

Bias Incident Reporting

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Frequently Asked Questions

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What is Bias?

Bias is based on race, religion, color, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, parental status (including pregnancy), national origin, age, disability, family medical history or genetic information, political belief or affiliation, or military service. [UMW's Non-Discrimination Notice.](#)

What is a Bias Incident?

Bias incidents involve acts of harassment, threat or intimidation directed towards an individual or group or property motivated by protected class membership as described in [UMW's Non-Discrimination Notice.](#)

What are some examples of bias harassment or intimidation?

When acts are intended to harm an individual or have the purpose or effect of unreasonably or substantially interfering with an individual's safety and security by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational or working environment they can be defined as harassment.

Depending on the totality of the circumstances, writing a racial epithet on someone's door or bulletin board, making fun of another person because of his or her language or accent, or making insulting comments about someone's traditional manner of dress or geographic origin, writing the "N word" or drawing a noose on the Spirit Rock, are examples of a bias-related harassment. Additional examples include stalking or threatening a person, sending unwanted or intimidating packages, letters, computer messages, social media postings, text messages, or phone calls, particularly if the intent is to harm or intimidate.

How do I report a Bias Incident?

Report Bias Incidents in the designated section of the [UMW Reporting Form](#).

Bias incidents reports concerning **faculty and staff** (any one employed or paid by the university) should be reported to **Human Resources**. All bias incident reports are reviewed promptly by appropriate offices, including, Equity and Access, the Dean of Student Life, Student Conduct and Responsibility (OSCAR), Human Resources; The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance, and the Director of Athletics. For all reports containing contact information, the designated staff member will contact the reporting person and will be available to meet and discuss resources, policies, procedures, and services.

- Bias Incident reports and related follow up are treated as private. Other University offices may be contacted only as needed to ensure safety and a prompt response.
- All bias reports provide an opportunity to identify areas for educational and developmental intervention

I am unsure if something I experienced or observed was bias, should I submit a report?

Yes, UMW encourages all faculty, staff, students, and community members to report suspected and/or actual bias incidents. If you do, university officials will review it, and if you include your name, we will touch base with you to help you sort this out.

Will submitting a bias incident report result in adjudication and disciplinary action?

Please recognize that reporting a bias incident on the UMW Reporting Form does not constitute filing a formal complaint. If the report indicates that the bias incident may violate the [Student Code of Conduct](#), [UMW's Non-Discrimination Notice](#), [UMW's Respectful Workplace Policy](#), [UMW's Policy on Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence](#), or other UMW policies, the report and/or reporter will be referred to the appropriate office for additional review.

You may contact: The Vice President for Equity and Access at diversity@umw.edu, for formal discrimination complaints, Director of Compliance and Title IX/ADA Coordinator, rdavison@umw.edu, for violations of the Title IX Policy.

What is a hate crime?

Hate crime means criminal acts, illegal acts and other incidents as determined by law enforcement authority, that are motivated by race, religion, gender, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, or ethnic or national origin ([Code of Virginia, Section 52-8.5](#)) If you believe you have been the victim of a hate crime, please contact UMW Police at [540-654-4444](tel:540-654-4444) (emergencies) or [540-654-1025](tel:540-654-1025). If you are off campus, please contact your local police at 911 (emergencies).

Examples of behavior that may be considered hate crimes:

- Painting racial slurs on the side of a campus building
- Assaulting another person because of his/her/their perceived sexual orientation
- Throwing a rock through someone's window while yelling derogatory comments about his/her/their religious affiliation

Can individuals who engage in hateful speech be disciplined by UMW?

UMW is committed to the freedom of inquiry and expression. Being exposed to different and sometimes competing perspectives, questioning our assumptions, testing our beliefs and refining our knowledge are consistent with a public liberal arts and sciences education. All members of this community have a fundamental right to express their views privately and publicly without censorship.

An inclusive and respectful environment empowers a rigorous exchange of different and sometimes competing ideas, however, university conduct policies may not be used to limit freedom to express views that many or even most members of the UMW community may consider incorrect or even offensive.

What can I do to create a culture of inclusion and respect at UMW?

- Speak out when jokes or comments are made that are hateful or demean others.
- Examine your own behavior and consider how it may affect others in the community.
- Take steps to understand what motivates you and how you can help create an affirming, supportive environment for all people.
- Attend programs, lectures, workshops, etc. that increase your knowledge and understanding of people different from you.

If you witness or experience discrimination, harassment, report the behavior.

Educate yourself on bias motivated incidents by visiting resources such as <http://www.stophate.org/> or the Southern Poverty Law Center at <http://www.splcenter.org/>

Message from President Paino

Bias Incident Reporting

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Support and Resources

Glossary of Diversity Terms

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