

Equity & Human Rights Services Annual Report on the Non-Discrimination/Harassment Policy May 1, 2019 to April 30, 2020

This Annual Report is prepared by EHRS as per the *Non-Discrimination/Harassment Policy, (MAPP 1.35), section 12*. Its focus is on the harassment and discrimination work conducted by the office of Equity & Human Rights Services and the office of the Associate Vice-President, Human Resources. ¹

Equity & Human Rights Services (EHRS) is available to all members of Western’s community. EHRS facilitates the development, implementation and ongoing management/coordination of Western’s policies and programs relating to discrimination and harassment. Western’s policies are in compliance with the Ontario Human Rights Code and Occupational Health and Safety Act.

EHRS offers the following services:

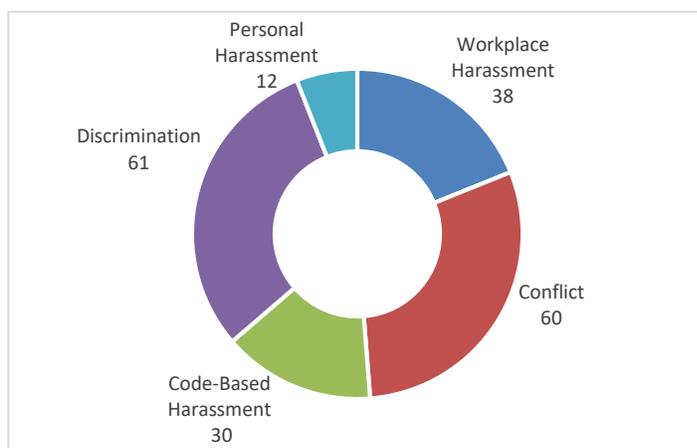
- Confidential consultation, support, and information available to all Western students, staff, faculty and postdoctoral scholars
- Support, education and advice to Administrative leaders and Academic leaders
- Culture and climate reviews, as appropriate
- Training and presentations

Contacts

Over the past academic year, EHRS recorded a total of **352** contacts. **170** of these were from individuals who believed they had been subjected to, or had witnessed behaviour that may fall under the Policy. The remaining contacts were: requests for assistance from **77** Academic or Administrative Leaders (i.e., those with the authority and responsibility to address concerns); requests for information and/or assistance by **66** third-parties (often friends, coworkers or persons in non-authority roles seeking assistance to support others); and, **39** general requests for information.

Individual Contacts

The chart on the right and Table 1 on the following page show the number of consultations by issue for the **170** individuals who contacted EHRS in relation to a concern, or concerns, they were directly experiencing.



¹ Visit the Equity & Human Rights Services website for information about other services available.

It is common for an individual to raise several concerns during a consultation or over a course of meetings. In addition to concerns of harassment and discrimination, individuals frequently report other types of conflict which do not fall within the scope of the Policy and are better described as interpersonal issues, misunderstandings about role or job clarity, challenges with organizational structure, etc. EHRs recognizes that unresolved conflict(s) can affect the work and academic settings. In an effort to assist, EHRs often works with and/or refers to Western’s network of support services.

If the matter falls within the scope of the Non-Discrimination/Harassment Policy, individuals are given the option to request alternate resolution or to file a formal complaint and request investigation. It is also common for individuals, after sharing their concerns and seeking advice from EHRs, to attempt to resolve the situation themselves.

Table 2 displays the role at Western of individuals contacting our office. Equity & Human Rights Services supports all members of Western - students, staff and faculty. We also receive inquiries from alumni, affiliated colleges, and community members and we endeavor to make proper referrals for these individuals.

Table 1: Code-Based Discrimination and Harassment Grounds

Grounds	Number
Religion (incl. accommodation)	2
Family	8
Sexual Orientation	3
Gender Identity / Expression	7
Disability (incl. accommodation)	22
Race	21
Sex (harassment and discrimination)	34

Table 2: Individual Consultations - Role at Western

Role	Number
Undergraduate	49
Graduate	26
Faculty	25
Staff	58
Other	12
Total	170

EHRs offered some form of alternate resolution in relation to **15** matters. Alternate resolution includes mediations, facilitations, educational sanctions and EHRs-led inquiries to support the proper application of the Policy.

The office of the Associate Vice-President (Human Resources) receives and administers formal complaints. This past year, **36** complaints were received and **17** investigated (**6** are on-going) under the Non-Discrimination and Harassment Policy. **13** complaints were alternatively resolved before investigation.

Academic and Administrative Leader Support

Western’s Policy requires Academic and Administrative Leaders to report any incidents which **may be** related to harassment and discrimination to EHRs. Leaders are also required to involve EHRs in any unit-based attempts at resolving or mediating potential harassment.

Table 3 and **Table 3A** display the Code-Based and non-Code-Based issues reported by the **77** Academic and Administrative Leaders over the past year. Understanding the issues that leaders are facing assists our office in designing and delivering support and resources.

Table 3: Code-Based Grounds

Grounds	Number
Religion (incl. accommodation)	2
Family	2
Sexual Orientation	4
Gender Identity / Expression	3
Disability (incl. accommodation)	9
Race	14
Sex (harassment and discrimination)	21

Table 3A: Non-Code-Based Discrimination and Harassment Grounds

Non-Code-Based Issues	Number
Workplace Harassment	14
Conflict	14
Personal Harassment	6
Other	7

A note regarding safety and domestic violence

Where a concern is shared with EHRIS that suggests potential violence or threats to individuals’ safety, EHRIS refers or reports the concern to Campus Police (CCPS). EHRIS referred to, or contacted, CCPS on **7** occasions this past year. EHRIS also assisted in **2** matters of domestic violence ensuring proper advice and referrals.

Education and Outreach

EHRIS conducts workshops, lends materials, and engages outreach to colleagues and groups across campus. This year, EHRIS provided education and training to over **2000** Western members. We routinely provide training related to the Non-Discrimination and Harassment Policy (and rights and responsibilities thereunder) to staff, faculty and leaders, and students (undergraduate and graduate) through workshops, presentations to departments, classes or lectures, and student groups. Workshops are tailored for each audience.

EHRIS also offers “lunch and learns” throughout the year on a variety of equity-related topics. These feature speakers from Western or the local London community in an effort to showcase local knowledge and supports. This year’s lunch and learns included presentations on sexual harassment, accessibility, as well as concepts related to power, privilege and inclusion in the workplace.

We also began a partnership with Western’s Centre on Research on Violence Against Women and Children to offer Make it Our Business, a program designed to address domestic violence in the workplace. To date, three 3-hour intensive sessions have been offered to academic and administrative leaders. Over the next year, we plan to offer more leader sessions, as well as one-hour sessions open to all employees.

EHRIS is also proud to coordinate Western’s annual involvement in the London Pride Festival.

Trends and Highlights

This academic year began as usual. However, like most of the world, it ended under unusual circumstances due to the COVID pandemic. The pandemic has had implications for not only the work of this office, but for equity-related matters more generally. We saw contacts with our office drop when Western (and Canada) moved to a largely virtual setting in March of 2020. During March, 14 people contacted our office and, in April, there were only 4 contacts. Our numbers would usually be in the

range of 30-40 contacts during these months. We suspect people were simply trying to cope with immediate needs related to shifting work and learning to a virtual space, as well as caring for loved ones and dealing with the pandemic's health-related concerns. Our office is concerned about the impacts that COVID has had on individuals' safety and human rights and [a statement about these concerns](#) was released in April 2020.

COVID has highlighted accessibility and accommodation concerns. In some ways, we saw an increase in accessibility as work was adapted to support flex time and at-home tasks. Classes, meetings and workshops moved online in a rapid pace and there are countless examples of creative problem solving that resulted in increased accessibility. However, gaps still remained and many families juggled jobs and at-home teaching responsibilities. Then, as places and services began to reopen, other accessibility challenges emerged, particularly where in-person services were limited and/or physical access to areas was restricted. We are reminded of the importance of planning with accessibility and inclusion in mind, while also ensuring room to meet individuals' needs through a creative and flexible accommodation process. Thus, one of the themes we would like to highlight is a need for more awareness, education and consultation around the duty to accommodate. This includes accommodation for a wide-range of Code-based grounds including disability, family status and marital status. As we plan for an uncertain future (and a possible second wave of COVID in the fall), being mindful and adhering to the laws relating to accommodation will be vital to support members of our community.

In October 2019, a series of racial incidents sparked significant conversations, safety concerns, and ultimately resulted in the formation of an Anti-Racism Working Group. The Director of Equity & Human Rights Services served on that group. While the working group's report was anticipated by the end of the academic year, its release was delayed until June due to the pandemic. Equity & Human Rights Services firmly supports, and is committed to, the recommendations made in the [President's Anti-Racism Working Group Final Report](#).

Conclusion

Events over the past year have given our office significant pause and reflection. Our office is entrusted by each person who comes to us seeking advice and support. We do not take this responsibility lightly. We recognize that there is more that can be done, and in fact, *needs to be done* if we are to create a campus where each member feels respected and included.

Discussions about systemic racism and oppression have (again) reminded us that inequities have existed, and continue to exist, on our campus. The realities of racism, and specifically, anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism, are not new and should not surprise anyone. However, this year has brought an urgency and a challenge to Western to truly engage in critical self-reflection and participate in addressing inequities. Equity & Human Rights Services looks forward to co-creating a truly equitable and inclusive campus with all campus partners and members.

As we do each year, we wish to express our sincere appreciation to all those who have entrusted us with their experiences and sought our assistance toward resolving matters. We also wish to thank our campus partners who have long-supported and practiced equity and inclusion.

For further information please contact:

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Western University sits on traditional territory. Equity & Human Rights Services acknowledges the Attawandaran (Neutral) peoples who settled the Southwestern Ontario region alongside the Algonquin and Haudenosaunee people, as well as the three other longstanding Indigenous groups of this region: the Anishinaabe Peoples, the Haudenosaunee Peoples and the Leni-Lunaape People.