

Equity & Human Rights Services Annual Report on the Non-Discrimination/Harassment Policy May 1, 2020 to April 30, 2021

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:

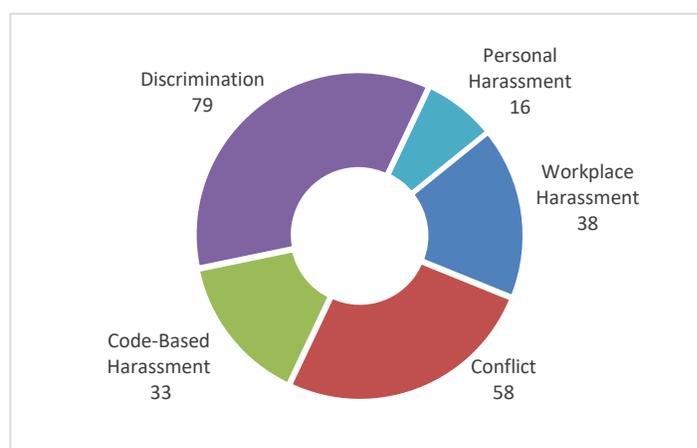
- Confidential consultation, support, and information available to all Western students, staff, faculty and postdoctoral scholars
- Support, education and advice to Administrative leaders and Academic leaders
- Culture and climate reviews, as appropriate
- Training and presentations

Contacts

Over the past academic year, EHRS recorded a total of **429** contacts. **176** 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 **87** Academic or Administrative Leaders (i.e., those with the authority and responsibility to address concerns); requests for information and/or assistance by **86** third-parties (often friends, coworkers or persons in non-authority roles seeking assistance to support others); and **80** 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 **176** individuals who contacted EHRS in relation to a concern, or concerns, they were directly experiencing.



¹ Visit the Equity & Human Rights Services website (www.uwo.ca/equity) for more information

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	4
Sexual Orientation	7
Gender Identity / Expression	6
Disability (incl. accommodation)	30
Race	43
Sex (harassment and discrimination)	25

Table 2: Individual Consultations - Role at Western

Role	Number
Undergraduate	48
Graduate	38
Faculty	28
Staff	40
Other	22
Total	176

EHRS offered some form of alternate resolution in relation to **11** 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, 37 complaints were received and 36 investigated (11 are ongoing as at May 2021) under the Non-Discrimination and Harassment Policy. One complaint was 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 **87** 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)	3
Family	2
Sexual Orientation	2
Gender Identity / Expression	1
Disability (incl. accommodation)	10
Race	19
Sex (harassment and discrimination)	20

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

Non-Code-Based Issues	Number
Workplace Harassment	25
Conflict	17
Personal Harassment	6
Other	10

A note regarding safety and domestic violence

Where a concern is shared with EHRs that suggests potential violence or threats to individuals’ safety, EHRs refers or reports the concern to Campus Safety and Emergency Services (formerly, CCPS). EHRs referred to, or contacted, CSES on **7** occasions this past year.

Online Reporting Form

In late February 2021, EHRs launched an online reporting form. This form is available to any person in order to support the reporting of discrimination and/or harassment. There is the option to report anonymously. From February until the end of the reporting period (April 30, 2021), a total of **32** online reports were made. **16** of these were anonymous.

The reporting form allows individuals to identify if they were directly affected by discrimination/harassment or if they were a witness to an incident or concern. Of the 32 reports, 22 were “direct” reports while 10 were from “witnesses”. These numbers are included in discussion about Contacts on page 1 as “individuals and “third-parties”, respectively.

The matters of concern reported by those directly affected are included in the summary shown in Table 1.

Education and Outreach

EHRs conducts workshops, lends materials, and engages outreach to colleagues and groups across campus. This year, EHRs 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 groups. We also provide workshops and training to support learning needs related to employment equity, accessibility and anti-oppression.

We continue to partner 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. Three-hour intensive workshops are offered to academic and administrative leaders and one-hour workshops are offered to employees. We look forward to continuing this partnerships and expanding Western’s resources related to domestic and intimate partner violence in order to support safety in the workplace.

EHRS is also pleased to coordinate Western's annual involvement in the London Pride Festival. The 2020 Pride festival was virtual. Campus members were encouraged to submit photos and videos and show their 'virtual Pride'. Several campus groups also hosted online events.

Trends and Highlights

All of EHRS' services were offered virtually this reporting year. This included client support and the delivery of workshops and trainings. We saw no impact to our work volume and in fact, our total contacts increased by 22% over the 2019/20 reporting year, bringing us back to pre-pandemic volume. Our workshops, although all were shifted to a virtual format, remained in high-demand and we were able to reach out across campus to a variety of staff, student, faculty and leaders.

Western had begun discussions regarding anti-Black racism through the formation of an Anti-Racism Working Group in early 2020 and these discussions continued until the working group released its report in May 2020. That reportⁱ and its recommendations garnered considerable discussion at Western. Indeed, the deaths of George Floyd, Regis Korchinski-Paquet, and other Black and racialized people by police violence, along with a strong social movement and response led by Black Lives Matter contributed to an increased number of individuals reporting concerns specific to racial discrimination and harassment. We worked closely with the University Students' Council's Ethnocultural Services team to create the aforementioned online reporting tool. EHRS also lent support to Western's anti-racism initiatives and we look forward to working with Western's inaugural Associate Vice-President, Equity, Diversity and Inclusionⁱⁱ.

We note that there is increasing attention being given to accessibility issues. Much of this due to a comprehensive review sponsored by Student Experience that highlighted accessibility-related challenges that students have facedⁱⁱⁱ. It is clear that a campus-wide approach to accessibility is required. EHRS wishes to highlight the increased volume of individual concerns related, most often, to challenges in receiving accommodations for disabilities. We again call for a need for more awareness, consultation and education about the duty and procedures for implementing accommodations, particularly among those who provide academic counselling and support (in the case of students) and workplace leadership (in the case of employees). At an institutional level, accessibility must become forefront in decisions made at every level and within every academic and administrative portfolio. Discussions have begun in this regard already and we appreciate all those who have made significant efforts, most specifically those students and employees who have shared their experiences (over many years), in order for Western to understand what challenges exist^{iv}.

Conclusion

Over the past year, our office has been struck at the uncertainty that seems to exist around Western's supports and procedures for non-discrimination and harassment. What underpins this is likely complex and multi-layered but it is nevertheless troubling. As the campus began to shift intense focus onto "EDI", some voiced that the campus was without dedicated supports and resources. In fact, EHRS has always been here – for well over 20 years – offering consultation and advice to individuals and leaders and supporting Western more broadly in its equity, accessibility and diversity efforts. While our office's work related to employment equity and accessibility are not the subject of this report, it is important to acknowledge both as they complement efforts being made to address harassment and discrimination^v.

Equity & Human Rights Services' wholeheartedly welcomes the increased focus and resources that are being given to EDI, anti-oppression and decolonization efforts at Western. This is a time of exceptional momentum. Our campus, and indeed our broader community and nation, are paying attention and seeking to learn and engage in change. Each member of Western's community has the right to learn,

work and live in an environment free of harassment and discrimination. Our vision is a campus where each member truly belongs.

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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equity@uwo.ca (for consultation and advice)
diversity@uwo.ca (for resources/training)
www.westernu.ca/equity

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.

ⁱ <https://president.uwo.ca/pdf/arwg-final-report-to-president-shepard-fnl.pdf>

ⁱⁱ <https://news.westernu.ca/2021/07/opiyo-oloya-to-lead-equity-work/>

ⁱⁱⁱ https://studentexperience.uwo.ca/student_experience/external_reviews/ASE_Memo_Campus_ExternalReview-final.pdf

^{iv} <https://news.westernu.ca/2021/03/western-adopts-accessibility-recommendations/>

^v <https://www.uwo.ca/equity/diversity/index.html>; <https://www.accessibility.uwo.ca/>