

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES CONCERNING SEXUAL ASSAULT, STALKING AND DOMESTIC AND INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AGAINST STUDENTS

I. POLICY STATEMENT

The City University of New York seeks to create and maintain a safe environment in which all members of the University community—students, faculty and staff—can learn and work free from the fear of sexual assault and other forms of violence. The University’s policies on Workplace Violence and Domestic Violence and the Workplace apply to all acts of violence that occur in the workplace or that may spill over into the workplace. The University’s Sexual Harassment Policy prohibits many forms of unwelcome conduct, including but not limited to, physical conduct of a sexual nature. This policy is specifically directed towards sexual assault, domestic and intimate partner violence and stalking committed against students on and off-campus.

CUNY wants all victims of sexual assault, stalking and domestic and intimate partner violence to know that the University has professionals and law enforcement officers who are trained in the field to assist student victims in obtaining help, including immediate medical care, counseling and other essential services. If the alleged perpetrator is also a member of the CUNY community, the college will take prompt action to investigate, and, where appropriate, to discipline and sanction the alleged perpetrator. CUNY urges all victims to seek immediate help in accordance with the guidelines set forth in this policy with the assurance that all information received from a complaint will be handled as confidentially as possible.

In order to eliminate sexual assaults and other forms of violence perpetrated against students, and to create a safe college community, it is critical to provide an appropriate prevention education program and have trained professionals to provide vital supportive services.

Accordingly, CUNY is committed to the following goals:

- Providing clear and concise guidelines for students to follow in the event that they or someone they know have been the victim of a sexual assault, domestic/intimate partner violence, or stalking.
- Assisting victims of sexual assault or abuse in obtaining necessary medical care and counseling, whether on or off-campus.
- Providing the most informed and up-to-date education and information to its students about how to identify situations that involve sexual assault, domestic and intimate partner violence, or stalking, and ways to prevent these forms of violence.

- Educating and training all staff members, including counselors, public safety officers and student affairs staff and faculty, to assist victims of sexual assault, domestic/intimate partner violence, or stalking.
- Ensuring that disciplinary procedures are followed in the event that the alleged perpetrator is a CUNY student or employee.

II. **PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING INCIDENTS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT AND OTHER FORMS OF VIOLENCE**

Obtaining assistance after a student is sexually assaulted, stalked or is in an abusive relationship is extremely important and can involve different points of on-campus contact for students, faculty and staff, including the Public Safety Department, Women's/Men's Centers and Counseling Departments, and/or the Dean of Student Development/Student Affairs. Each provides different forms of assistance which together address many of the needs of survivors.

- **Contact Law Enforcement Personnel Immediately**

CUNY urges any student who has been the victim of a sexual assault or other act of violence or abuse, or any student or employee who has witnessed a sexual assault or other act of violence against a student, to immediately report the incident to the college Public Safety Department if the attack occurred on-campus, or to call 911 or go to the local NYPD precinct if the incident took place off-campus. Each college shall be provided with a list of emergency contact numbers as part of its orientation and training programs.

- **Seek Immediate Medical Attention**

It is critical that victims of a physical assault receive comprehensive medical attention as soon as possible. For a sexual assault in particular, immediate treatment and the preservation of evidence of the attack (i.e. retain the clothing worn during the attack and do not shower) is crucial to a criminal investigation. If a student believes that she/he may be the victim of date rape by being drugged, she/he should go directly to a hospital to receive a toxicology examination since such drugs only remain in a person's system for a short period of time. In all other circumstances, public safety and police personnel can assist the victim in obtaining medical care. Each college shall be provided with a list of local hospitals, some of which are designated as SAFE (Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner) hospitals that are specially equipped to handle sexual assaults and are trained to gather minute evidence from such assaults. Rape crisis advocates at emergency rooms are also trained to handle domestic violence. EMS will be directed to bring victims to a SAFE hospital at their request. Medical attention is critical not only to treat internal and external injuries and to combat the possibilities of sexually transmitted infections and/or pregnancy, but also to collect evidence that can be used against the alleged perpetrator. It is also vital to ongoing safety and recovery that victims receive emotional support and professional counseling as soon as possible after the attack.

- Seek On-Campus Assistance

CUNY encourages student victims to contact the Dean of Student Affairs/Student Development to obtain assistance in accessing medical and counseling services, or to make any necessary changes to the student's academic program or residential housing situation. Public Safety can assist victims getting to and from campus safely, filing a police report and obtaining an order of protection against the alleged perpetrator. Victims can also file a complaint with the College against an alleged perpetrator who is a student or employee of the University with the Dean of Student Affairs/Student Development and the Public Safety Office.

- Obtaining an On-Campus Advocate

Student victims of a sexual assault, stalking or domestic or intimate partner violence shall be provided with on-campus support in the form of an advocate from the Women's/Men's Center (if there is one on campus) or an appropriately trained counselor to assist them in handling the various aspects of their ordeal, such as: 1) explaining to victims their options of whether or not to report the incident to campus or law enforcement authorities; 2) providing guidance if they require medical attention; 3) providing guidance in obtaining crisis intervention and/or ongoing counseling services (or a referral to obtain the necessary services if such services are not available on campus); and 4) assisting victims throughout the College's disciplinary process if they choose to file a complaint against another student in connection with the incident.

- Handling Sexual Assault, Stalking and Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence Complaints On-Campus

The Colleges shall act promptly in response to information that a student has been sexually assaulted, or has been the victim of domestic or intimate partner violence or stalking by another member of the CUNY community. Upon receipt of a complaint, the College shall undertake an appropriate investigation. If it appears that there is sufficient evidence to warrant disciplinary charges against a student or staff member, such charges shall be brought pursuant to the appropriate University procedures or collective bargaining agreement. If the alleged perpetrator is a student and the matter is brought before a hearing, the victim and alleged perpetrator are entitled to the same opportunities to have others present and to be informed of the outcome of the proceedings. The victim is entitled to a report of the results of the proceeding at her/his request. If a student is found guilty of committing a sexual assault or other act of violence against another CUNY student or employee after a disciplinary hearing, the penalties may include suspension, expulsion from residence halls, or permanent dismissal from CUNY.

In addition, if during the course of the investigation and/or disciplinary process the alleged perpetrator, or anyone on his/her behalf, seeks to contact the victim so as to harass, intimidate, threaten or coerce the victim in any way, the College reserves the right to bring additional disciplinary action against the actor. Such conduct by any member of the CUNY community will not be tolerated.

- Confidentiality

The University recognizes that confidentiality is particularly important to victims of sex crimes, domestic and intimate partner violence and stalking. If the victim seeks counseling with a licensed professional and/or works with an advocate from the campus, those communications will be confidential. CUNY encourages victims in all circumstances to seek counseling in order to speak about her/his options and to begin the recovery period.

While complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality on a “need to know” basis. Generally, the wishes of a victim not to report a sexual assault or incident of domestic/intimate partner violence or stalking to the police will prevail, though the College reserves the right to notify the police when it believes that such reporting is necessary for the protection of the College community. Such notification, however, will generally be done without divulging the victim’s identity and for the purpose of providing a campus-wide safety alert. In addition, the College must adhere to legal mandates such as Title IX, medical reporting laws, and the Campus Security Act. For example, CUNY is required to make an annual report documenting the occurrences of violent crimes on campus, including sexual assault. However, this report does not include any information identifying the individuals (including the victims) linked to these crimes.