

# Highline College Title IX Process

## Introduction:

Every member of the Highline community has the right to learn and work in an environment free from sex and gender-based violence and harassment. Sexual assault, relationship or intimate partner violence, stalking and other forms of harassment and discrimination can profoundly affect people of any gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, ability, citizenship, or socioeconomic status.

Knowing what options, rights, and resources are available can help individuals determine their best path forward. This guide:

- Introduces the College professional staff who assist students and employees with understanding and navigating the support and reporting options that work best for them;
- Highlights confidential advocates because they can provide legally-protected confidentiality, specialized expertise, and ongoing support whether or not an individual chooses to make a formal complaint;
- Emphasizes that individuals who have experienced harm have the right to choose their next steps—if any—including the right to seek support measures or to make a formal complaint.

Together, we are committed to preventing and addressing sex and gender-based violence and harassment. Please contact me—and any of the staff or offices included in this guide—at any time

## Where to start:

If you have experienced—or think you may have experienced— sexual assault, stalking, relationship or intimate partner violence, sex- or gender-based harassment, and/or another form of sexual misconduct, resources, support measures and reporting options are available to you. Choosing one option does not preclude others; you can pursue any of them at any time. You can also contact the Title IX Coordinator at any time, for any reason.

**Confidential Option:** If you want to talk to someone for support, to make a plan, and/or to understand your options, connect with the Counseling Center.

## [The Counseling Center](#)

The Counseling Center mission is to help students and the greater community to reach their goals through personal, career, and educational counseling. They deliver culturally

competent innovative outreach programs and individualized services to support the campus and community.

To make an appointment or learn more, follow the options at this link:

<https://counseling.highline.edu/contact-us/> or call 206-592-3353

**Medical Option:** If you need or want medical attention, you can connect with a Medical provider and/or SANE exam

SANE exam (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners)

Some health care facilities have SANEs who are specially-trained to work with patients who have been sexually assaulted. They will explain each step of the process and allow you to make decisions about what you want to do next. A SANE exam is an important way to preserve evidence should you choose to make a police report.

If you have been sexually assaulted, a SANE can offer:

- A physical exam that will identify any injuries
- Emergency contraception to prevent pregnancy
- Sexually-transmitted infection (STI) testing and prophylaxis medication to prevent infection
- Optional forensic evidence collection and documentation

Federal and state law protect the confidentiality of medical records. Information retained in medical provider records that is otherwise confidential may be subject to disclosure in response to a valid subpoena or court order.

Facilities near Highline College that provide SANE exams (there may be confidential options that are no cost to the patient):

- Harborview Medical Center: [Abuse and Trauma Center](#)
  - Patricia Steel Building, 401 Broadway, Suite 2075, Seattle, WA 98104
  - Phone: 206-744-1600
- Evergreen Health [Emergency Care](#)
  - Kirkland: 12040 NE 128th Street, Kirkland, WA 98034
    - 425-899-1711
  - Redmond: 8980 161st Ave NE, Redmond, WA 98052
    - 425-899-1111

**Reporting Option:** If you want to make a report to the college and/or police.

Making a formal complaint to the college

A formal complaint is a request for an investigation. You have the right to submit a formal complaint about any behavior that feels inappropriate or unwelcome. The college will respond to your complaint whether you choose to file a police report or not.

The process the college follows to investigate and resolve complaints depends on who engaged in the behavior—a student, an employee, or a person unaffiliated with the college. Processes are designed to be prompt, fair, impartial and to equitably protect the rights of individuals participating in them. If you choose to submit a complaint, a confidential advisor can work with you throughout the complaint, investigation, and hearing process.

### Reporting to the Police

Behaviors described in this guide may also be a crime, and you may report them directly to the police. Police with jurisdiction over the location where the alleged crime occurred will investigate. If you have also chosen to report to the College, the College will make legally allowed efforts to work cooperatively with the law enforcement agency but will not unduly delay its own investigation. If you do report to the police, they may notify the College that a report has been made.

### Seeking a court-issued protective order

The main purpose of a court-issued protective order is to keep the respondent or subject from contacting you or causing further physical harm. There are different types of protective orders available based on the situation and the people involved. [Public Safety](#) is available to provide more information and support in seeking a protective order

## **Making a plan of Support**

Supportive measures are available whether or not a formal complaint is made or an investigation is launched. An advocate can help you explore your goals so that you can decide what supportive measures you need and how to access them. Supportive measures might include a request for a mutual no contact directive, services you access, changes you request, or adjustments to your work or academic schedule. With the exception of mutual no contact directives, the College generally cannot impose restrictions on a student or employee respondent – the person accused of the misconduct - until and unless a formal complaint is made or an investigation is initiated. Any restrictions implemented may not place an unreasonable burden on you or the respondent.

College staff such as the Title IX Coordinator, can assist you in seeking supportive measures.

***The college can respond to your safety and health concerns by:***

- Engaging in safety assessment and planning with Public Safety
- Implementing a no contact directive that directs both people involved to cease any contact or communication with one another
- Identifying referrals for counseling and medical resources
- Working with Public Safety Escort Service or other services that can escort you around Highlines Campus
- Changing your residence hall room (if spaces are available)
- Increasing the presence of Public Safety around the buildings where you live, work, or study
- Assisting you in obtaining a civil/court-ordered protection order

***College staff can advocate for academic support, such as:***

- More time on exams
- Extensions for papers or projects
- Alterations to course requirements
- Modifications to participation requirements
- Remote attendance for lectures or classes
- Recording of lectures
- Switching course or discussion sections
- Adjustments to lab or desk space

## **Access Services**

Academic and employment accommodations can be made for a temporary health condition or injury as well as for a permanent disability such as an acute stress disorder developed or triggered as a result of trauma.

Access Services provides reasonable accommodations for qualified students in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Federal Rehabilitation Act. [Current Students](#) can request Letters of Accommodation to assist in their learning. Contact Access Services via phone 206-592-3857 or send a message to [access@highline.edu](mailto:access@highline.edu) to get started.

You may seek supportive measures without an investigation being launched. However, some additional protective measures may be available if you choose to make a formal complaint. Examples of what might be possible include:

- Adjustments to the other person's living, working, or study spaces
- Placing the person who allegedly engaged in prohibited behavior on administrative leave (in work settings)

## **Community Resources**

- Harborview Abuse and Trauma Center—Center for Sexual Assault and Traumatic Stress
  - 206.744.1600
- King County Sexual Assault Resource Center
  - 888.99.VOICE (86423) (24-hour resource line)
  - kcsarc.org
- New Beginnings – Ending Domestic Violence
  - 206.522.9472 (24-hour helpline)
  - newbegin.org
- The Northwest Network of Bi, Trans, Lesbian & Gay Survivors of Abuse
  - 206.568.7777
  - nwnetwork.org
- Abused Deaf Women’s Advocacy Services
  - 206.812.1001
  - adwas.org
- Rebuilding Hope! The Sexual Assault Center for Pierce County 24-hour Crisis, Information and Referral Line
  - 800.756.7273
  - sexualassaultcenter.com
- Crystal Judson Family Justice Center (Tacoma) (serving domestic violence victims and their children)
  - 253.798.4166 (helpline)
  - aplaceofhelp.com
- LifeWire – Together Against Domestic Violence (Bellevue)
  - 425.746.1940
  - lifewire.org
- RAINN - Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network
  - 800.656.HOPE (4673)
  - rainn.org
- National Domestic Violence Hotline
  - 800.799.7233
  - thehotline.org
- Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs
  - 360.754.7583
  - wcsap.org
- Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WSCADV)
  - 1.800.799.7233
  - wscadv.org

**For a Formal Report: What to expect during the investigation and adjudication process**

State and federal law impose complex and specific requirements which must be incorporated into College investigations and adjudications of sex- and gender-based violence and harassment. The information below provides a general overview of these procedures at Highline College. If you chose to submit a formal complaint, you will receive more detailed information about your rights and options throughout the process. For additional information before making a formal complaint, contact the Title IX Coordinator.

**Contacting an investigation office:** The Title IX Coordinator designated to receive complaints and conduct investigations. A representative of the office will answer your questions and/or set up an initial meeting with an investigator. You will not be expected or asked to share more details than you are comfortable with during this initial conversation. Remember, you do not need to request an investigation in order to receive supportive measures.

**Timing considerations:** Deciding if or when to report sex- and gender-based violence and harassment is a very personal decision. While there is no right or wrong time to make a complaint, timing may affect how the College is able to respond. For example, sanctioning options may be limited if the College receives a report too close to or after a student respondent's graduation or if the College receives a report after an employee respondent has left their position at the College.

**Meeting with an investigator:** If you elect to meet with an investigator, you may choose to be accompanied by an advisor. The investigator will provide details of the investigation process, answer questions, and gather information about your experience. The investigator will also provide you with information about College policies and Department of Education federal regulations that prohibit sexual assault, stalking, relationship or intimate partner violence, sex- and gender-based harassment, and/or other sexual misconduct. The differences between the federal and College definitions and processes will be clarified for you throughout the process. After the College investigator considers and reviews the information you provided, you will be informed of action(s) the College will take, including whether an investigation will be opened and if the Department of Education federal regulations and/or College policy apply

**Remote or online options:** Meetings with an advocate or investigator can occur in-person or online. If a hearing occurs, both parties have the option to remain in a separate room from one another throughout the duration of the hearing. Hearings may also may occur fully online.

**For a Formal Report: Overview of the Process**

**Accessibility:** Title IX investigation and adjudication processes are intended to be inclusive and accessible. For accommodation requests connected to a disability or health condition, contact the investigator or advocate with whom you are working or the Title IX Coordinator.

**Allegations and notice:** The investigator will meet with you to understand what happened and prepare allegations based on what you share. Once you confirm the allegations, the investigator will provide official notice of the allegations to the respondent (i.e., the person who has been accused of misconduct).

**Investigation:** The investigator will thoroughly interview you, the respondent, and any witnesses; they will also ask everyone they interview to provide relevant evidence and information, including documents, emails, texts, or social media communications. The investigator will assess and analyze the evidence and information provided by the parties and witnesses. This process can take weeks or months, depending on the complaint and availability of witnesses. If you're working with an advisor, they can help you prioritize your self-care during this time.

If any allegations involve conduct prohibited by the Department of Education federal regulations, the investigator will provide a draft report, along with relevant and related evidence, to both you and the respondent. You will have an opportunity to respond and provide feedback.

**Concluding the investigation:** In some cases, an investigator can make a decision about whether College code or policy was violated. In other cases—including any matter involving allegations of conduct prohibited by the Department of Education federal regulations—a hearing will be initiated.

**Hearing:** If a hearing occurs, an advisor and support person may accompany you. The way they may participate will be explained before the hearing. For hearings that involve conduct prohibited by the federal regulations, both you and the respondent must have advisors who will orally ask questions of the other party and of witnesses. In student conduct hearings that don't involve the federal regulations, questions are posed in writing and then asked by the hearing officer.

**Sanctions and disciplinary action:** If it is determined that code or policy was violated, sanctions for student respondents can include loss of privileges, an ongoing no contact directive, and/or disciplinary probation. For matters that go to a hearing, suspension and dismissal are also possible sanctions. Corrective or disciplinary action for employee

respondents can range from coaching and education to changes in work assignment to termination of employment.

**Appeals:** After findings are issued in a student conduct matter, you and the respondent both have the option to request administrative review, which is also referred to as an appeal. In employee matters involving the Department of Education federal regulations, you and the respondent will also have the opportunity to appeal the decision.