanction and condition(s) imposed in the initial conduct order are affirmed, vacated, or amended, and, if amended, set forth any new disciplinary sanction and/or condition(s).

(3) The vice president of enrollment and student services or their delegate shall serve the final decision on the parties simultaneously.

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