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## TITLE IX RESOURCE GUIDE



U.S. Department of Education  
Office for Civil Rights  
April 2015



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U.S. Department of Education  
Office for Civil Rights

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April 2015

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## A. Scope of Title IX

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) prohibits discrimination based on sex in education programs and activities in federally funded schools at all levels.<sup>1</sup> If any part of a school district or college receives any Federal funds for any purpose, all of the operations of the district or college are covered by Title IX.<sup>2</sup>

Title IX protects students, employees, applicants for admission and employment, and other persons from all forms of sex discrimination, including discrimination based on gender identity or failure to conform to stereotypical notions of masculinity or femininity. All students (as well as other persons) at recipient institutions are protected by Title IX—regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, part- or full-time status, disability, race, or national origin—in all aspects of a recipient’s educational programs and activities.

As part of their obligations under Title IX, all recipients of Federal financial assistance must designate at least one employee to coordinate their efforts to comply with and carry out their responsibilities under Title IX and must notify all students and employees of that employee’s contact information.<sup>3</sup> This employee is generally referred to as the Title IX coordinator.

The essence of Title IX is that an institution may not exclude, separate, deny benefits to, or otherwise treat differently any person on the basis of sex unless expressly authorized to do so under Title IX or the Department’s implementing regulations.<sup>4</sup> When a recipient is considering relying on one of the exceptions to this general rule (several of which are discussed below), Title IX coordinators should be involved at every stage and work with school officials and legal counsel to help determine whether the exception is applicable and, if so, properly executed.

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<sup>1</sup> 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681–1688. The Department of Justice shares enforcement authority over Title IX with OCR. The Department of Education’s Title IX regulations, 34 C.F.R. Part 106, are available at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/rights/reg/ocr/edlite-34cfr106.html>. Although Title IX and the Department’s implementing regulations apply to any recipient institution that offers education programs or activities, this resource guide focuses on Title IX coordinators designated by local educational agencies, schools, colleges, and universities.

<sup>2</sup> An educational institution that is controlled by a religious organization is exempt from Title IX to the extent that compliance would not be consistent with the religious tenets of such organization. 20 U.S.C. § 1681(a)(3); 34 C.F.R. § 106.12(a). For application of this provision to a specific institution, please contact the appropriate OCR regional office.

<sup>3</sup> 34 C.F.R. § 106.8(a).

<sup>4</sup> 20 U.S.C. § 1681(a); 34 C.F.R. § 106.31.

## **B. Responsibilities and Authority of a Title IX Coordinator**

Although the recipient is ultimately responsible for ensuring that it complies with Title IX and other laws, the Title IX coordinator is an integral part of a recipient's systematic approach to ensuring nondiscrimination, including a nondiscriminatory environment. Title IX coordinators can be effective agents for ensuring gender equity within their institutions only when they are provided with the appropriate authority and support necessary to coordinate their institution's Title IX compliance, including access to all of their institution's relevant information and resources.

One of the most important facets of the Title IX coordinator's responsibility is helping to ensure the recipient's compliance with Title IX's administrative requirements. The Title IX coordinator must have knowledge of the recipient's policies and procedures on sex discrimination and should be involved in the drafting and revision of such policies and procedures to help to ensure that they comply with the requirements of Title IX.

The coordinator may help the recipient by coordinating the implementation and administration of the recipient's procedures for resolving Title IX complaints, including educating the school community on how to file a complaint alleging a violation of Title IX, investigating complaints, working with law enforcement when necessary, and ensuring that complaints are resolved promptly and appropriately. The coordinator should also coordinate the recipient's response to all complaints involving possible sex discrimination to monitor outcomes, identify patterns, and assess effects on the campus climate. Such coordination can help an institution avoid Title IX violations, particularly violations involving sexual harassment and violence, by preventing incidents from recurring or becoming systemic problems. Title IX does not specify who should determine the outcome of Title IX complaints or the actions the school will take in response to such complaints. The Title IX coordinator could play this role, provided there are no conflicts of interest, but does not have to.

The Title IX coordinator should also assist the institution in developing a method to survey the school climate and coordinate the collection and analysis of information from that survey. Further, the coordinator should monitor students' participation in athletics and across academic fields to identify programs with disproportionate enrollment based on sex and ensure that sex discrimination is not causing any disproportionality or otherwise negatively affecting a student's access to equal educational opportunities.

The Title IX coordinator should provide training and technical assistance on school policies related to sex discrimination and develop programs, such as assemblies or college trainings, on issues related to Title IX to assist the recipient in making sure that all members of the school community, including students and staff, are aware of their rights and obligations under Title IX. To perform

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this responsibility effectively, the coordinator should regularly assess the adequacy of current training opportunities and programs and propose improvements as appropriate.

A recipient can designate more than one Title IX coordinator, which may be particularly helpful in larger school districts, colleges, and universities. It may also be helpful to designate specific employees to coordinate certain Title IX compliance issues (*e.g.*, gender equity in academic programs or athletics, harassment, or complaints from employees). If a recipient has multiple Title IX coordinators, then it should designate one lead Title IX coordinator who has ultimate oversight responsibility.

Because Title IX prohibits discrimination in all aspects of a recipient's education programs and activities, the Title IX coordinator should work closely with many different members of the school community, such as administrators, counselors, athletic directors, non-professional counselors or advocates, and legal counsel. Although these employees may not be formally designated as Title IX coordinators, the Title IX coordinator may need to work with them because their job responsibilities relate to the recipient's obligations under Title IX. The recipient should ensure that all employees whose work relates to Title IX communicate with one another and that these employees have the support they need to ensure consistent practices and enforcement of the recipient's policies and compliance with Title IX. The coordinator should also be available to meet with the school community, including other employees, students, and parents or guardians, as needed to discuss any issues related to Title IX.

For more information about the role of the Title IX coordinator, please review:

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.8(a);
- Dear Colleague Letter: Title IX Coordinators (April 24, 2015), *available at* <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/letters/colleague-201504-title-ix-coordinators.pdf>; and
- Letter to Title IX Coordinators (April 24, 2015), *available at* <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/dcl-title-ix-coordinators-letter-201504.pdf>.

## **C. Title IX’s Administrative Requirements**

The administrative requirements in the Department’s Title IX regulations are the underpinning of both the Title IX coordinator’s job and a recipient’s compliance with Title IX; their purpose is to ensure that a recipient maintains an environment for students and employees that is free from unlawful sex discrimination in all aspects of the educational experience, including academics, extracurricular activities, and athletics. These requirements provide that a recipient must establish a system for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints. This allows an institution to resolve complaints of discrimination without the need for involvement by outside entities, such as the Federal government. They also provide that a recipient must ensure that members of the school community are aware of their rights under Title IX, have the contact information for the Title IX coordinator, and know how to file a complaint alleging a violation of Title IX.

### **1. Grievance Procedures**

The Department’s Title IX regulations require a recipient to adopt and publish grievance procedures providing for the prompt and equitable resolution of student and employee complaints under Title IX. These procedures provide an institution with a mechanism for discovering incidents of discrimination or harassment as early as possible and for effectively correcting individual and systemic problems. The procedures that each school uses to resolve Title IX complaints may vary depending on the nature of the allegation, the age of the student or students involved, the size and administrative structure of the school, state or local legal requirements, and what it has learned from past experiences.

There are several ways in which a Title IX coordinator can coordinate the recipient’s compliance with the Title IX regulatory requirement regarding grievance procedures.

- First, the Title IX coordinator should work with the recipient to help make sure that the grievance procedures are written in language appropriate for the age of the audience (such as elementary, middle school, high school, or postsecondary students), and that they are easily understood and widely disseminated.
- Second, the Title IX coordinator should review the grievance procedures to help determine whether they incorporate all of the elements required for the prompt and equitable resolution of student and employee complaints under Title IX, consistent with the Title IX regulatory requirement and OCR guidance.
- Third, the Title IX coordinator should communicate with students, parents or guardians, and school employees to help them understand the recipient’s grievance procedures; train employees and students about how Title IX protects against sex discrimination; and provide consultation and information regarding Title IX requirements to potential complainants.



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- Fourth, the Title IX coordinator is responsible for coordinating the grievance process and making certain that individual complaints are handled properly. This coordination responsibility may include informing all parties regarding the process, notifying all parties regarding grievance decisions and of the right to and procedures for appeal, if any; monitoring compliance with all of the requirements and timelines specified in the grievance procedures; and maintaining grievance and compliance records and files.
- Finally, the Title IX coordinator should work with the recipient to help ensure that its grievance procedures are accessible to English language learners<sup>5</sup> and students with disabilities.<sup>6</sup>

For more information about grievance procedures, please review:

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.8(b);
- Questions and Answers on Title IX and Sexual Violence (April 29, 2014), *available at* <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/ga-201404-title-ix.pdf>;
- Dear Colleague Letter: Sexual Violence (April 4, 2011), *available at* <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/letters/colleague-201104.pdf>;
- Dear Colleague Letter: Title IX Grievance Procedures, Postsecondary Education (August 4, 2004), *available at* [http://www.ed.gov/ocr/responsibilities\\_ix\\_ps.html](http://www.ed.gov/ocr/responsibilities_ix_ps.html);
- Dear Colleague Letter: Title IX Grievance Procedures, Elementary and Secondary Education (April 26, 2004), *available at* [http://www.ed.gov/ocr/responsibilities\\_ix.html](http://www.ed.gov/ocr/responsibilities_ix.html); and
- Revised Sexual Harassment Guidance (January 19, 2001), *available at* <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/shguide.pdf>.

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<sup>5</sup> Public schools and State educational agencies must take affirmative steps to ensure that students with limited English proficiency can meaningfully participate in their educational programs and services under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d to d-7, and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1703(f) (1974).

<sup>6</sup> See 28 C.F.R. § 35.130(a) and (b); 34 C.F.R. § 104.4.

## 2. Notice of Nondiscrimination and Contact Information for the Title IX Coordinator

The Department's Title IX regulations require a recipient to publish a statement that it does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the education programs or activities it operates and that it is required by Title IX not to discriminate in such a manner. The notice must also state that questions regarding Title IX may be referred to the recipient's Title IX coordinator or to OCR.

The notice must be widely distributed to all applicants for admission and employment, students and parents or guardians of elementary and secondary school students, employees, sources of referral of applicants for admission and employment, and all unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements with the recipient. The notice should be prominently posted on the recipient's website, at various locations on campus, and in electronic and printed publications for general distribution. In addition, the notice must be included in any bulletins, announcements, publications, catalogs, application forms, or recruitment materials.

A recipient must notify all students and employees of the name or title, office address, telephone number, and email address of the Title IX coordinator, including in its notice of nondiscrimination. The notice should also state any other job title that the Title IX coordinator might have. Recipients must notify students and employees of the Title IX coordinator's contact information in its notice of nondiscrimination. Recipients with more than one Title IX coordinator must notify the school community of the lead Title IX coordinator's contact information in its notice of nondiscrimination, and should also make available the contact information for its other Title IX coordinators as well to ensure consistent practices and standards in handling complaints. In doing so, recipients should include any additional information that would help students and employees identify which Title IX coordinator to contact, such as each Title IX coordinator's specific geographic region (*e.g.*, a particular elementary school or part of a college campus) or area of specialization within Title IX (*e.g.*, gender equity in academic programs or athletics, harassment, or complaints from employees). Because social media are now widespread means for students and other members of the school community to communicate, a recipient should also make the Title IX coordinator's contact information available on social media to the extent that they are supported or used by the recipient.

The content of the notice must be complete and include current information. The Title IX coordinator should work with the recipient to make sure the text of the notice complies with all applicable requirements, that the notice is published and properly displayed, and the content of the notice remains accurate. One potentially low-cost way to help ensure that a recipient's notice is properly disseminated and current on the recipient's website is to create a page on the website that includes the name and contact information of the recipient's Title IX coordinator(s), relevant Title IX policies and grievance procedures, and other resources related to Title IX compliance and gender equity. A link to this page should be prominently displayed on the recipient's homepage.

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For more information on notices of nondiscrimination, please review:

- 34 C.F.R. §§ 106.8(a), 106.9;
- Notice of Nondiscrimination (August 2010), *available at* <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/nondisc.pdf>;
- Dear Colleague Letter: Title IX Grievance Procedures, Postsecondary Education (August 4, 2004), *available at* [http://www.ed.gov/ocr/responsibilities\\_ix\\_ps.html](http://www.ed.gov/ocr/responsibilities_ix_ps.html); and
- Dear Colleague Letter: Title IX Grievance Procedures, Elementary and Secondary Education (April 26, 2004), *available at* [http://www.ed.gov/ocr/responsibilities\\_ix.html](http://www.ed.gov/ocr/responsibilities_ix.html).

## **D. Application of Title IX to Various Issues**

Below is a summary of some of the key issues covered by Title IX, as well as some general information on the legal requirements applicable to each issue area, including citations to the relevant Departmental regulatory provisions and references to OCR's guidance that address the issue. The discussion of each Title IX issue includes recommended best practices to help a recipient meet its obligations under Title IX.

### **1. Recruitment, Admissions, and Counseling**

Title IX prohibits recipient institutions of vocational education, professional education, graduate higher education, and public colleges and universities from discriminating on the basis of sex in the recruitment or admission of students.<sup>7</sup> The Title IX coordinator at these recipient institutions should help the recipient to ensure that it does not discriminate on the basis of sex in recruitment and admissions by reviewing the recipient's recruitment materials, admission forms, and policies and practices in these areas.

The Department's Title IX regulations also prohibit all recipients from discriminating on the basis of sex in counseling or guiding students or applicants for admission. The Title IX coordinator should review any materials used for counseling students in terms of class or career selection, or for counseling applicants for admission, to ensure that the recipient does not use different materials for students based on sex or use materials that permit or require different treatment of students based on sex.

At all types of recipient institutions covered by Title IX, the Title IX coordinator should also work with school officials to help remind the school community that all students must have equal access to all programs. Many fields of study continue to be affected by sex-based disparities in enrollment; these are typically called nontraditional fields. For example, some fields of study in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics or career and technical education are often affected by disproportionate enrollment of students based on sex, which triggers a duty of inquiry on the part of the recipient. Title IX coordinators can help ensure that such disparities are not the result of discrimination on the basis of sex by reviewing enrollment data and working with other employees of the recipient to review counseling practices and counseling or appraisal materials. Under certain circumstances, recipients might encourage students to explore nontraditional fields to address underrepresentation of students of that sex in those fields.

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<sup>7</sup> 20 U.S.C. §1681(a)(1). The Department's Title IX regulations regarding admissions do not apply to private institutions of undergraduate higher education or to any public institution of undergraduate higher education which traditionally and continually from its establishment has had a policy of admitting only students of one sex. 34 C.F.R. § 106.15.

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For more information about sex discrimination in recruiting, admissions, and counseling, please review:

- 34 C.F.R. §§ 106.3(b), 106.15, 106.36, and 34 C.F.R. Part 106, Subpart C; and
- Title IX and Access to Courses and Programs in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (October 2012), *available at* <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/presentations/stem-t9-powerpoint.pdf>.

## 2. Financial Assistance

Generally, a recipient may not: (a) provide different amounts or types of financial assistance, limit eligibility for such assistance, apply different criteria or otherwise discriminate on the basis of sex in administering such assistance; or (b) assist any agency, organization, or person which offers sex-restricted student aid.

The Department's Title IX regulations provide three exceptions to these general prohibitions. Recipients are permitted to administer or assist in the administration of scholarships, fellowships, or other awards that are restricted to members of one sex if the award is: (a) created by certain legal instruments, including wills or trusts, or by acts of a foreign government, provided the overall effect is nondiscriminatory; (b) for study at foreign institutions if the recipient provides, or otherwise makes available reasonable opportunities for similar studies for members of the other sex; or (c) athletic financial assistance. The Department's Title IX regulatory requirements regarding athletic financial assistance are discussed in the Athletics section, below.

To help the recipient ensure its compliance with these requirements, the Title IX coordinator should help the recipient develop, and subsequently monitor, the procedures and practices for awarding financial assistance and for administering or aiding any foundation, trust, agency, organization, person, or foreign government in awarding financial assistance to its students.

For more information about sex discrimination in financial assistance, please review:

- 34 C.F.R. §§ 106.31(c) and 106.37.

### **3. Athletics**

The Department's Title IX regulations prohibit sex discrimination in interscholastic, intercollegiate, club, or intramural athletics offered by a recipient institution, including with respect to (a) student interests and abilities; (b) athletic benefits and opportunities; and (c) athletic financial assistance.

#### **(a) Student Interests and Abilities**

Under the Department's Title IX regulations, an institution must provide equal athletic opportunities for members of both sexes and effectively accommodate students' athletic interests and abilities. OCR uses a three-part test to determine whether an institution is providing nondiscriminatory athletic participation opportunities in compliance with the Title IX regulation. The test provides the following three compliance options:

1. Whether participation opportunities for male and female students are provided in numbers substantially proportionate to their respective enrollments; or
2. Where the members of one sex have been and are underrepresented among athletes, whether the institution can show a history and continuing practice of program expansion which is demonstrably responsive to the developing interests and abilities of the members of that sex; or
3. Where the members of one sex are underrepresented among athletes, and the institution cannot show a history and continuing practice of program expansion, as described above, whether it can be demonstrated that the interests and abilities of the members of that sex have been fully and effectively accommodated by the present program.

The three-part test is intended to allow institutions to maintain flexibility and control over their athletic programs consistent with Title IX's nondiscrimination requirements. The three-part test furnishes an institution with three individual avenues to choose from when determining how it will provide individuals of each sex with nondiscriminatory opportunities to participate in athletics. If an institution has met any part of the three-part test, OCR will determine that the institution is meeting this requirement.

To coordinate the institution's compliance with this requirement, the Title IX coordinator should compare its enrollment data to the number of athletic participation opportunities it offers; review the institution's history of expanding participation opportunities for students of the underrepresented sex; and evaluate whether there is unmet interest in a particular sport, whether there is sufficient ability to sustain a team in the sport, and whether there is a reasonable expectation of competition for the team.

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For more information about the obligation to provide equal athletic opportunities and to effectively accommodate students' athletic interests and abilities, please review:

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41(c)(1);
- Dear Colleague Letter: Part Three of the Three-Part Test (April 20, 2010), *available at* <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/letters/colleague-20100420.html>;
- Dear Colleague Letter: Athletic Activities Counted for Title IX Purposes (September 17, 2008), *available at* <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/letters/colleague-20080917.pdf>;
- Dear Colleague Letter: Title IX Athletics Three-Part Test (March 27, 2008), *available at* <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/letters/title-ix-2008-0327.pdf>;
- Dear Colleague Letter: Further Clarification of Intercollegiate Athletics Policy Guidance (July 11, 2003), *available at* <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/title9guidanceFinal.html>;
- Dear Colleague Letter: Clarification of Intercollegiate Athletics Policy Guidance: The Three-Part Test (January 16, 1996), *available at* <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/clarific.html>; and
- Title IX Policy Interpretation: Intercollegiate Athletics (December 11, 1979), *available at* <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/t9interp.html>.



## **(b) Athletic Benefits and Opportunities**

The Department's Title IX regulations and OCR guidance require that recipients that operate or sponsor interscholastic, intercollegiate, club or intramural athletics provide equal athletic opportunities for members of both sexes. In determining whether an institution is providing equal opportunity in athletics, the regulations require the Department to consider, among others, the following factors: (1) the provision of equipment and supplies; (2) scheduling of games and practice time; (3) travel and per diem allowances; (4) opportunity for coaching and academic tutoring; (5) assignment and compensation of coaches and tutors; (6) provision of locker rooms, and practice and competitive facilities; (7) provision of medical and training facilities and services; (8) housing and dining services; (9) publicity; (10) recruitment; and (11) support services. These factors are sometimes referred to as the laundry list.

As part of the recipient's obligation to provide equal athletic opportunity to its students, OCR encourages Title IX coordinators to work with the recipient to periodically review and compare the distribution of athletic benefits and opportunities by sex in each of these areas, including financial expenditures on male and female athletic teams.

For more information about each of these areas, please review:

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.41(c)(2)–(10); and
- Title IX Policy Interpretation: Intercollegiate Athletics (December 11, 1979), *available at* <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/t9interp.html>.

## **(c) Athletic Financial Assistance**

The Department's Title IX regulations specify that if a recipient awards athletic financial assistance, including athletic scholarships or grants-in-aid, it must provide reasonable opportunities for such awards for members of each sex in substantial proportion to the number of students of each sex participating in interscholastic or intercollegiate athletics. Separate athletic financial assistance for members of each sex may be provided as part of separate athletic teams for members of each sex.

The Title IX coordinator should help coordinate the recipient's efforts to ensure that the athletic financial assistance awarded by the recipient complies with these provisions by working with the institution and its athletics department.

For more information about a recipient's obligations regarding awards of athletic financial assistance, please review:

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.37(c);
- Title IX Policy Interpretation: Intercollegiate Athletics (December 11, 1979), *available at* <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/t9interp.html>; and
- Dear Colleague Letter: Bowling Green State University (July 23, 1998), *available at* <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/bowlgrn.html>.

## 4. Sex-Based Harassment

In order to best perform academically and to have equal access to all aspects of a recipient's educational programs and activities, students must not be subjected to unlawful harassment, either in the classroom or while participating in other education programs or activities.<sup>8</sup>

Title IX prohibits sex-based harassment by peers, employees, or third parties that is sufficiently serious to deny or limit a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the recipient's education programs and activities (*i.e.*, creates a hostile environment). When a recipient knows or reasonably should know of possible sex-based harassment, it must take immediate and appropriate steps to investigate or otherwise determine what occurred. If an investigation reveals that the harassment created a hostile environment, the recipient must take prompt and effective steps reasonably calculated to end the harassment, eliminate the hostile environment, prevent the harassment from recurring, and, as appropriate, remedy its effects.

Title IX prohibits several types of sex-based harassment. Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, such as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual violence is a form of sexual harassment and refers to physical sexual acts perpetrated against a person's will or where a person is incapable of giving consent (*e.g.*, due to the student's age or use of drugs or alcohol, or because an intellectual or other disability prevents the student from having the capacity to give consent). A number of different acts fall into the category of sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, sexual abuse, and sexual coercion. Gender-based harassment is another form of sex-based harassment and refers to unwelcome conduct based on an individual's actual or perceived sex, including harassment based on gender identity or nonconformity with sex stereotypes, and not necessarily involving conduct of a sexual nature. All of these types of sex-based harassment are forms of sex discrimination prohibited by Title IX.

Harassing conduct may take many forms, including verbal acts and name-calling, as well as non-verbal behavior, such as graphic and written statements, or conduct that is physically threatening, harmful, or humiliating. The more severe the conduct, the less need there is to show a repetitive series of incidents to prove a hostile environment, particularly if the conduct is physical. Indeed, a single or isolated incident of sexual violence may create a hostile environment.

Title IX protects all students from sex-based harassment, regardless of the sex of the alleged perpetrator or complainant, including when they are members of the same sex. Title IX's sex discrimination prohibition extends to claims of discrimination based on gender identity or failure to

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<sup>8</sup> A Title IX coordinator may receive reports of sex-based harassment of any member of the school community. It is the Title IX coordinator's responsibility to help make sure that such complaints are processed appropriately.

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conform to stereotypical notions of masculinity or femininity, and a recipient must accept and appropriately respond to all complaints of sex discrimination. Similarly, the actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity of the parties does not change a recipient's obligations. A recipient should investigate and resolve allegations of sexual or gender-based harassment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students using the same procedures and standards that it uses in all complaints involving sex-based harassment. The fact that an incident of sex-based harassment may be accompanied by anti-gay comments or be partly based on a student's actual or perceived sexual orientation does not relieve a recipient of its obligation under Title IX to investigate and remedy such an incident.

The Title IX coordinator must coordinate the recipient's efforts to accept and appropriately respond to all complaints of sex discrimination and should work with the recipient to prevent sexual and gender-based harassment.

- First, the Title IX coordinator should assist in any training the recipient provides to the school community, including all employees, as to what conduct constitutes sexual and gender-based harassment and how to respond appropriately when it occurs.
- Second, the Title IX coordinator should help the recipient develop a method appropriate to their institution to survey the campus climate, evaluate whether any discriminatory attitudes pervade the school culture, and determine whether any harassment or other problematic behaviors are occurring, where they happen, which students are responsible, which students are targeted, and how those conditions may be best remedied.
- Third, because the Title IX coordinator must have knowledge of all Title IX reports and complaints at the recipient institution, the Title IX coordinator is generally in the best position to evaluate confidentiality requests from complainants in the context of providing a safe, nondiscriminatory environment for all students.
- Fourth, the Title IX coordinator should coordinate recordkeeping (for instance, in a confidential log maintained by the Title IX coordinator), monitor incidents to help identify students or employees who have multiple complaints filed against them or who have been repeated targets, and address any patterns or systemic problems that arise, including making school officials aware of these patterns or systemic problems as appropriate.
- Fifth, the Title IX coordinator should recommend, as necessary, that the recipient increase safety measures, such as monitoring, supervision, or security at locations or activities where harassment has occurred.

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- Finally, the Title IX coordinator should regularly review the effectiveness of the recipient's efforts to ensure that the recipient institution is free from sexual and gender-based harassment, and use that information to recommend future proactive steps that the recipient can take to comply with Title IX and protect the school community.

For more information about a recipient's obligation to address sexual and gender-based harassment, please review:

- Questions and Answers on Title IX and Sexual Violence (April 29, 2014), *available at* <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/ga-201404-title-ix.pdf>;
- Dear Colleague Letter: Sexual Violence (April 4, 2011), *available at* <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/letters/colleague-201104.pdf>;
- Dear Colleague Letter: Harassment and Bullying (October 26, 2010), *available at* <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/letters/colleague-201010.pdf>;
- Sexual Harassment: It's Not Academic (September 2008), *available at* <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/ocrshpam.pdf>;
- Dear Colleague Letter: Sexual Harassment Issues (January 25, 2006), *available at* <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/letters/sexhar-2006.pdf>;
- Dear Colleague Letter: First Amendment (July 28, 2003), *available at* <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/firstamend.html>;
- Revised Sexual Harassment Guidance (January 19, 2001), *available at* <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/shguide.pdf>; and
- Not Alone: Together Against Sexual Assault, *available at* <http://www.notalone.gov>.

## 5. Pregnant and Parenting Students

Under the Department’s Title IX regulations, recipients are prohibited from: (a) applying any rule concerning parental, family, or marital status that treats persons differently on the basis of sex; or (b) discriminating against or excluding any student from its education program or activity, including any class or extracurricular activity on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery therefrom. Institutions of vocational education, professional education, graduate higher education, and public colleges and universities are prohibited from making pre-admission inquiries as to the marital status of an applicant for admission.

The Title IX coordinator should work with the recipient on its obligation not to discriminate against students based on their parental, family, or marital status, or exclude pregnant or parenting students from participating in any educational program, including extracurricular activities. The Title IX coordinator is responsible for coordinating the recipient’s response to complaints of discrimination against pregnant and parenting students. In addition, the Title IX coordinator should provide training to students so they know that Title IX prohibits discrimination against pregnant and parenting students, provide workshops to administrators, teachers, and other staff on the Department’s Title IX regulations and OCR guidance related to pregnant and parenting students, and assist the recipient in helping to meet the unique educational, child care, and health care needs of pregnant and parenting students.

For more information about a recipient’s obligations regarding pregnant and parenting students, please review:

- 34 C.F.R. §§ 106.21(c), 106.31, 106.40;
- Supporting the Academic Success of Pregnant and Parenting Students (June 2013), *available at* <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf>;
- Dear Colleague Letter: Pregnant and Parenting Students (June 25, 2013), *available at* <http://www2.ed.gov/ocr/letters/colleague-201306-title-ix.pdf>; and
- Dear Colleague Letter: Nondiscriminatory Treatment of Pregnant Student Athletes (June 25, 2007), *available at* <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/letters/colleague-20070625.pdf>.

## 6. Discipline

The Department's Title IX regulations prohibit a recipient from subjecting any person to separate or different rules of behavior, sanctions, or other treatment, such as discriminatory discipline, based on sex.

The Title IX coordinator should review the recipient's discipline policies to help make sure they are not discriminatory. In addition, the Title IX coordinator should work with other coordinators or school employees to help the recipient keep and maintain accurate and complete records regarding its disciplinary incidents and monitor the recipient's administration of its discipline policies to ensure that they are not administered in a discriminatory manner. For example, the Title IX coordinator should review the recipient's disciplinary records and data to ensure that similarly situated students are not being disciplined differently based on sex for the same offense and that the recipient's discipline policies do not have an unlawful disparate impact on students based on sex. The Title IX coordinator should also help the recipient to ensure that students are not disciplined based on their gender identity or for failing to conform to stereotypical notions of masculinity or femininity in their behavior or appearance.

For more information about a recipient's obligations regarding nondiscriminatory administration of discipline, please review:

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(b)(4); and
- Dear Colleague Letter: Nondiscriminatory Administration of Discipline (January 8, 2014), available at <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/letters/colleague-201401-title-vi.pdf>.

## 7. Single-Sex Education

A recipient is generally prohibited from providing any of its education programs or activities separately on the basis of sex, or requiring or refusing participation by students on the basis of sex unless expressly authorized to do so under Title IX or the Department’s implementing regulations. There are some limited exceptions, the most significant of which are outlined below.

### (a) Schools

A recipient generally may offer a single-sex nonvocational elementary or secondary school under Title IX only if it offers a substantially equal school to students of the other sex.<sup>9</sup> The substantially equal school may be either single-sex or coeducational. The Department’s Title IX regulations include a non-exhaustive list of factors that are relevant to determining whether a school is substantially equal to a single-sex school. The factors include the admission criteria and policies; the educational benefits provided, including the quality, range, and content of curriculum and other services, and the quality and availability of books, instructional materials, and technology; the qualifications of faculty and staff; geographic accessibility; the quality and range of extracurricular offerings; the quality, accessibility, and availability of facilities and resources provided; and intangible features, such as reputation of faculty. Although the schools do not need to be identical with respect to each factor, they need to be substantially equal. This means that if one school is significantly superior with respect to one factor, or slightly superior with respect to many factors, the schools are likely not substantially equal.

If the recipient offers a single-sex school, then the district’s Title IX coordinator should be involved in assessing the recipient’s compliance with Title IX by helping to ensure that the recipient offers a substantially equal single-sex school or coeducational school.

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<sup>9</sup> Title IX does not prohibit the operation of a single-sex nonvocational private elementary or secondary school or a single-sex nonvocational private institution of undergraduate higher education. 20 U.S.C. § 1681(a)(1); 34 C.F.R. § 106.15(d). Title IX permits the operation of a nonvocational public charter school that is a single-school local educational agency under State law without requiring the operation of a substantially equal school for the excluded sex.



## **(b) Classes and Extracurricular Activities**

The Department's Title IX regulations do not prohibit recipients from grouping students in physical education classes and activities by ability as assessed by objective standards of individual performance developed and applied without regard to sex or using requirements based on vocal range or quality that may result in a chorus or choruses of one or predominantly one sex.

The Department's Title IX regulations identify the following categories for which a recipient may intentionally separate students by sex: (a) contact sports in physical education classes; (b) classes or portions of classes in elementary and secondary schools that deal primarily with human sexuality; and (c) nonvocational classes and extracurricular activities within a coeducational, nonvocational elementary or secondary school if certain criteria are met.

With respect to the third category, a recipient may offer a single-sex nonvocational class or extracurricular activity in a coeducational, nonvocational elementary or secondary school if the class is based on one of two important objectives: to improve its students' educational achievement through its overall established policy to provide diverse educational opportunities or to meet the particular, identified educational needs of its students. The single-sex nature of each class must be substantially related to achievement of the important objective and the recipient must implement its important objective in an evenhanded manner. In addition, enrollment in a single-sex class must be completely voluntary and the recipient must provide a substantially equal coeducational class in the same subject to all students, and may be required to provide a substantially equal single-sex class for students of the excluded sex. The factors that are relevant to determining whether a single-sex class and a coeducational class are substantially equal are similar to those used to determine whether schools are substantially equal. If a recipient provides a single-sex class under this regulatory exception, it is also required to conduct a periodic evaluation of the class and the original justification behind the class at least every two years. The periodic evaluation must ensure that each single-sex class is based upon a genuine justification and does not rely on overly broad generalizations about the different talents, capacities, or preferences of either sex, and that each single-sex class or extracurricular activity is substantially related to the achievement of the important objective for the class.

If the recipient offers a single-sex class, then the Title IX coordinator should be involved in assessing the recipient's compliance with Title IX, both when determining whether and how single-sex classes can be offered and during the recipient's periodic review of single-sex offerings. The Title IX coordinator's role may include assisting with the preparation and review of the required periodic evaluations, tracking and reviewing complaints involving single-sex classes, confirming that student enrollment in any single-sex class is completely voluntary, and helping to ensure that the recipient offers a substantially equal coeducational class and, as appropriate, substantially equal single-sex class, for each single-sex class offered. The Title IX coordinator should also help ensure that

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transgender students are treated consistent with their gender identity in the context of single-sex classes.

For more information about single-sex schools, classes, and extracurricular activities, please review:

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.34;
- Questions and Answers Regarding Single-Sex Elementary and Secondary Classes and Extracurricular Activities (December, 2014), *available at* <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/faqs-title-ix-single-sex-201412.pdf>;
- Dear Colleague Letter: Single-Sex Education (January 31, 2007), *available at* <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/letters/single-sex-20070131.html>; and
- Final Rule: Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance, 71 Fed. Reg. 62,530 (October 25, 2006), *available at* <http://www2.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/finrule/2006-4/102506a.pdf>.

## 8. Employment

Under the Department’s Title IX regulations, a recipient is generally prohibited from discriminating on the basis of sex in any employment or recruitment, consideration or selection for employment, whether full-time or part-time.<sup>10</sup> This includes employment actions such as recruitment, hiring, promotion, compensation, grants of leave, and benefits. A recipient must make employment decisions in a nondiscriminatory manner, and may not enter into contracts, including those with employment agencies or unions, that have the direct or indirect effect of subjecting employees or students to discrimination based on sex. Additionally, Title IX’s employment provisions protect against discrimination based on an applicant’s or employee’s pregnancy or marital or parental status. Finally, a recipient may not employ students in a way that discriminates against one sex, or provide services to any other organization that does so.

The Title IX coordinator should help the recipient in making sure school employees are aware that the Title IX coordinator is available to help employees as well as students. The Title IX coordinator should be familiar with the recipient’s employment policies and procedures, and train the appropriate human resource employees regarding the recipient’s obligations under Title IX.

For more information about employment discrimination, please review:

- 34 C.F.R. Part 106, Subpart E; 34 C.F.R. § 106.38.

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<sup>10</sup> Employees are also protected from discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment, by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, 42 U.S.C. § 2000e. OCR does not enforce Title VII. For information about Title VII, see the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's website at <http://www.eeoc.gov>.

## 9. Retaliation

A recipient cannot retaliate against an individual, including a Title IX coordinator, for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX. Retaliation against an individual because the individual filed a complaint alleging a violation of Title IX; participated in a Title IX investigation, hearing, or proceeding; or advocated for others' Title IX rights is also prohibited. The recipient should ensure that individuals are not intimidated, threatened, coerced, or discriminated against for engaging in such activity.

For more information about the prohibition against retaliation, please review:

- 34 C.F.R. § 106.71 (incorporating by reference 34 C.F.R. § 100.7(e)); and
- Dear Colleague Letter: Retaliation (April 2013), *available at* <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/letters/colleague-201304.pdf>.

## E. Information Collection and Reporting

The Department requires recipients to report information about Title IX and other civil rights issues that may be useful to the work of Title IX coordinators. In addition, Title IX coordinators can play a helpful role in helping to ensure that their institutions' information is accurate, comprehensive, and effectively used to cure civil rights violations or prevent them from occurring.

OCR administers the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), which collects information on key education and civil rights issues from public local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools, including juvenile justice facilities, charter schools, alternative schools, and schools serving students with disabilities. The information is used by OCR in its enforcement efforts, by other Department offices and Federal agencies, and by the public, including policymakers and researchers.

The CRDC collects information on several key issue areas under Title IX that might help inform the Title IX coordinator's work, including harassment or bullying,<sup>11</sup> discipline, and participation in various academic classes and programs, single-sex classes and activities, and interscholastic athletics. In addition, the CRDC asks LEAs to report whether they have civil rights coordinators, including Title IX coordinators and to provide each coordinator's contact information. For Title IX coordinators at elementary and secondary schools, the CRDC may be a useful tool to monitor trends within their districts and schools to determine whether there are patterns or systemic problems under Title IX. Additionally, the CRDC and other information collections at the State and local levels can help recipients and their Title IX coordinators identify patterns of disproportionality that may be rooted in sex discrimination. For example, the CRDC's information about student enrollment in particular courses of study (*e.g.*, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics courses) may help a Title IX coordinator determine whether a particular sex is underrepresented in such courses. If so, the coordinator should investigate the possible causes of the disproportionality and then recommend measures for reaching greater proportionality, as appropriate.

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<sup>11</sup> The CRDC collects information on allegations of harassment or bullying, students reported as harassed or bullied, and students disciplined for harassment or bullying, based on sex, race/color/national origin, and disability. For allegations of harassment or bullying, data are also collected based on religion and sexual orientation. As a best practice, OCR recommends that Title IX coordinators assist the recipient in training relevant staff about how information on sex-based harassment should be reported under the CRDC. For example, relevant staff should be knowledgeable about the ways in which harassment based on sex and sexual orientation overlap, and informed that if an incident has multiple bases (*e.g.*, an incident in which a student was harassed both based on gender nonconformity (sex) and sexual orientation), the LEA should report all relevant bases under the CRDC. In addition, the recipient should remind staff who collect, maintain, and report information to the Department of these requirements and of the district's obligations, including keeping personally identifiable information private.

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The Department's Office of Postsecondary Education also collects information about Title IX coordinators from postsecondary institutions in reports required under the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act and the Higher Education Opportunity Act.<sup>12</sup> Title IX coordinators in postsecondary settings should assist the institution's officials in accurately reporting the required information.

For more information about data collection and reporting, please review:

- CRDC webpage, *available at* <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/data.html>; and
- Campus Security webpage (for postsecondary institutions), *available at* <http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/campus.html>.

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<sup>12</sup> 20 U.S.C. § 1092(f). The Department will begin collecting this information in 2015.