

Sexual Misconduct and Prevention Training

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This is an *informal document* with *no official status* prepared by Danny Calegari as a resource for the Sexual Misconduct and Prevention Training session at WOMP in fall 2024. It represents some of my best guesses about the information and resources most useful to grad students in the math department, and is based partly on official resources that can be found on the CARES (i.e. the Center for Awareness, Resolution, Education, and Support) webpage <https://cares.uchicago.edu>. *The contents of this document do not necessarily represent the views of the University of Chicago or the Department of Mathematics.*

1 What is Title IX?

The term ‘Title IX’ refers to a section of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, which identifies sexual misconduct as a form of sex discrimination prohibited by Title IX. U Chicago has a Title IX coordinator, whose job is to handle reports of sexual misconduct.

2 What is sexual misconduct?

Sexual misconduct describes a range of conduct, including:

1. sexual assault;
2. unwanted touching;
3. persistent unwelcome comments, emails, or pictures of an insulting or degrading sexual nature.

Sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or sexually directed remarks or behaviour constitute sexual harassment when

1. submission to or rejection of such conduct is made, explicitly or implicitly, a basis for an academic or employment decision, or a term or condition of either; or
2. such conduct directed against an individual persists despite its rejection.

Examples of situations in which conduct is (or might be construed to be) implicitly a basis for an academic decision include the advisor–advisee role, teacher–student role, grader–student role (*including* graduate students teaching or grading undergrad classes).

3 How do I report sexual misconduct?

If you disclose any kind of sexual misconduct, in however offhand or vague a manner to university faculty, staff or postdoctoral researchers, you should be aware that those persons have *mandatory reporting responsibilities*; to wit:

University employees not designated as confidential resources are considered “Individuals with Title IX Reporting Responsibilities” and must report all incidents of gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking to UChicago CARES.

It is certainly permitted to approach e.g. faculty and make a report; however, the faculty member will be obliged to forward the report to CARES who will take over all official handling of the case.

Important note: graduate students are considered to have mandatory reporting responsibilities if they are teaching or grading a class, with respect to their interactions with the students in that class. On the other hand they are *not* considered to have mandatory reporting responsibilities in their (non-class related) interactions with other graduate students. For example, if grad student 1 confides in grad student 2 they are being harassed (by some third party), grad student 2 is not required to report it.

To go through ‘official channels’ the options are:

1. note/document an incident with CARES (see § 4) without choosing to file a formal complaint;
2. formal complaint to the University by using the Report an Incident form https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofChicago&layout_id=6;
3. anonymous reporting to CARES (their ability to address anonymous reports is very limited; however, if the reported event is part of a pattern of behavior involving the same individual, being otherwise investigated, an anonymous report might be very valuable);
4. reporting to law enforcement (e.g. UCPD).

In the event of a formal complaint, the resolution options depend on whether the complaint is against a student, a staff member, or a university faculty member (including postdoctoral researchers); for more details see <https://cares.uchicago.edu/resolution-services>.

4 What support resources do I have?

The relevant office is CARES: the Center for Awareness, Resolution, Education and Support. Their webpage is <https://cares.uchicago.edu> which contains numerous resources.

The resources they provide fall in two categories: non-confidential, and confidential. Non-confidential resources include:

1. opportunities to note/document an incident without choosing to file a formal complaint;
2. obtaining a University issued No-Contact directive (these are mutual and non-punitive);
3. changes or accommodations for academics, housing, dining, and working;
4. obtaining a referral to a resolution process;
5. obtaining a referral for mental health or legal support.

Confidential resources include:

1. sexual assault Dean on Call 24/7; they can be reached through the UChicago Safe App or by calling UCPD Dispatch at 773-702-8181 and asking UCPD to page the sexual assault Dean on Call;
2. UChicago student wellness provides confidential medical services and mental health services.

5 Day to day departmental life

It is important for all of us to work together to create an inclusive and inviting culture in the math department that helps everybody reach their potential. ‘Soft’ forms of prejudice/harassment sometimes go unacknowledged, or even unnoticed by the perpetrator.

Here is a very partial list of relevant scenarios.

1. Every graduate student in the department has been admitted on the basis of their mathematical ability, and because the senior faculty are confident they are more than capable of succeeding and thriving as a mathematician. Suggesting otherwise — even indirectly or under the cover of ‘humor’ — is factually incorrect, ignorant, and hurtful.
2. Persistent unwelcome comments (and other activities; see above) are classified as sexual misconduct. But it is *not* the responsibility of the target to communicate to the perpetrator that such activity is unwelcome. Such activity is unwelcome *if it is unwelcome*. In many cases it is prudent to assume that the activity is unwelcome unless there is clear and uncontroversial evidence to the contrary.
3. A commonly held prejudice presumes that women have ‘soft skills’ that make them more ‘suitable’ for extracurricular work which rightly should be shared among the entire graduate student body. Many women are socialized to accede to this prejudice. Expressing or endorsing this prejudice, even unconsciously or indirectly, helps perpetrate an unfair burden.
4. Some people care deeply about being addressed by particular pronouns; other people are indifferent. Respecting individual choices in this matter is just basic human consideration and decency.