

# NGP Code of Conduct

## Introduction

This Code of Conduct for the Neuroscience Graduate Program was originally developed by our community in 2021-2022. While our core values are enduring, their expression and the policies they guide will be refined continuously as a living document. This Code is aligned with the core values at the University of Michigan-Michigan Medicine (1) and is meant to complement the university's broader statements on ethics and integrity (2,3), prohibition of discrimination (4), and student rights and responsibilities (5). [Your feedback is always welcome.](#)

## Part I: NGP Norms and Values

### Be Caring and Respectful

*I will treat everyone with dignity, kindness, and respect, while maintaining personal well-being and the well-being of others.*

We are each responsible for treating one another with dignity, kindness, and respect and have a right to expect this in return. An environment where people feel safe, cared for, and respected is a productive and creative working space. However, in the face of aggression, bias, or harassment, caring for self or other targets of oppression is paramount. To meet this core value, we will:

- Listen to understand before seeking to be understood.
- Give space to other viewpoints while bravely sharing your own.
- Disagree in conflict without being disrespectful.
- Be kind, affirm others, and choose your words carefully.
- Own the impact of your words; harm can be caused even without malicious intent.
- Care for self and stand up for others when facing or observing harassment.

### Foster Inclusion

*I will foster an environment where every individual has a sense of belonging, a voice that is heard, and the opportunity to achieve and thrive.*

We welcome and support people of all backgrounds and identities. Inclusivity is a priority of our community and should therefore extend to all NGP-affiliated laboratories, events, and programming. We will work to ensure fair treatment and equal opportunities for everyone. To meet this core value, we prohibit discrimination based on:

- Sexual orientation
- Sex, gender identity and expression
- Race, ethnicity, and culture
- National origin and immigration status
- Socioeconomic status and education level
- Family status and age
- Size
- Political belief and religion
- Mental health status
- Physical ability

## Work with Integrity

*I will adhere to the highest ethical standards, demonstrating courage, truth, and transparency in my words and actions.*

We value honesty and transparency. Whether in our academics or personal interactions, we will conduct our work with integrity and humility. To propel our science forward and to provide the best training possible, we will:

- Perform our research with rigor
- Foster research environments that value honesty and integrity
- Provide honest critical feedback with empathy
- Own the impact and consequences of our actions

## Promote Teamwork

*I will work with my teams with a shared purpose rooted in equity and fairness where diversity is celebrated, respected, and valued.*

We thrive best within a culture of creativity that affirms the inextricable link between innovation and diversity. We will promote a culture that inspires new ideas and diverse ways of thinking, behaving, and improving the world. To meet this core value, we will:

- Work to deconstruct the systemic barriers to diversity
- Promote holistic recruiting, admissions, and hiring practices
- Understand how one's own cultural identity shapes the perception of others
- Continuously learn about other cultures and seek to work effectively with them

## Act and Speak Up

*I will take action to build an inclusive and supportive community, to understand and own the impact of my actions, and to confidently intervene to support others.*

Conflicts will inevitably arise. In minor disagreements, listen, learn, and explore differing views. In larger disagreements that threaten our values, report concerns and seek mediation when possible. As power structures often prevent victims from reporting, program leaders and faculty should take ownership in creating equitable learning and research environments and intervene when our values are threatened. Harassment and exclusionary behavior are not acceptable, whether in public arenas or in private interactions involving members of the NGP. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Threats of violence
- Unwelcome sexual attention
- Sharing sexually explicit or violent material via electronic devices or other means
- Discriminatory jokes and language
- Personal insults, especially those using racist, sexist, or ableist terms
- Advocating for, or encouraging, any of the above behavior

## Part II: NGP Reporting Process and Actions

Violations of our collective Norms and Values negatively impacts the NGP climate and can do real harm to individuals in our community. As such, discussing and reporting these behaviors is an essential part of our Norms and Values. Below, we provide a clear path to reporting inappropriate behavior and information about the responses you can expect. Some key terms (bolded) within this guide include:

- **DISCUSSION**: An initial conversation, within or outside NGP, to raise concerns, identify available resources, and/or seek clarity about a potentially reportable situation.
- **REPORT**: Any **informal** or **formal complaint** of suspected inappropriate behavior, whether **policy concern**, **prohibited conduct**, or **workplace conflict**.
- **INFORMAL COMPLAINT**: An anonymous or identifying complaint about **policy concern**, **prohibited conduct**, or **workplace conflict**, intermediate to filing a formal, signed grievance.
- **FORMAL COMPLAINT**: Signed grievances documenting suspected **prohibited conduct** submitted through reporting mechanisms that may lead to investigational hearings, resolution processes, and/or disciplinary actions.
- **COMPLAINANT**: Refers to any student or employee affiliated with the Neuroscience Graduate Program who is reporting suspected **prohibited conduct** or **workplace conflict**.
- **RESPONDENT**: Refers to any individual who is reported to have engaged in **prohibited conduct** or **workplace conflict**.
- **POLICY CONCERNS**: Policy and procedure concerns, unrelated to discriminatory practices (**prohibited conduct**), that create a negative learning environment, such as grading and matriculation policies, general climate concerns, lack of clarity in program expectations.
- **WORKPLACE CONFLICT**: Actual or perceived discord between two or more people due to a clash between different needs or values, including instances of indifference, disrespect, and harm that is inconsistent with the NGP [Norms and Values](#).
- **PROHIBITED CONDUCT**: Misconduct, or suspected misconduct, related to discrimination and harassment outlined in [SPG 201.89](#), including sexual and gender-based misconduct consistent outlined in [SPG 601.89](#) as well as non-discriminatory misconduct such as breaches of research integrity ([SPG 303.03](#)).

The following sections outline each phase of a reporting process, which is also depicted in the [quick reference guides](#). These processes cannot provide definitive answers to all questions and concerns, so we [welcome your feedback and suggestions for improvement](#).

### Outline

- [The Basics](#)
- [Step 1: Beginning the Conversation](#)
- [Step 2: Reporting](#)
- [Step 3: Post-Reporting Responses](#)
- [Quick Reference Guides](#)
- [Glossary](#)

## The Basics

### *Why discuss and report?*

Reporting suspected misconduct can be distressing but is critical to ensuring a positive learning environment and the health and safety of each person in our community. The NGP leadership commits to considering all **informal** and **formal complaints**, supporting those negatively impacted, and preventing retaliation.

### *What can I report?*

**Policy concerns** address programmatic aspects leading to a negative NGP learning environment, such as unfair grading practices, poor communication methods, etc..

**Workplace conflicts** that violate our Norms and Values raise tension within the community. Whether between peers or across power differences, they need not fester.

**Policy concerns** or **workplace conflict** that involve potential discriminatory practices are considered **prohibited conduct**.

**Prohibited conduct** may include, but is not limited to, discrimination and harassment related to sex & sexual orientation, gender identity, race/ethnicity, age, marital status, (dis)ability, religion, height, weight, or veteran status ([SPG 201.35](#) and [SPG 601.89](#)) as well as non-discriminatory behaviors such as breaches of research integrity related to data fabrication & falsification, plagiarism, authorship, and confidentiality ([SPG 303.03](#)).

### *Who can report?*

Anyone working, training, volunteering, or collaborating with NGP affiliated faculty, staff, or students can report policy concerns or suspected inappropriate behavior.

### *How can I report?*

STEP 1: DISCUSSION with your supervisor or [NGP Leadership](#) is often the first and best step. However, it is important to recognize that each of these are [Individuals with Reporting Obligations](#) involving issues specifically related to sexual and gender-based misconduct. Confidential resources without reporting obligations are also available outside NGP ([Table 1](#)).

STEP 2: **Informal** and signed **formal complaints** go beyond the initial discussion, articulating a specific incident and typically requiring a response and follow-up. These are made through many avenues inside and outside the NGP, such as

- [NGP B.I.G. Suggestion Box](#)
- [Equity, Civil Rights, & Title IX Office](#)
- [Graduate Employees' Organization](#)
- [Compliance Office](#)
- [Division of Public Safety & Security](#)

Are you ready to report an informal or formal complaint?

## Step 1: Discussion - Beginning the Conversation with Confidential Resources and Non-Confidential Resources

### A. Discussions within NGP

- There are many people within NGP available for conversations about climate or suspected misconduct. Whenever possible, we hope to form dialogues in the midst of conflict so that we can better understand the situation, provide the necessary support, and follow-up appropriately.
- Unless they are involved in the conflict, consider first talking with your faculty mentor or members of your thesis committee, the NGP Director or Associate Directors, or NGP program staff. The Rackham Faculty Ally and Associate Director for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is readily available to discuss any concern. For an up-to-date list of program administration, see our [website](#).
- Be aware, however, that these conversations with NGP affiliates may be private but non-confidential. In almost every case, these are [Individuals with Reporting Obligations](#) (IROs). IROs are required to report misconduct related to sexual and gender-based behaviors, which is governed by [Title IX](#) rules and implemented by the Equity, Civil Rights, and Title IX Office (ECRT). You may always speak with an IRO about non-Title IX issues or you may choose to speak in hypotheticals or generalities. Even if the IRO chooses to file a report, they will first notify you. How you choose to engage with ECRT is always up to you.

### B. Discussions with Confidential Resources outside NGP

- If you want to maintain confidentiality, want to speak with someone outside of NGP, or are uncertain you want to file a report, you may first want to contact confidential resources without reporting obligations (see Table 1).

## Table 1: Confidential Resources

This list includes UM resources that do not have reporting obligations, but can assist if you want to report.

Name/Unit	Information	Contact	For Faculty, Postdocs, Staff, Students
Counseling & Psychological Services ( <a href="#">CAPS</a> )	Free, confidential services for U-M students. <a href="#">Schedule a consultation</a> .	24-hour line for Urgent Support: 734-764-8312. Rackham <a href="#">Embedded CAPS Counselor</a>	Students
Faculty & Staff Counseling and Consultation Office ( <a href="#">FASCCO</a> )	For staff, faculty and their immediate family members; provides short-term counseling, personalized	734-936-8660 or <a href="mailto:fascco@umich.edu">fascco@umich.edu</a>	Faculty, Staff, Postdocs

	coaching and educational presentations.		
Michigan Medicine Office of Counseling & Workplace Resilience ( <a href="#">Website</a> )	Provides 24-hour, no cost, confidential counseling, crisis intervention and referrals for Michigan Medicine faculty, staff and immediate family members.	734-763-5409 or <a href="mailto:counseling@med.umich.edu">counseling@med.umich.edu</a>	Faculty, Staff, Postdocs
Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies: Wellness ( <a href="#">OGPS</a> )	Free, confidential support. Make an <a href="#">appointment</a> .	<a href="#">Kate Hagadone</a> or <a href="#">LaNeisha Murphy</a>	Postdocs, Students
Graduate Employees' Organization 3550 Grievance Committee ( <a href="#">Website</a> )	Designed to achieve informal resolution if possible; allows the employee to escalate all the way to binding third-party arbitration	<a href="#">Grievance Form</a> or email <a href="mailto:grievancechair@geo3550.org">grievancechair@geo3550.org</a>	Students
Rackham Graduate Student and Program Consultation Services	Free, confidential resolution services related to crisis, disputes, conduct	<a href="#">Request a meeting</a>	Students, Faculty, and Staff
UM Psychiatric Emergency Service ( <a href="#">PES</a> )	Provides psychiatric evaluation, referrals, crisis intervention, and mental health treatment.	24-hour crisis phone service: 734-936-5900 Text 4UMICH to 741741	All
Ombuds - <a href="#">Faculty</a>	Provides confidential, independent, impartial, and informal problem solving services.	734-763-2707 or <a href="mailto:facultyombuds@umich.edu">facultyombuds@umich.edu</a>	Faculty
Ombuds - <a href="#">Staff</a>	Provides confidential, independent, impartial, and informal problem solving services.	<a href="#">Confidential intake form</a> or 734-936-0600	Staff
Ombuds - <a href="#">Students</a>	Free, confidential advice and resources.	734-763-3545 or , <a href="mailto:umstudentombuds@umich.edu">umstudentombuds@umich.edu</a>	Students
Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center ( <a href="#">SAPAC</a> )	For U-M students, faculty and staff who are survivors of sexual assault, relationship violence,	24-hour crisis line: 734-936-3333.	All

	stalking and sexual harassment.		
<a href="#">Disabilities</a> via the Equity, Civil Rights & Title IX Office	Free, confidential resource for disability disclosure, accommodations, and reporting discrimination.	<a href="#">ADA Coordinator</a>	All

## Step 2: Reporting

### Concerns or conduct that is not or may not be based in discrimination (Flow Diagram 1)

- A. Report via NGP Mechanisms
  - a. [NGP Leadership](#). **Policy concerns, workplace conflict**, or instances of non-discriminatory **prohibited conduct** can be reported to the NGP Director, Associate Directors, Faculty Ally, or Administrators. After initial discussions, the COMPLAINANT may be asked to help complete an intake form to record the incident and facilitate a record of follow-up and resolution.
  - b. [B.I.G. Suggestion Box](#). We seek all types of input! Whenever possible, follow up your post with an idea of how to overcome your concern, promote your accolade, respond to your feedback, follow-up on your thoughts, or implement your Bright Idea. All responses are first submitted to NGP administrative staff and then forwarded to relevant leadership, which may include Director/Assoc Directors, NGP Committees, and NGP DEI Task Forces. All responses are anonymous unless you choose otherwise. If remaining anonymous, we recommend that you include a non-university email that does not include your name or other identifying information to provide a mechanism for direct follow-up.
  
- B. Report Interpersonal Conflicts and General University Concerns
  - a. [Rackham Conflict Resolution](#) Policy and procedures enable students to address disagreements with faculty or staff over equity and fairness related to their academic standing and progress. Students may also request a meeting with [Rackham Resolution Services](#) to address other disputes and crisis situations.
  - b. The [Office of the Ombuds](#) offers a confidential space for students to share concerns and complaints about the functioning of the university.
  - c. The [Office of Student Conflict Resolution](#) (OSCR) focuses on a variety of restorative processes to address interpersonal disagreements involving faculty, staff, students, and even off campus conflicts. OSCR is the direct referral for student-to-student complaints.
  - d. The [Graduate Employees' Organization](#) (GEO) sets the terms and conditions for GSIs and GSSAs. GEO can help resolve conflicts and concerns faced by graduate students in their capacity as GSIs and GSSAs in several ways, up to

and including a formal grievance process, and serve as a conflict resolution resource for all graduate students (regardless of GSI/GSSA status).

- C. Report Ethical Dilemmas, Research Misconduct, or Illegal Conduct
  - a. [Compliance Office](#). For ethical dilemmas, integrity issues, or research misconduct, file an anonymous or self-identified incident report at the [Compliance Hotline](#). A unique “Report Key” will be provided to obtain status updates and allow for follow-up questions, while maintaining anonymity.
  - b. [Division of Public Safety & Security](#) (DPSS). In the event of theft or other illegal conduct, call 911, email [dpss-safety-security@umich.edu](mailto:dpss-safety-security@umich.edu), or file an [Incident Report](#) with the campus police. A case report will be made and an officer assigned for follow-up.

### ***Concerns or conduct involving potential discrimination or harassment (Flow Diagram 2)***

- A. Report to [Equity, Civil Rights, and Title IX Office](#) (ECRT)
  - a. The ECRT oversees, facilitates, and supports the University’s efforts to ensure opportunities for all in our community (see their [Nondiscrimination Statement](#) for protected groups). Examples of prohibited discrimination and descriptions of hostile work environments can be found [here](#). Units within this office consider:
    - i. Sexual and gender-based discrimination or harassment and Title IX-related concerns
    - ii. Race, age, marital status, (dis)ability, religion, height, weight, or veteran status, and/or ethnicity-related complaints
    - iii. Disability-related harassment and discrimination and compliance with accommodations
  - b. For concerns involving sexual or gender-based misconduct, ECRT reporting process and potential remedies are illustrated below:



# Equity, Civil Rights, and Title IX Office

## Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct Process Overview: Student Respondent

### 1 ECRT Receives Report + Performs Initial Assessment

- Assessment occurs immediately
- ECRT considers immediate health and safety concerns

### 2 ECRT Sends outreach to Complainant

- Outreach occurs within 24 business hours of report receipt
- Email explaining ECRT's role, procedural options and supportive measures

### 3 ECRT Meets with Complainant

- Meeting optional
- Complainant may elect to share information about their experience and/or file a Formal Complaint - a signed document outlining the allegations and requesting an Investigative Resolution or Adaptable Resolution.

### 4 Complainant Requests one of the following:

#### Investigative Resolution

- Expected timeline for entire process (including appeals) expected is 180 days (see Investigation Process sheet)
- ECRT gathers information
- Includes a live hearing to determine whether policy was violated

#### Adaptable Resolution

- Expected timeline is 90 days but varies based on party participation
- Voluntary, remedies based resolution that seeks to repair harm (to the extent possible)
- Does not include formal discipline of Respondent

#### Other Response

- Expected timeline is 30 days
- Includes educational conversations, training, other available educational interventions.

#### No Action

Parties may request that ECRT take no action at all in response to their report.

### 5 Title IX Coordinator Reviews requested step

Title IX Coordinator must approve any requested resolution option identified by Complainant. Generally, the Title IX Coordinator will seek to honor requests made by Complainant.



## B. Report to the [Division of Public Safety & Security](#) (DPSS).

- a. Suspected **prohibited conduct** may be directly reported to DPSS, including but not limited to instances of hate crimes or assault and intimidation of persons from protected groups.
- b. Reporting mechanisms include emergency calls to 911, email to [dpss-safety-security@umich.edu](mailto:dpss-safety-security@umich.edu), or completion of an [Incident Report](#). A unique case number and case officer will be assigned and serve as a point of contact for status updates and follow-up.

## C. NGP Response Team. Anyone filing a **formal complaint** can request to be assigned a NGP Response Team composed of one or more of the following: NGP Director or Associate Directors, NGP Faculty Ally, NGP Administrative Staff, or other NGP-affiliated faculty/staff. The goal of this team is to facilitate communication between the **complainant**, case managers, as well as others in Rackham, OGPS, or DPSS involved in the case. The NGP Response Team will play supportive roles, ensure that there is no retaliation arising from the report, pursue resolution wherever possible, and maintain confidential records for non-identifying summative incidence reporting. Note that any records will not be associated with formal student records within the Program.

## Step 3: Post-Reporting Responses

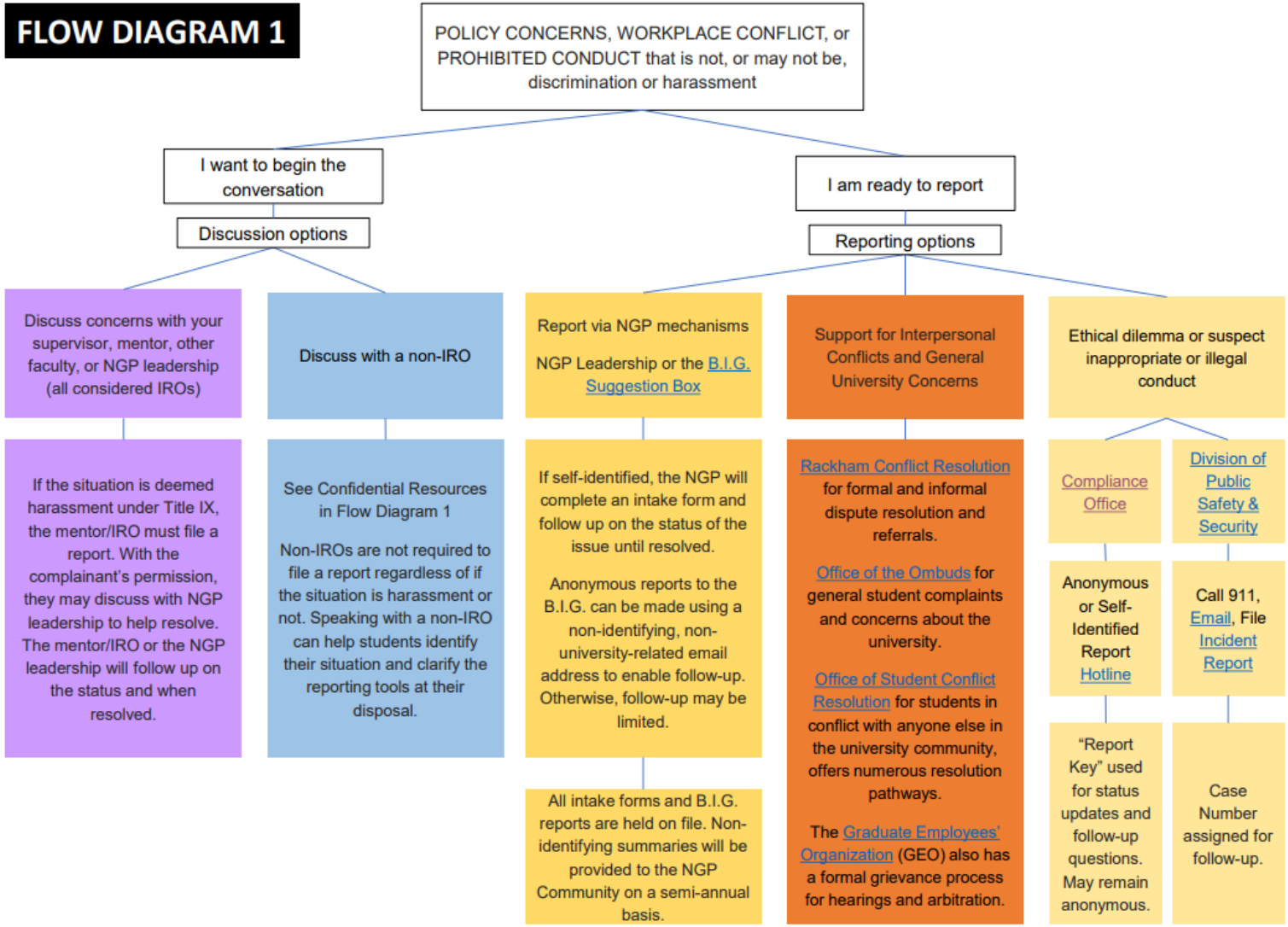
### *Could I face retaliation?*

The NGP will not tolerate retaliation on those lodging complaints. “Acts or threats of retaliation in response to good-faith reports of wrongful conduct violate [university] policy.” ([SPG 601.90](#)) All individuals in the University community are protected from retaliation according to [SPG 201.89-1 Section H](#). Retaliation itself is a reportable offense.

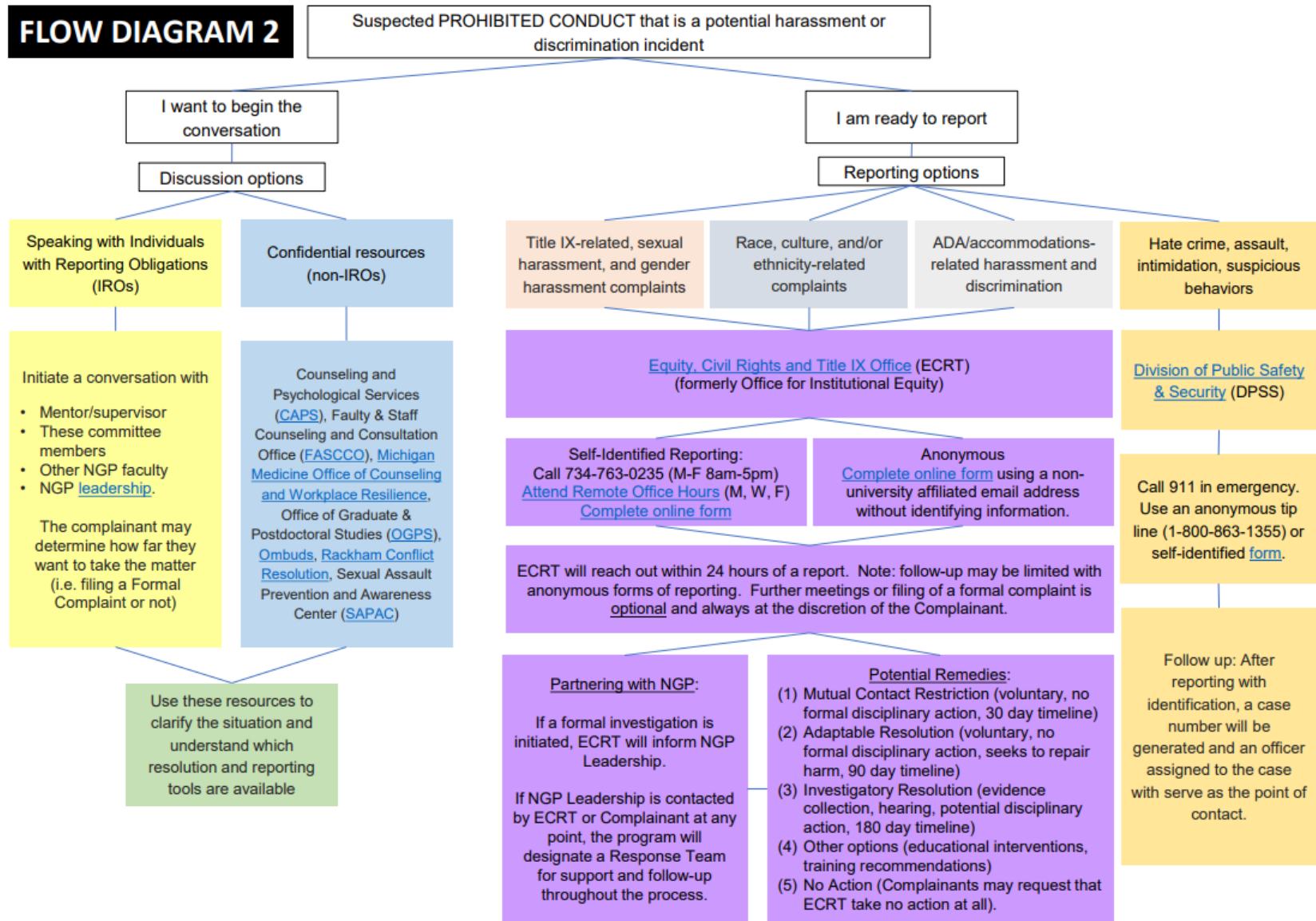
### *What are the potential consequences for misconduct?*

The consequences for misconduct may include but are not limited to: educational interventions, restorative measures, or additional service requirements; removal from the graduate program or probationary periods; referral to investigatory arms of the university or security services; removal from the university or other severe disciplinary actions. These consequences vary depending on the position of the **respondent**, situational circumstances, severity and frequency, and outcomes of any investigational process. In most cases, corrective actions from **formal complaints** of **prohibited conduct** will be determined and applied by the Office of Student Conflict Resolution (for students) and/or an employee’s supervisor in consultation with Human Resources. NGP Leadership and the Executive Committee will review any report and investigational outcomes to determine if additional action is required at the program level. Such review and actions may also extend to **complainants** or **respondents** who repeatedly violate Mutual Contact Restrictions or repeatedly fail to follow-through with mutually agreed upon Adaptable Resolutions, Educational Interventions, or Training Recommendations.

Quick Reference Guides (A PDF with active links available [here](#))



# FLOW DIAGRAM 2



## **Glossary**

### ***Discrimination***

Treating a community member or group less favorably than other similarly situated individuals based on membership in “[protected groups](#)” based on race, color, national origin, age, marital status, (dis)ability, religion, height, weight, military or veteran/s status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, genetic information, or other legally protected characteristics.

### ***Harassment***

Any behavior that is based on an individual or group’s membership in a “protected group” that is unwelcome and creates a hostile learning and working environment including behaviors such as bullying, intentional or unintentional microaggressions, and intentional or unintentional disrespect for the dignity of others.

### ***Bullying***

Unwanted, recurring aggressiveness that causes psychological or physical harm, and creates a psychological power imbalance between the aggressor and target(s).

### ***Microaggressions***

Verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that perpetuate derogatory or negative stereotypes and/or contain hidden messaging that isolates and demeans marginalized individuals and groups. Some (possibly surprising) examples can be found [here](#).

### ***Disability***

Disability discrimination is governed by the [Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990](#). This form of discrimination can occur whenever a qualified individual is denied the same opportunities as other students, faculty, and staff because of their disability status. Disability is defined as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities and has a record of such an impairment or is generally regarded as having such an impairment. To determine disability status and potential accommodations, contact the [NGP Leadership Team](#) or the [UM ADA Coordinator](#) or [UM Services for Students with Disabilities](#).

### ***Retaliation***

Retaliation is considered any intimidating, threatening, coercing, or harassing behavior that results in adverse actions or consequences against a person resulting from their report or complaint. Retaliation may occur in a single incident or as a series, and may be direct or indirect. Some examples include more negative performance evaluations or references than warranted, increased scrutiny due to the complaint, spreading of false rumors, erecting barriers

to the reporter's work, limiting access to work-related resources, exclusion from work-related social activities.

### ***Individuals with Reporting Obligations (IROs)***

Under the UM Policy on Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct, people in certain roles are considered "[Individuals with Reporting Obligations](#)" (IROs) and are required to report information about sexual or gender-based misconduct to the Equity, Civil Rights & Title IX Office. In general, NGP faculty and staff that are supervisors of other UM employees or trainees or sponsors of student organizations are IROs. Moreover, as of 2021, if you are an IRO in one capacity, you are an IRO in all university-related activities. To learn if you are an IRO, faculty and staff can complete this [training module](#).

### ***Title IX***

Title IX is a federal civil rights law passed as part of the Education Amendments of 1972. This law protects people from discrimination based on sex in education programs or activities that receive Federal financial assistance. Title IX states: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." Prohibited conduct related to Title IX includes Sexual Assault, Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Harassment, Gender-Based Harassment, Sex and/or Gender-Based Stalking, Intimate Partner/Domestic Violence, Sex and Gender-Based Discrimination, Retaliation and Violation of Supportive Measures.