

UW//LA Department Grievance Reporting Protocol

The Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Washington is committed to supporting all members of our community in actively addressing concerns of stigma and discrimination through a clear and accountable process. This document establishes acting principles, provides definitions, and delineates the protocols and processes to report grievances. If you, or someone you are advocating for, has a grievance, please read this document fully and follow the steps provided. The Department maintains confidentiality in all grievance matters.

ACTING PRINCIPLES

The department values every member of our community and all of our diversity including race, ethnicity, gender identity & expression, sexual orientation, marital/family status, physical ability, socio-economic class, education, age, religion, place of origin, language, neurological difference, size/appearance and a variety of different ways of thinking and being in the world.¹ We are committed to co-creating a diverse and supportive work and learning environment for all department members and recognize their right to be safe and to be heard.

Based on this, we adopt the following Community Guidelines related to concerns and inquiries around equity, diversity, and inclusion.^{2 8}

1. Grievances are viewed as constructive opportunities to grow.
2. The department community seizes the opportunity to engage in shared problem-solving.
3. Documentation is designed to facilitate transparency and understanding.
4. Individual boundaries are respected, such as needs for privacy/anonymity.
5. Communications are timely and efficient.

Confidentiality

Throughout this process, people's privacy will be respected, particularly those who bring forward a grievance. Given the sensitive nature of such situations and the feelings of vulnerability that they can create, anyone who expresses a concern can remain anonymous throughout the grievance process. Sometimes, in order to follow up to ensure accountability, you may need to make your identity known to a trusted person. This would only be done with your informed consent and for the purpose of ensuring accountability or proper follow-up in addressing the grievance.

There are two broad approaches to anonymity in reporting: (1) remaining anonymous throughout the entire process; or (2) at some point revealing your identity to select persons with decision-making power who can meet with you privately to find ways to address the situation and ensure that the department responds to the concerns raised. Requests to remain anonymous will be honored but be aware that anonymity can limit the response team's ability to provide responses and updates in a more private manner directly to the person who brought the grievance. Different outcomes for these options are outlined in the "Planning Response/Actions" section (p. 7) in this document.

¹ Adapted from [Racial Equity Tools Glossary](#)

² Adapted from the [Roger Williams Bias Incident Response](#), [UW Faculty Disciplinary Task Force](#) and [Faculty Grievance Model](#)

Approaching Mistakes³

Because our knowledge and awareness of the changing world is finite, we all make mistakes. The following section provides guidance on how we can properly approach mistakes and remediate the negative impacts created by mistakes. For more detailed guidance on how to prevent or repair harm in specific circumstances, you can refer to Grievance Response Team Resources (p. 8).

Center the impact over your intention.

Making mistakes is a natural part of learning. Even when we think our intentions are positive or well-meaning, we might discover that what we said or did was harmful to someone. Once we learn this, how we respond is an important part of repairing a relationship and moving forward in a more positive way.

All words and actions matter.

We need to be aware that our words and actions matter. They can have real impact and it is important to notice if you have caused discomfort to somebody else. Although it might not be our intention, some things we say and do can be felt as a microaggression.

Microaggressions can be defined as subtle or overt, intentional or unintentional interactions or behaviors that communicate bias toward marginalized groups.⁴ Micro does not signify “small” in terms of impact, but rather signifies that these interactions tend to happen by one person to another person in the course of everyday life, rather than an explicit biased comment to a group. These interactions, especially over time, can cause physical and psychological harm.

Take responsibility to repair harm caused.

A person who causes harm has the responsibility to be a part of the repair process. If you aren't clear about what harm was caused and/or are unsure how to proceed, it is good to spend time reflecting on the situation to understand a different perspective. One first step might be to consult resources to guide you (see resources at the end of the document). Taking action to repair harm requires centering relationships rather than personal feelings or reputation. Resist defending yourself to let in space for other perspectives. Ask what you can do, but accept that repairing a relationship might take time as this might only be the beginning of a process.

Practice co-regulating your body and mind.

Emotional regulation is the ability to respond to a challenging experience with intention. It can be helpful to be actively aware of your body and mind before you act. Notice when and where you are holding tension throughout this process and how it is affecting your response - this is normal. Take deep breaths or take additional care actions necessary to help collect your thoughts and reset your commitment to repairing harm caused.⁵

Be aware of power imbalances.

Staff and faculty members have the primary responsibility to correct and repair microaggressions that we commit personally or that we witness occurring in our classrooms, or other spaces where we are viewed as leaders, because our actions have greater impact.

³ Adapted from [Wheaton College: Social Justice & Community Impact, Making Mistakes](#)

⁴ See the National Equity Project's [Responding to Microaggressions and Unconscious Bias](#) for more resources

⁵ See the Wikipedia entry on [Emotional self-regulation](#) for more resources.

From the student perspective, we understand that reporting a grievance can feel risky because of the difference in power between students, faculty and staff. Regardless of your role, your concerns matter and should be heard. It can be helpful to find a trusted person with whom to share your concern so you may determine the right course of action for you (please see p.1 on Confidentiality).

DEFINITIONS / TERMS

We offer the following definitions of key terms used in this document that inform the grievance reporting process.

Advocate

If multiple people have a concern or a person with a concern is reluctant to report a grievance, then an advocate can be identified. An advocate can be any member of the Department community (course instructor, other faculty, adviser, other staff or another student). The advocate will represent student concerns to the Grievance Response Team and, if desired, serve as an intermediary in reporting and responding to the incident while maintaining the student's anonymity.

Grievance Response Team

The Grievance Response Team will consist of the department Chair and both MLA and BLA advisors. If an individual who is involved in the grievance is also a member of the Grievance Response Team, that individual will need to recuse themselves because of a conflict of interest. The Grievance Response Team will work in consultation with the advocate, and/or other suitable people who work with related grievances as needed to come up with an appropriate response (see Planning Response/Action section on p.7).

Community Member

Community members of the Landscape Architecture department include but are not limited to students, staff, faculty (part-time and full-time, adjunct and affiliate), Professional Advisory Council members, guest reviewers, and guest lecturers.

Stigma/Bias/Discrimination

Stigma refers to a set of negative thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs held within social systems.¹ Social stigma may affect individual bias, leading to acts of discrimination. Bias, as defined by the Oxford Dictionary, is "prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair." Discrimination is the "unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of ethnicity, age, sex, or disability."

Since stigma, bias and discrimination all cause emotional, mental, and physical harm for individuals and communities, and the goal of this protocol is to address harm caused, these terms are used interchangeably throughout this document.

WHEN TO REPORT: INCIDENT OF CONCERN

There are multiple types of concerns that can arise for students, faculty, or staff. If your concerns are causing distress, and you feel you have suffered a wrong or hardship, this forms legitimate grounds for a complaint. If this occurs, you are encouraged to make a report (see "Grievance Resource Graphic: Ways to Report" on p. 6 for an overview of communication pathways). The following guideline unpacks what a

bias-related grievance might look like, as these are incidents that might be more complicated to understand.

What is a Bias Incident?

Among the various grievances can be concerns about bias. A bias incident is any act of discrimination or harassment against an individual or a group based on their age, religion, disability (physical or mental), race, ethnicity, national origin, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran status, socioeconomic status, or other category. It can be an event, image, utterance, or behavior that occurs physically, verbally, in writing or via social media/other digital means. Bias incidents can be intentional or unintentional acts of conduct.⁶

Examples of bias may include, but not limited to:

- Promoting/distributing materials that have language or images that are insensitive/derogatory.
- Jokes or comments that are insensitive or demeaning to a group of people based on their actual or perceived race, sex, gender identity or expression, disability or other category of their identity.
- Hosting a tokenizing culturally themed event.
- Mis-gendering individuals
- Comments that reinforce stereotypes that may be deemed “non-demeaning” (i.e. the model minority myth)
- Preferential treatment for some, which might result in lack of inclusion for others.⁷

Ways to Intervene in an Incident of Concern⁸

DIRECT: Be direct, address the situation and explain to the person why their language or actions were harmful. If someone is continuously using biased language, or not affirming someone’s gender (i.e. using the wrong pronouns), you may consider taking a more direct approach to correct the person privately in another setting. If you are correcting pronouns, there is a chance that the person is not “out” in that space or is not using those pronouns openly. Being ‘out’ means that the person is not concealing their identity within that community for fear of negative repercussions.

DELEGATE: Ask someone else, such as a peer, staff, or faculty for support, or ask them to address the situation if you are not comfortable doing so. If you’re not sure who you’d like to support you through this process and/or would like to remain anonymous, you can submit a form that will be received by the Grievance Response Team via the [UW//LA Grievance Report Form](#) (see “Ways to Report” section on p. 5).⁹ There will be different outcomes depending on whether you choose to confide in another person versus remaining completely anonymous using the form (read the “Document” section below for further guidance, and see the “Planning Response/Action” section on p.7 for possible outcomes).

DELAY: Check in with the person that was harmed in the interaction afterwards and ask if they need support and direct them to resources available. It is important to remember that when we offer someone support after they have experienced a microaggression, they may not want it. Respect that person’s space. If they change their mind later, they know that you have offered support.

⁶ Adapted from [Wheaton College: Social Justice and Community Impact](#) and [UW: Reporting Bias Incidents](#)

⁷ Based on [Examining Racial Bias in Education: A New Approach](#)

⁸ Adapted from [Wheaton College: Social Justice & Community Impact](#) and [Right to Be Bystander Intervention](#)

⁹ Remember that choosing to remain anonymous throughout the reporting process limits the Grievance Response Team’s ability to report directly back to you in private. It might also limit the team’s ability to respond if we need to follow up to obtain more information about the grievance in order to take action. See confidentiality section on p. 1.

DOCUMENT: If you're not sure who you'd like to support you directly through this process and/or would like to remain anonymous, you can submit a form that will be received by the Department advisors and chair via the Department's anonymous [UW//LA Grievance Report Form](#). If you are supporting as an advocate for someone directly affected, it is helpful to document the incident as soon as possible, using our suggested intake questions (see "Information to Record in an Initial Intake" under the next section). If the behavior seems targeted, intentional, malicious or is ongoing, even after you have tried to intervene, you may want to document the incident(s) by submitting a report through UW's [Bias Reporting Tool](#) (see "Ways to Report" under the next section for more information).

DISTRACT: This type of intervention is a creative and subtle tool for interrupting on-going harassment, defined as unwanted physical or verbal behavior that causes emotional distress. The key parts of implementing distraction effectively are to ignore the person who is harassing and engage directly with the person being affected, and to ignore the harassment itself while talking about something completely unrelated.

DOCUMENTATION / REPORTING

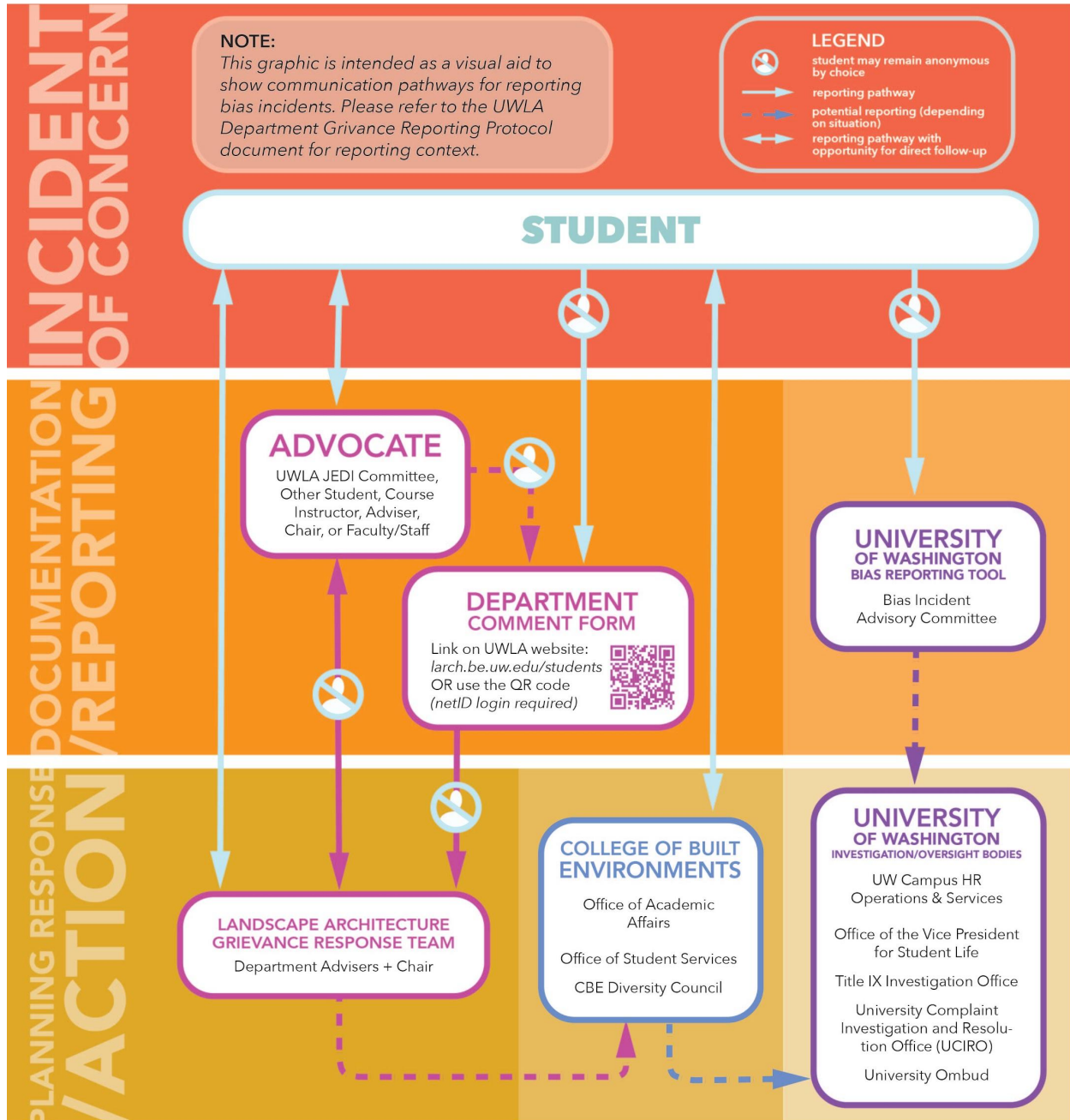
Ways to Report

There are multiple ways to report a grievance, see accompanying diagram on p. 6.

- Any member of the department's community can bring concerns of bias or other discrimination related issues they experience to a peer, course instructor, department adviser, department chair, other department instructor or staff depending on who they are most comfortable engaging their concern with.
- Anonymous reporting is available via the UW//LA Grievance Report Form. Links to this form can be found on the Department website.
- If a student has any concerns about reporting an incident of stigma/bias/discrimination to a member of the Department, there are pathways that lead directly to the College of Built Environments (CBE) or University of Washington.

GRIEVANCE RESOURCE GRAPHIC

WAYS TO REPORT



Next Steps

- The community member has the right to remain anonymous or can meet directly with the department Grievance Response Team.
- Community members can retain confidentiality if needed with an advocate who will make sure to review with the community member what aspects of the incident can be shared.
- Once a community member brings an issue to an advocate, this advocate will document the incident and bring up concerns to the department's Grievance Response Team either with/without the original community members involved, depending on individual preference and original reporting situation.
- The advocate can also report the incident to other reporting or action bodies, detailed in the "Ways to Report" diagram on p. 6.
- The Grievance Response Team will develop a plan of action and communicate this to the community member (or advocate) no later than one week after the incident is reported. As a plan proceeds, the community member/advocate will be notified of actions/progress/outcomes in a timely manner.

Suggested Information to Record in an Initial Intake ¹⁰

When filing a report, please describe as clearly as possible what happened and if possible, what outcomes you are looking for. Consider documenting the following:

- Who was involved in the incident? Note who was an active part of the incident while respecting individuals' need for anonymity in your records.
- Who was affected? Note others who may have directly or indirectly felt the effects of what happened, again respecting individuals' need for anonymity in your records.
- What happened? Describe the events leading up to the situation, the situation itself, and what happened afterwards.
- When did the incident occur? Record the date and time if applicable.
- Where did the incident occur? Describe where the incident took place (on campus, off campus, etc. Please be as specific as possible)
- What is the desired outcome of the concerned party? Describe what actions the affected party would ideally like to see happen. This is not a guarantee that the actions taken by the department will match these expectations, but a starting point to acknowledge and try to honor foundational needs.

PLANNING RESPONSE / ACTION

Set Actions / Responses

These are actions and responses that are guaranteed to be taken by the Grievance Response Team.

- Determining whether the original grievance reporter wants to remain anonymous. The Grievance Response Team will continue to check in with known reporters.

¹⁰See [UW's Incident Reporting Tool](#) as an example intake form

- Documentation of the incident. For reports using the UW//LA Grievance Report Form, we will maintain a secure record of the report for 5 years per the record retention requirements in accordance with retention requirements outlined by UW Record Management Services.¹¹
- Meeting with the known parties involved to review the incident.
- Maintaining on-going and follow-up communication with parties involved to address all concerns and needs.

Possible Resources/Options for Resolution

Since every situation is unique, the following are possible actions the Grievance Response Team may take.

- Consult with appropriate members of the CBE or UW community as determined by the nature of the incident.
- Recommendation that the student complete a report in the UW Bias Reporting Tool.

Additional Reporting

At the College Level (College of Built Environment):

- Office of Student Services
- Office of Academic Affairs
- CBE Diversity Council
- Human Resources (HR) Administrator

At the University Level:

- Caroline Currin, HR Consultant, UW Campus HR Operations & Services – Employee Relations
- [Office of the Vice President for Student Life](#)
- [Title IX Investigation Office](#)
- [University Complaint Investigation and Resolution Office \(UCIRO\)](#)
- [University Ombud](#)

Resources for Advocates/People Who've Experienced Harm

Campus Support Services

- [Student Care Reporting Form](#)
- [SafeCampus](#)
- [UWPD Victim Advocate](#)
- [Student Legal Services](#) (serves students enrolled in Seattle)

Counseling

- [Counseling Center](#)
- [Hall Health Mental Health](#)

Local

- [Legal Voice](#)
- [Sexual Violence Law Center](#)
- [King County Sexual Assault Resource Center \(KCSARC\) – 24-hour crisis line 888-99-VOICE](#)

¹¹ Source: <https://finance.uw.edu/recmgt/gs/student?combine=grievance+&title=>

External

- [National Center for Victims of Crime Stalking Resource Center](#)
- [Crash Override Network-Resources and support for online harassment](#)

Grievance Response Team Resources

- [Generation Five: Transformative Justice](#)
- [John Galtung's The Transcend Method at a glance: a one-page version \(page 5\). Conflict Transformation by Peaceful Means \(the Transcend Method\)](#)
- [TransConflict: Principles of Conflict Transformation](#)
- [Loyola University of Maryland: Restorative Justice](#)
- [Restorative Practices: Fostering Healthy Relationships & Promoting Positive Discipline in Schools. A Guide for Educators](#)
- [SFUSD: Restorative Practices Whole School Implementation Guide](#)
- [Community Tool Box - Documenting Complaints \(see checklist as potential guide\)](#)
- [DCFPI Style Guide for Inclusive Language](#)
- [Responding to Microaggressions and Unconscious Bias](#)

REFERENCES USED

[Bryn Mawr College: Bias Response](#)

[Emotional self-regulation](#)

[Examining Racial Bias in Education: A New Approach](#)

[Responding to Microaggressions and Unconscious Bias](#)

[Right to Be Bystander Intervention Training](#)

[Roger Williams Bias Incident Response](#)

[Washington Department of Health: Stigma](#)

[Wheaton College: Social Justice and Community Impact](#)

[Unconscious Bias in Schools](#)

[UW Faculty Disciplinary Task Force](#) and [Faculty Grievance Model](#)

[UW: Reporting Bias Incidents](#)