

MERCYHURST
UNIVERSITY



Title IX/Discrimination

Student Information

Respondent Form, Grievance Procedure and Sexual Misconduct Policy

To file a complaint with the University, please complete and bring this form to the Title IX Coordinator or a Deputy Title IX Coordinator or call to make arrangements for a representative to meet with you. If you are unable to complete this form and would like to make a verbal complaint, please call the Title IX Coordinator, 814-824-2362, to schedule an appointment.

Although the University cannot commit to keeping a complaint of discrimination confidential because of the University's obligation to investigate the complaint, the University will use its best efforts not to disseminate information concerning the complaint beyond those who have a need to know.

Please feel free to contact the Title IX Coordinator if you have any questions regarding the process for filing or investigating complaints of sex discrimination.

Please Note: All employees have a duty to immediately report, to the Title IX Coordinator, information related to sexual harassment, except those employees who are exempted from sharing such information by virtue of their position at the University.

Individuals should report any instance of sexual misconduct before conduct becomes severe or pervasive, so the University can take the necessary steps to prevent the harassment from creating a hostile environment.

If Mercyhurst is made aware of any sexual misconduct or harassment, immediate action will be taken to eliminate the hostile environment, prevent its reoccurrence and address its effects.

MERCYHURST UNIVERSITY
Title IX – Complaint Form

Any individual may use this form to file a complaint alleging a violation of Title IX against any Mercyhurst student, Mercyhurst employee, or third party. Complaints may include claims of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, or any other forms of sexual misconduct against the complainant or against others. The complainant may choose to file a criminal complaint with the appropriate local or state authorities.

Sex Discrimination – any behaviors and/or actions that deny or limit a person’s ability to benefit from, and/or fully participate in the educational programs, activities or employment opportunities because of a person’s sex.

Sexual Harassment – any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that includes unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other visual, verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: (1) submission to such conduct is made a term or condition of employment or the educational relationship; (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for employment or education decisions affecting the individual; or (3) such conduct has the effect of unreasonably interfering with a student’s or employee’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working, educational, or living environment.

Relationship Violence – is any act of violence committed by a person who is or has been in a 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 length of the relationship, the type of relationship and/or the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.

Stalking – intentionally engaging in a course of conduct, directed at a specific person, which is likely to cause a reasonable person to fear for their safety or the safety of others or cause the person to suffer substantial emotional damage.

Sexual Misconduct – encompasses any sexual behaviors that violate Mercyhurst University’s Code of Conduct and/or Title IX Policy. In general, any nonconsensual physical contact of a sexual nature may constitute Sexual Misconduct.

Consent – words or actions that demonstrate an affirmative, knowing, and voluntary agreement to engage in a mutually agreed-upon sexual act. Consent must be informed and freely given. Consent is invalidated when it is forced, coerced, or when a person is physically and/or mentally incapable of giving consent.

Consent is an active, on-going process. It can be withdrawn at any time, and consent for one sexual act does not imply consent for another subsequent sexual act. Consent, a lack of consent, or a withdrawal of consent can be expressed by words or actions or both. Students are strongly advised to avoid any ambiguity in obtaining and giving consent. Relying solely on non-verbal communication can lead to miscommunication.

University Status: (Circle one or more that apply to you)

Administrator

Student

Staff

Employment Applicant

Prospective Student

Other (Please Explain)

Faculty Member

Graduate Student

Name

Date

Department

Work Number

Home Number

Cell Number

Home Address

City

State

Zip

Employee I.D. Number

Student I.D. Number

Respondent: Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability in full description. Use as much detail as possible and write as much as you feel is necessary. Supplemental sheets may be attached to provide additional detail regarding the alleged violation. When the packet is complete, please turn it in to the Human Resources Department, Police & Safety or the Student Conduct Office.

1. Describe the incident(s) as clearly as possible; include date(s), location(s), the presence of any witnesses, verbal statements (threats, requests, demands etc.), physical contact, etc.
2. Include any other information that is relevant.

MERCYHURST UNIVERSITY
Title IX – Sexual Misconduct Policy

Mercyhurst University policy prohibits sexual harassment against any staff members, applicant, student, administrator, faculty member, or third-party vendor. Respect for the dignity and work of each individual is a guideline of the University. All persons will be held to standards of conduct which ensure that all members of the University community are free from sexual and other forms of harassment. Nothing in the policy is meant to limit the rights of an aggrieved person to seek relief in a state or federal court of law. The term harassment refers to unwelcome mistreatment based upon a person's protected characteristics or class membership which is intended to or has the effect of preventing or interfering with a person's full participation in the University's work or academic environment.

In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendment Act of 1972, Mercyhurst University prohibits discrimination based on sex in its educational and athletic programs, as well as in extracurricular activities sponsored by the University. To ensure compliance with Title IX and other federal and state civil rights laws, the University has developed policies and procedures that prohibit sex discrimination in all forms. An individual's sex cannot be considered as a basis for making decisions in areas such as:

Admission and graduation requirements
Access to course enrollment or campus facilities
Counseling and health services
Competitive athletic programs and activities
Housing, financial aid, or other benefits/services

A student, employee, or other individual may use this grievance procedure to file a complaint alleging a violation of Title IX against any Mercyhurst student, Mercyhurst employee, or third party. Complaints may include claims of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, or any other forms of sexual misconduct against the complainant or against others. The person aggrieved may choose to file a criminal complaint with the appropriate local or state authorities.

The University takes complaints very seriously and will work with complainants to ensure their safety and to remedy the situation. Mercyhurst University encourages those who have experienced any form of sex discrimination to report the incident promptly and to seek all available assistance.

The University does not limit the timeframe for filing a report of discrimination based on sex. Reports can be submitted at any time following an incident, although the University's ability to take any action may be limited by the matriculation status of the alleged respondent.

Complainant – a person who initiates the complaint process under this policy

Respondent – a person against whom a complaint is filed under this policy

Witness – a person that is present during an incident that violates this policy

Investigator – a person assigned to investigate the complaint

Please Note: The use of alcohol and other drugs never makes someone at fault for being sexually assaulted. Alcohol and other drugs can lower inhibitions and create an atmosphere of confusion over whether consent is freely and affirmatively given. The use of alcohol and other drugs shall in no way limit the responsibility of students for the consequences of sexual misconduct policy violations.

The University's primary concern is student safety. Students may be reluctant to report instances of sexual assault because they fear being charged with policy violations, such as underage alcohol consumption. To encourage reporting, any other policy violations may be addressed (if necessary) separately from a sex discrimination allegation.

MERCYHURST UNIVERSITY
Title IX – Complaint Procedure

Mercyhurst University encourages those who have experienced any form of sex discrimination to report the incident promptly and to seek all available assistance. Mercyhurst University takes complaints very seriously and will work with complainants to ensure their safety and to remedy the situation.

Filing a Complaint

A complaint should be filed as soon as possible after the incident. The complaint should be filed in writing by utilizing the "Title IX Complaint Form." Forms may be obtained from the Title IX Coordinator or online. Supplemental sheets may be attached to provide additional detail regarding the alleged violation. The completed "Title IX Complaint Form" and any supplemental attachments can be submitted to any of the following:

Alice Agnew
Title IX Coordinator
Old Main 300
aagnew@mercyhurst.edu
(814) 824-2362

Police & Safety

Lower Level McAuley
(814) 824-2304
(814) 824-3889

Laura Zirkle
Vice President for Student Life
Egan 314
lzirkle@mercyhurst.edu
(814) 824-2262

Stacey Gaudette
Assistant Director of Athletics
Lower Level Baldwin
sgaudette@mercyhurst.edu
(814) 824-2079

Jackie Fink
Director of Administrative Services
Miller 104
jfink@mercyhurst.edu
(814) 725-6274

Courtney Olevnik
Student Life Coordinator
Egan 318
colevnik@mercyhurst.edu
(814) 824-2333

All complaint forms that are received will be given to the Title IX Coordinator.

Support Services

The University offers various supportive measures available for those who have experienced any form of sex discrimination. Support services include:

- *Counseling:* Students may receive free and **confidential** counseling at the Counseling Center, (814) 824-3650. Mercyhurst University employees may contact the Title IX Coordinator or reference the Employee Handbook for information regarding counseling options.
- *Medical Assistance:*

	Urgent Care – UPMC Hamot 7200 Peach Street – Erie, PA 16509 (814) 860-3301 Monday – Sunday: 9a.m. – 9p.m. No appointment necessary No emergency co-pay	Urgent Care – Saint Vincent 4950 Buffalo Road – Erie, PA 16510 (814) 898-2576 Monday – Friday: 10a.m. – 8p.m. Saturday – Sunday: 10a.m. – 5p.m. No appointment necessary
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- *Off Campus Resources:*

	Crime Victim Center 125 West 18th Street - Erie, PA 16501 (814) 455-9414 or (800) 352-7273	Erie Police Department 626 State Street - Erie, PA 16501 (814) 870-1125
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- *Title IX Coordinator:* serves as the central reference person for information about filing the complaint and the investigative procedure, as well as available support services: *Alice Agnew, (814) 824-2362.*

- *Remedies and Reassignments:* At any time during the process, the Title IX Coordinator/Investigator/ Director of Student Conduct may recommend that interim protections or remedies for the parties involved or witnesses be provided by appropriate University officials. These protections or remedies may include separating the parties, placing limitations on contact between the parties, making alternative workplace arrangements or student housing arrangements, and suspension. When the complainant and the respondent participate in the same courses, reside in the same residence or in proximity to one another, or participate in the same activities (sports teams, organizations on campus, etc.) either party may request a fair and immediate interim remedy.

The Title IX Coordinator will consult with the Office of Academic Affairs to determine alternative classroom assignment(s) for the respondent and/or the complainant who has experienced a sex offense and will consult with the Director of Residence Life to determine an alternative housing assignment. If a student employee and the respondent work in the same department or area, alternative work assignments may be made by the appropriate administrator upon request.

In certain circumstances, it may be necessary to impose suspension immediately. The interim suspension is used when there is substantial reason to fear harm to persons or property, to ensure the safety and well-being of members of the University community, or when there is a threat of or actual disruption or interference with the normal operation of the University. During the period of interim suspension, a defiant trespass notice will be issued. Failure to comply with the terms of interim protections may be considered a separate violation of the Student Conduct Code (see Student Handbook).

Investigation Process

Upon receiving the complaint form, the Title IX Coordinator will begin an investigation or designate an Investigator. The Title IX Investigator will conduct a prompt and thorough investigation, which includes: interviews of parties involved, identifying and interviewing witnesses, gathering and securing all documentation, and identifying other information. The Investigator acts as a neutral party in the investigation and provides a detailed, unbiased report regarding the findings of the investigation.

At any time during the investigation, the Investigator may recommend that interim protections or remedies for the parties involved or witnesses be provided by appropriate University officials. These protections or remedies may include, but are not limited to, separating the parties, placing limitations on contact between the parties, suspension, making alternative workplace arrangements, or student housing arrangements. Failure to comply with the terms of interim protections may be considered a separate violation of the Student Conduct Code (see Student Handbook).

The investigation will be conducted to ensure the greatest degree of confidentiality of all parties involved. However, the institution's ability to promise confidentiality may be limited by its obligation to remedy the harassment or discrimination. All parties involved in the investigation are encouraged to respect the privacy of others involved in the process. Retaliation against the complainant, respondent, or witnesses is strictly prohibited. Proven retaliation by any individual will result in disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion, or other appropriate sanctions (See Non-Retaliation Policy Definition).

The investigation shall be concluded as quickly as feasible and within a reasonable amount of time required to complete the investigation. The investigation will be conducted in a manner that is adequate, reliable, and impartial.

Completion of Investigation Process

Upon completion of the investigation, the Investigator will submit a written report to the Title IX Coordinator, or if necessary to the Vice President for Student Life, within 60 days of the initial complaint. The report will detail allegations made by the complainant, summarize the complainant, respondent, and witness meetings, and describe the findings of the investigation. However, due to the extensiveness or complexity of the issues of an investigation, more time may be needed to complete a thorough and equitable investigation. In those cases, the complainant and respondent will be notified in writing that additional time is required.

The complainant and respondent will be advised when the report has been submitted. The Title IX Coordinator will choose one of the three following options: 1) no further action to be taken at this time, 2) refer incident to an administrative hearing, or 3) refer incident to a hearing panel.

No Further Action

In cases where the investigation does not establish that a violation has occurred, and there are no further avenues to investigate, the case will be closed (i.e. there is not enough evidence to proceed with the investigation at this time). If new evidence is found or submitted, which was not available at the time of the original investigation and is found to be substantial enough to have changed the decision to close the case, the case may be reopened.

In cases where the investigation indicates that no violation of the Title IX policy has occurred, the case will be closed.

Hearing Process

In cases where there will be an administrative hearing or a hearing panel, every effort will be made to provide a hearing as soon as feasible following the conclusion of the investigation. Whenever possible, the complainant and respondent will be given at least 7 calendar days' notice to prepare for the hearing. The hearing is a closed proceeding and only the complainant, respondent, and relevant witnesses are permitted to attend. One advocate (parent, attorney, counselor etc.) may accompany involved individuals, but may not participate at the hearing.

The Complainant's and the Respondent's rights during the hearing process include:

- An explanation of the changes and the available options for remedy,
- Freedom from harassment by the respondent (or supporters),
- Use of all available internal and external support services in dealing with the aftermath of the offense,
- An explanation of the University discipline system,
- The ability to speak on their own behalf during the proceedings,
- An opportunity to present witnesses who can speak about the charges, character witnesses excluded,
- Testify on his/her own behalf,
- Freedom from having irrelevant sexual history considered during the hearing,
- Information about the outcome of the hearing,
- An opportunity to appeal the outcome of the hearing,
- An opportunity to review the documents and materials presented during the hearing,
- Documents will be redacted, removing the identifiable information of another student, in accordance with FERPA, and
- The right to a non-adversarial hearing in which neither the complainant nor the respondent will have the opportunity to ask the other questions. Typically, neither will be present in the room at the same time.

Administrative Hearing

A complaint may be resolved through an administrative hearing. The administrator is charged with determining whether a Title IX Policy has been violated and if violated, will provide appropriate sanctions. An administrative hearing is only considered if the Title IX Coordinator deems it appropriate, and both parties agree that they would prefer this type of hearing. Please note that either party may request that a hearing panel be provided instead.

The Administrative Procedure

The administrator will have the opportunity to thoroughly review the investigative report and documentation submitted prior to the hearing. The general course of the administrative procedure will be as follows:

- Complainant statement,
- Questions to the complainant,
- Closing statement by complainant,
- Respondent statement,
- Questions to the respondent,
- Closing statement by respondent,
- Witness testimony and questioning (if the hearing officer determines it is necessary),
- Clarification from the investigator (if the hearing officer determines it is necessary), and
- Opportunity to follow up with any party.

The administrator may impose time limits on any stage of the procedure. The administrator may determine the relevance of and place restrictions on any witnesses or information presented. When the complainant and respondent are not able to be present, arrangements will be made for the parties to participate via alternate means (phone, Skype, etc.). In cases where the respondent and/or complainant have chosen not to participate in the administrative procedure, the administrator will begin and will hear from the party (if one exists) who has chosen to participate in the process.

At the conclusion of the administrative process, the University will provide written notification to the parties involved of the outcome and resolution within 7 calendar days. Once written notification of the resolution has been received, the parties involved will have the opportunity to appeal the findings. The appeal should be submitted in writing to the Title IX Coordinator within 7 calendar days.

Due to the extensiveness or complexity of the issues of an investigation, more time may be needed to complete a thorough and equitable investigation. In those cases, the complainant and respondent will be notified in writing that additional time is required to reach a decision.

The Hearing Panel

A complaint may be resolved through a hearing panel if the Title IX Coordinator decides it is appropriate or if either the complainant or respondent request a hearing panel instead of the administrative hearing. The hearing panel is charged with determining whether a Title IX Policy has been violated and if violated, will provide appropriate sanctions. Whenever feasible, the hearing panel will consist of one chair, two faculty members and two staff members. The complainant and respondent will be informed of the panel members prior to the commencement of the hearing. A party may challenge a panel member's participation in writing if the party believes that the panelist is acquainted or associated with the case in any way. This written challenge must be received by the Title IX Coordinator within 3 calendar days of the hearing.

The Hearing Procedure

The Hearing Panel will have the opportunity to thoroughly review the investigative report and documentation submitted by the investigator prior to the hearing. The general course of the hearing procedure will be as follows:

- Complainant statement,
- Questions to the complainant,
- Closing statement by complainant,
- Respondent statement,
- Questions to the respondent,
- Closing statement by respondent,
- Witness testimony and questioning (if the hearing panel determines it is necessary),
- Clarification from the investigator (if the hearing panel determines it is necessary), and
- Opportunity to follow up with any party.

The panel may impose time limits on any stage of the procedure. The panel may determine the relevance of and place restrictions on any witnesses or information presented. When the complainant and respondent are not able to be present for the hearing panel, arrangements will be made for the parties to participate via alternate means (phone, Skype, etc.). In cases where the respondent and/or complainant have chosen not to participate in the hearing procedure, the panel will commence and hear from the party (if one exists) who has chosen to participate in the process.

At the conclusion of the hearing process, the University will provide written notification to the parties involved of the outcome and resolution of the hearing within seven calendar days. Once written notification of the resolution has been received, the parties involved will have the opportunity to appeal the findings. The appeal should be submitted in writing to the Title IX Coordinator within 7 calendar days of the date of the written decision notification.

Due to the extensiveness or complexity of the issues of an investigation, more time may be needed to complete a thorough and equitable investigation. In those cases, the complainant and respondent will be advised in writing that additional time is required.

Hearing Response

The panel or administrator will use preponderance of evidence as the standard of proof to determine whether a Title IX Policy violation occurred. Preponderance of evidence means that a panel or the administrator must be convinced based on the information provided that a policy violation was more likely to have occurred than to not have occurred in order to find a student responsible for violating a policy. The panel or administrator will render a decision following the conclusion of the hearing.

If the respondent is found to have violated Title IX policies, the panel will determine the appropriate sanctions. Consideration may be given to the nature of and circumstances surrounding the violation, prior disciplinary violations, precedent cases, University safety concerns, or any other information deemed relevant by the Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator will provide each party with information detailing the sanctioning decision of the panel.

Consequences and Possible Sanctions

Not all forms of sexual misconduct will be deemed to be equally serious offenses, and the University reserves the right to impose differing sanctions, ranging from a verbal warning to expulsion, depending on the severity of the offense. The University reserves the right to take whatever measures it deems necessary in response to an allegation of sex discrimination in order to protect the individuals' rights and personal safety. Such measures include, but are not limited to:

- Reprimand/warning,
- Modification of living arrangements,
- Counseling assessment,

- Social or disciplinary probation,
- Removal from University housing,
- Suspension,
- Expulsion, and/or
- Arrest and prosecution.

Appeal Process

The purpose of the appeal process is to ensure that the policies and procedures of Mercyhurst University are administered in a fair and consistent manner. An appeal is a request to the Vice President of Student Life or designee to review a decision or action. Each party will be notified if the other party files an appeal, and will be provided the opportunity to respond in writing.

The issue in question is not the respondent's original action or incident; rather it is a request for reconsideration of the original decision. When an appeal is heard, the Vice President of Student Life or designee may recommend, eliminate, decrease, increase, modify, or uphold the initial decision or action.

The complainant and respondent may appeal: 1) the decision made by the hearing panel or administrator, or 2) the sanctions determined by the panel or administrator. There should be no expectation that an appeal will be successful simply because a party is unhappy with or disagrees with the original decision or action.

The three grounds upon which an appeal of the decision or sanctions may be made are:

1. The individual believes a procedural error occurred, which the individual feels may change or affect the outcome of the decision;
2. The individual has substantive new evidence that was not available at the time of the hearing and that may change the outcome of the decision;
3. The individual feels that the sanction issued as a result of the original decision was disproportionate for the violation, unwarranted or excessive in nature.

The written appeal request should:

- Be submitted within 7 calendar days of receipt of the University's decision to the Title IX Coordinator;
- Include the reasons for the appeal and the requested outcome.

Outcome Notification

Every effort will be made to ensure that both the complainant and respondent are updated regularly to inform them of important developments and decisions.

At the conclusion of an administrative hearing or a hearing panel, both the complainant and respondent will be notified in writing to inform them if harassment was found to have occurred or not. In cases where a sanction has been imposed, the sanction will be shared with the complainant when said sanction directly relates to the harassed student. In cases where the conduct involves a crime of violence or a non-forcible sex offense, complainants will be notified of the outcome including the sanctions.

MERCYHURST UNIVERSITY
Title IX – Common Definitions

Advisor: an individual selected by a Complainant or Respondent to assist throughout the University process including. An advisor may advise and assist the Complainant or Respondent in preparation for any meetings, interviews, or hearings that may occur; accompany the Complainant or Respondent through all student conduct process meetings, interviews, or hearings; or assist the Complainant or Respondent in preparing an appeal. An advisor may not participate in the student conduct process in any other capacity in reference to the same incident, including, but not limited to, serving as a Witness, Co-Complainant, or Co- Respondent. Advisors may not directly participate or make any type of representation or argument on behalf of a Complainant or Respondent in any aspect of the student conduct process including, but not limited to: meetings, interviews, or hearings. The availability of an Advisor to attend a student conduct process meeting, interview, or hearing shall not unreasonably interfere with or delay the proceedings.

Consent: Consent is an informed decision made freely and actively through words or actions that demonstrates an affirmative, knowing, and voluntary agreement to engage in a sexual act. The need to obtain consent does not vary based upon a participant’s sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Because sexual misconduct is defined as sexual activity that is undertaken without consent, each participant must obtain and give consent to each sexual act. Students are strongly encouraged to talk with each other before and during any sexual interaction. Relying solely on non-verbal communication can lead to miscommunication. Students are strongly advised to avoid any ambiguity in obtaining and giving consent.

Although all parties must give their consent to any sexual act and it is the best practice for both partners to be responsible for confirming that they have obtained the other’s consent, it is the responsibility of the person initiating the sexual act to obtain consent from the other.

- Consent is required each and every time there is sexual activity;
- The absence of a verbal “no” does not indicate consent;
- Consent can be withdrawn by any person, at any time, at which point the sexual activity must stop immediately;
- Consent to some levels of sexual activity does not imply consent to all levels of sexual activity. Each new level of sexual activity requires consent (for example, moving from kissing to touching, to touching under clothes, etc);
- The person(s) who initiate(s) a new level of sexual activity is responsible for asking for consent;
- Consent cannot be obtained through the use of fraud or force (actual or implied), whether that force be physical force, threats, intimidation, or coercion (compelling another person to do something through emotional or physical pressure, threats, or other forms of intimidation);
- All parties must have equal freedom and room to choose (for example, if one person does not have a ride back to campus, they may feel “trapped” and unable to fully and honestly give consent)
- A current or previous dating or sexual relationship with the initiator (or anyone else) does not constitute consent;
- Being intoxicated does not diminish one’s responsibility to obtain consent;
- Bodily movements and non-verbal responses such as moans are not consent;
- Silence, passivity, or lack of active resistance is not consent;
- Intentional use of alcohol/drugs does not imply consent to sexual activity;
- Seductive dancing or sexy/revealing clothing does not imply consent to sexual activity;
- Use of agreed upon forms of communication such as gestures or safe words is acceptable, but must be discussed and verbally agreed upon by all parties before sexual activity occurs;
- Consent may never be given by minors (in Pennsylvania, those not yet 16 years of age);

- People with mental disabilities cannot give consent to sexual activity if they cannot appreciate the fact, nature, or extent of the sexual situation in which they find themselves.
- This policy also covers someone whose incapacity results from mental disability, sleep, involuntary physical restraint, or from the taking of a so-called “date-rape” drug. Possession, use and/or distribution of any of these substances, including Rohypnol, Ketomine, GHB, Burundanga, etc. is prohibited, and administering one of these drugs to another student for the purpose of inducing incapacity is a violation of this policy. More information on these drugs can be found at <http://www.911rape.org/>

Coercion: Unreasonable pressure for sexual activity. When someone makes it clear that he/she does not want to engage in sexual behavior, or that she/he does not want to go beyond a certain point of sexual interaction, continued pressure beyond that point can be considered coercive.

Cyberbullying: The use of communications technology to harm, threaten, or otherwise victimize another person. Cyberbullying can take many forms (i.e. offensive texts or instant messages, rumor-spreading emails, videos cruelly mocking other students posted to video-sharing sites, the creation of Facebook pages or Twitter accounts that humiliate other students, and forwarding “sexts,” private messages or intimate images sent from one student to another, to other students or even to the entire school).

Force: Use of physical violence and/or imposing on someone physically to gain sexual access. Force can also include threats, intimidation (implied threats) and coercion that are used to overcome resistance.

Forced Sexual Intercourse: Unwilling or non-consensual sexual penetration (anal, vaginal or oral) with any object or body part that is committed either by force, threat, intimidation, or through exploitation of another’s mental or physical condition of which the assailant was aware or should have been aware.

Gender-based Harassment: Acts of verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression, intimidation, stalking, or hostility based on gender or gender-stereotyping constitute gender-based harassment. Gender-based harassment can occur if students are harassed either for exhibiting what is perceived as a stereotypical characteristic for their sex, or for failing to conform to stereotypical notions of masculinity or femininity. In order to constitute harassment, the conduct must be such that it has the effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, demeaning, or offensive academic or living environment.

Gender-based Misconduct: Comprises a broad range of behaviors focused on sex and/or gender discrimination that may or may not be sexual in nature. Sexual harassment, sexual assault, gender-based harassment, stalking, and intimate partner violence are forms of gender-based misconduct under this policy. Misconduct can occur between strangers or acquaintances, including people involved in an intimate or sexual relationship. Gender-based misconduct can be committed by men or by women, and it can occur between people of the same or different sex.

Hostile Environment: Harassing conduct that is sufficiently serious - that is, severe or pervasive – to deny or limit a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from the school’s program based on sex. A single instance of rape or other form of sexual misconduct is sufficient to constitute as creating a hostile environment. Both, objective and subjective factors are considered in determining whether sexual harassment rises to the level of a hostile environment.

Impact on Education: Unwelcome sexual comments or conduct that denies or limits a student's ability to participate in or benefit from his/her education program.

Impact on Employment: Unwelcome sexual comments or conduct that unreasonably interferes with an employee's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Incapacitation: An incapacitated person cannot give consent. One who is incapacitated as a result of alcohol or other drug consumption (voluntary or involuntary), or who is unconscious, unaware, or otherwise helpless, is incapable of giving consent. One must not engage in sexual activity with another whom one knows (or should reasonably know) to be incapacitated.

The impact of alcohol and other drugs varies from person to person; however, warning signs that a person may be approaching incapacitation may include, but are not limited to:

- loss of balance/inability to walk without stumbling
- slurred speech
- inability to focus their vision
- vomiting
- erratic or extreme behavior
- passing out.

Intimate Partner Violence: Use of physical violence, coercion, threats, intimidation, isolation, stalking, or other forms of emotional, sexual or economic abuse directed towards a partner in an intimate relationship constitute intimate partner violence. This includes any behaviors that intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, coerce, threaten, blame, hurt, injure, or wound someone. Intimate partner violence can be a single act or a pattern of behavior in relationships. Intimate partner relationships are defined as short or long-term relationships (current or former) between persons intended to provide some emotional/romantic and/or physical intimacy.

Non-Consensual Sexual Contact: Any intentional sexual touching, however slight with any object or body part, by one person upon another, without consent.

Non-Consensual Sexual Intercourse: Any sexual intercourse (anal, oral, or vaginal), however slight, with any object or body part, by a man or woman upon a man or a woman, without consent.

Sexual Activity: Intentional contact with the breasts, buttock, groin, or genitals, or touching another with any of these body parts, or making another touch you or themselves with or on any of these body parts; any intentional bodily contact in a sexual manner, though not involving contact with/of/by breasts, buttocks, groin, genitals, mouth or other orifice. Intercourse, however slight, means vaginal and anal penetration by a penis, object, tongue, finger, and/or oral copulation (mouth to genital contact or genital to mouth contact).

Sexual Discrimination: Behaviors and actions that deny or limit a person's ability to benefit from, and/or fully participate in the educational programs or activities or employment opportunities because of a person's sex.

Sexual Exploitation: Occurs when a person takes non-consensual or abusive sexual advantage of another for his/her own advantage or benefit, or to benefit or advantage anyone other than the one being exploited, and that behavior does not otherwise constitute one of the other sexual misconduct offenses.

Sexual Harassment: Any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that includes unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other visual, verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: (1) submission to such conduct is made a term or condition of employment or the educational relationship; (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for employment or education decisions affecting the individual; or (3) such conduct has the effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's or employee's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working, educational, or living environment.

Sexual Misconduct: Encompasses any sexual behaviors that violate Mercyhurst University's Code of Conduct and/or Title IX Policy. In general, any nonconsensual physical contact of a sexual nature may constitute Sexual

Misconduct. Sexual Misconduct may vary in its severity and consists of a range of behaviors or attempted behaviors that may be grounds for student conduct action under University policy.

Stalking: A course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear. Stalking involves repeated and continued harassment made against the expressed wishes of another individual, which causes the targeted individual to feel emotional distress, including fear and apprehension.

Other examples of **prohibited conduct** include, but are not limited to unwelcome occurrences of:

- Sexual propositions or advances;
- Touching, pinching, or patting;
- Insulting or suggestive sounds;
- Comments about a person's body or body parts;
- Emails or other written communication of a sexually suggestive;
- Inappropriate displays of a sexual nature;
- Repeated flirtatious or sexual comments;
- Sexually suggestive displays or objects;
- Repeated insults directed against men or women;
- Comments or behaviors which promise benefits for sexual favors;
- Retaliation against an individual for participating in a sexual harassment investigation;
- Sexually suggestive or oriented jokes or gestures directed toward another or sexually oriented or degrading comments about another.

Non-Retaliation Policy: Members of the Mercyhurst community are encouraged to express displeasure at any conduct which may be sexual harassing or in any other way harassing, to tell individual(s) engaging in the conduct that it is unwelcome and to report that conduct and to use the complaint procedures set forth in this policy.

Mercyhurst University strictly prohibits retaliation against any person for using this reporting procedure, or for filing, testifying, assisting or participating in any manner in any investigation or proceeding involving allegations of sex discrimination. Any person who violates this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination if they are an employee, and/or expulsion if they are a student.

False Reports: The University will not tolerate intentional false reporting of incidents. It is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct to make an intentionally false report of any policy violation, and it may also violate state criminal statutes and civil defamation laws.