

## Diversity and Community Engagement

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### Bias Education and Response Team



While freedom of expression and the open exchange of ideas are important to the University of Mississippi, actions and behaviors that are bias-motivated, prejudiced, or otherwise disrespectful can negatively impact individuals or groups.

Bias-related incidents are defined as alleged threats or acts of harassment or intimidation, whether verbal, written or physical, which are motivated by a bias against a person or property in whole or in part because of that person's age, color, ability, marital status, national or ethnic origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sex (including pregnancy), socioeconomic status, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, veteran status, family medical or genetic makeup or information, intellectual perspective, criminal background and potentially other identities or identifiers.

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### Reporting

Members of the university community who have experienced or witnessed perceived/alleged bias incidents are encouraged to complete [this reporting form](#). This form will give you the opportunity to share the details of the incident including the impact it has had on you and/or others. The Bias Education & Response Team (BERT) will review all submissions to determine appropriate next steps. Our priority is connecting those who have been impacted by bias incidents to the appropriate resources and support.

BERT is not an investigative, adjudicatory, or disciplinary body and does not function in lieu of any disciplinary or complaint processes within or outside of the University.

In addition to filing an incident with BERT, individuals may also file a complaint with the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution, University Police Department, Equal Opportunity and Regulatory Compliance, or other appropriate offices. If a report is made to these offices, they will determine jurisdiction and investigate alleged or potential violations of policy and/or law if warranted. However, it is important for you to know that some bias-motivated, prejudice or otherwise disrespectful acts may be constitutionally protected speech and thus not subject to University disciplinary action or formal investigation.

Reports submitted anonymously are accepted, but may limit BERT's ability to offer support or follow-up. BERT values your privacy and trust. However, we cannot guarantee complete anonymity in circumstances which threaten safety and/or involve potentially criminal acts. BERT handles all submissions in alignment with university privacy policies, and will only share your information with individuals who have a legitimate need to know.

If you have questions, you may also e-mail [diversity@olemiss.edu](mailto:diversity@olemiss.edu) or call the Office of Diversity and Community Engagement at [662-915-2933](tel:662-915-2933). For immediate assistance or emergencies, please contact the University of Mississippi's Department of Police and Campus Safety at [662-915-7234](tel:662-915-7234).

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## Purpose

The Bias Education and Report Team is a non-judicial team of faculty, staff, and administrators which supports members of the University of Mississippi community who bring forward allegations of bias:

- Connecting University of Mississippi Community members who have been impacted by bias incidents to education, resources, and support
- Facilitating immediate and continuing opportunities for restorative justice, community dialogue, and other education about alleged bias/bias incidents proven to have transpired and freedom of expression
- Promoting the principles of civility and respect in the free and open expression of ideas
- Working with University administrators to support transparent and open communication about allegations of bias incidents
- Tracking bias concern data and reporting trends

BERT does not:

- Make determinations about policy violations and/or crimes
  - Investigate, adjudicate, or take the place of any other University of Mississippi processes or services
  - Make criminal referrals
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## **Additional Information**

**[Bias Education and Response Team Members](#)**

**[Frequently Asked Questions](#)**

**[Campus Climate Concern Form](#)**



**FOR ASSISTANCE**

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[IHL Plan for Diversity](#)

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[UM History of Integration](#)

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**Diversity and Community Engagement**

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