

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Title IX?

Title IX 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.”

Title IX harassment is often used to describe prohibited conduct that includes sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking based on sex.

Who is AFI's Title IX Coordinator?

AFI's Title IX Coordinator is:

Damien Parker
323.856.7624
titleix@afi.com

AFI's Deputy Title IX Coordinator for Fellows is:

Dr. Syreeta N. Greene
323.856.7682
SGreene@afi.com

Who can I speak with confidentially?

If you are seeking a confidential resource, you may want to confide in a licensed counselor/therapist, health service provider, clergy, or others who are legally permitted to maintain confidentiality. If you have questions about whether an individual can maintain confidentiality, you should clarify this with them before disclosing your experience to them.

What kind of support does AFI offer to Fellows who may have been victims of sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence or stalking based on sex?

Fellows can access a wide range of supportive measures through Fellow Affairs. Fellows can request counseling, academic accommodations (such as an exam delay or a schedule change), an Avoidance of Contact order, or other forms of support that would enable them to continue to participate in their education. Supportive measures are similarly available to all parties to the process. Please contact the Office of Fellow Affairs for more information.

What should I do if I'm not sure whether I want to report?

If you believe that you have experienced an incident of sexual misconduct or any behavior prohibited by AFI's Title IX Policy or SB 493 Policy, one option that you have is that you can reach out to someone you trust. Please be aware that some AFI employees

– including faculty, department heads, administrators, and Conservatory staff – are mandated reporters and must report what you tell them to the Title IX Coordinator. You can also contact the Title IX Coordinator directly to obtain more information about resources and your rights before deciding to disclose your experience.

Will information about my complaint remain confidential?

The privacy of those involved in a complaint of gender-based discrimination and sexual misconduct will be respected, except when it interferes with the AFI’s obligation to fully investigate allegations when AFI has determined that an investigation must be conducted. Complaints will be investigated and, depending on the nature of the offense, reported to authorities, as required by California law. It may be necessary for information submitted anonymously to AFI to be disclosed to investigators, respondents, and others with a need to know during AFI’s investigation process. Where information is shared, it will still be tightly controlled on a need-to-know basis wherever possible. However, AFI cannot guarantee anonymity.

How do I file a complaint and begin an investigation?

We hope that you have taken the opportunity to come meet with us before completing a report so that you are fully aware of the process and your options. When you are ready, you can file a formal complaint by submitting a complaint form online.

What does an investigation entail?

In general, during the investigation process, one or more impartial investigators are assigned to gather information. Each party – the complainant and the respondent – is provided a copy of the investigation report to review and provided feedback on any discrepancies. The parties have the right to challenge the selection should a potential conflict of interest exist. Witnesses may be interviewed and evidence will be gathered. The case may proceed to a hearing under AFI’s Title IX Policy if that policy applies.

Can someone come with me to investigation meetings?

Yes – you are permitted to have an advisor at any meetings involving sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking based on sex. The participation of advisors and support persons will be determined by the policy that applies to the complaint.

Who can be an advisor?

An advisor can be anyone of the complainant (or respondent’s) choosing. An attorney may also fill this role of advisor; however, the Title IX/sexual misconduct investigation process is not comparable to a criminal or civil court proceeding, and therefore, the role of an attorney as an advisor is different in AFI’s process than it is in a court of law. AFI’s process is strictly administrative in nature and is not a legal proceeding.

Who is a “complainant” and who is a “respondent”?

A complainant is an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment as defined by our policies. A respondent is an individual who has been reported to have engaged in conduct that could constitute sexual harassment under our policies.

Will I have to name the respondent?

No, if you are the person who experienced the misconduct and you are reporting the misconduct for the purpose of accessing resources, to learn about your options, or for statistical crime and campus reporting purposes, then you do not have to name the respondent.

In general, if AFI does not have the identity of the respondent, it is difficult to investigate or proceed with disciplinary action.

Will the use of drugs or alcohol affect the outcome of a gender-based discrimination and sexual misconduct conduct complaint?

Consistent with California law, the use of alcohol and/or drugs by either party will not diminish the respondent's responsibility to obtain affirmative consent.

Will either party's prior use of drugs and/or alcohol be a factor when investigating sexual misconduct?

No, not unless there is a compelling reason to believe that prior use or abuse is relevant to the present complaint.

Should I seek legal advice?

Because criminal legal matters are handled by the local District Attorney's office, people who experience criminal sexual assault may not need to retain a private attorney. You may choose to retain an attorney at your own expense if you are the respondent or if you are the complainant and are considering filing a civil action.

What should I do to preserve evidence of a sexual assault?

Physical information of a sexual assault must be collected very quickly for it to be used as evidence in a criminal prosecution. If you believe you have been a victim of a sexual assault, you should go to a hospital emergency room before washing yourself or your clothing. A health professional specially trained in responding to sexual assault will be on call at your local hospital and will help you. If you go to the hospital, local police will be called but you are not obligated to talk to the police or to prosecute. The hospital exam will help to keep that option open for you should you decide later to exercise it.

The hospital staff will collect information, check for injuries and address the possibility of exposure to sexually transmitted infections. If you have changed clothing since the assault, bring the clothing you had on at the time of the assault with you to the hospital in a clean, sanitary container such as a clean paper grocery bag or wrapped in a clean sheet. Plastic containers do not breathe and may render forensic information useless. If

you have not changed clothes, bring a change of clothes with you to the hospital, if possible, as they will likely keep the clothes you are wearing as information. You can take a support person with you to the hospital, and they can accompany you through the exam, if you want. Do not disturb the crime scene—leave all sheets, towels, etc. that may bear information for the police to collect. Keep any relevant texts or direct messages.

What should I do if I am accused of sexual misconduct?

First, do not contact the complainant. You may immediately want to contact someone in the campus community who can act as your advisor. Fellows can contact the Office of Fellow Affairs and employees can contact AFI Human Resources. Both offices can explain AFI's procedures for dealing with reports of sexual misconduct. You may also want to talk to a confidential counselor. Fellows can request to see a counselor by emailing the Office of Fellow Affairs at counseling@afi.edu.

How are complaints resolved?

In all complaints of sexual misconduct, the complainant will be informed of the outcome. In some instances, AFI Conservatory administration may choose to make a brief announcement of the nature of the violation and the action taken, to the community, though personally identifying information about the victim will not be shared. Certain AFI administrators are informed privately (e.g., the President of AFI, Executive Vice President/Dean of the AFI Conservatory, Title IX Coordinator, Chief Resource Officer, Director of Fellow Affairs, and relevant attorneys representing AFI). AFI must statistically report the occurrence on campus of any of six major violent crimes, including certain sex offenses, in an annual report of campus crime statistics. This statistical report does not include personally identifiable information.