

Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Policy

Responsible Area: Human Resources

Effective Date: 11/19/2025

Revision Date: N/A

Policy Owner: Jessica Harrison

Title: Director of Human Resources

Purpose

The University of Alabama System Office (the “UA System Office”) is committed to compliance with all applicable laws regarding the concept and practice of equal opportunity and non-discrimination (including anti-retaliation and reasonable accommodation) in all aspects of its employment practices and educational programs and activities.

Policy

Equal Opportunity

The UA System Office provides equal opportunity in education and employment for all qualified persons regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, genetic or family medical history information, disability, protected veteran status, or any other legally protected basis. The UA System Office makes employment decisions based only on individuals' performance and qualifications related to valid job-related requirements. The UA System Office does not discriminate on the basis of physical or mental disabilities or an individual's status as a disabled veteran or any other protected veteran with regard to application for employment or any terms or conditions of employment, provided the individual is qualified, with or without reasonable accommodations, to perform the essential functions of the job.

Non-Discrimination Notice

The UA System Office complies with applicable laws prohibiting protected class discrimination or harassment and related retaliation, including but not limited to Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and applicable regulations, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Vietnam Era Veterans' Adjustment Assistance Act, as amended by the Jobs for Veterans Act of 2002 (VEVRAA), the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA), the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, the Family and Medical Leave Act, and the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008. Consistent with those laws and the UA System Office's Title IX and Sexual Misconduct Policy, Harassment Policy, and other applicable policies, the UA System Office prohibits discrimination on the basis of genetic or family medical history information, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, protected veteran status, or any other legally protected basis in terms, conditions or privileges of employment and its programs and services.

These prohibitions against discrimination apply to recruitment; application; selection; hiring; appointment; transfer; demotion; promotion; tenure; job assignment; classification; compensation; benefits; leaves of absence; sick leave or any other leave; job training and development; tuition assistance; participation in UA System Office sponsored educational, social, and recreational programs and activities; discharge; layoff; and/or any other term, condition, or privilege of employment or education.

Inquiries or concerns related to protected class discrimination or harassment, sexual misconduct, or related retaliation may be directed to Beth Howard, Executive Director, in the University of Alabama Office of Equal Opportunity and Title

Non-discrimination in Health Care Programs/Activities

The UA System Office also complies with Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability in certain UA System Office health care programs and activities and the UA System Office's group health plans and wellness programs.

Anti-Retaliation

Retaliation is any adverse action that would dissuade a reasonable person from engaging in a legally protected activity, such as alleging Prohibited Conduct, harassment, or illegal discrimination; filing a complaint and/or assisting or participating in an investigation of such complaint; refusing to participate in any manner in a Title IX investigation, hearing, or other proceeding; opposing an allegation of Prohibited Conduct; or advocating for others' rights pursuant to this Policy or applicable law.

Disciplinary action separate from the original report of protected class harassment or discrimination may be taken based on a finding of responsibility of retaliation. An individual is protected from retaliation when there is a finding of not responsible/no policy violation based on the good faith allegations in the original report of protected class harassment or discrimination.

Examples of retaliatory actions include but are not limited to unjustified discipline, suspension, demotion, or termination in the employment context, or maliciously and purposefully interfering with, threatening, or damaging the academic or professional career of another individual before, during, or after the investigation and resolution of a report of conduct prohibited by this Policy.

The following actions do not constitute retaliation:

- Initiating an employee investigation/action against an individual for making a materially false statement in bad faith with regard to making a report or in the course of an investigation or proceeding, provided a determination regarding responsibility, alone, is not sufficient to conclude that any party has made a materially false statement in bad faith;
- The exercise of rights protected under the First Amendment (except that speech that amounts to intimidation, threats, or coercion for the purpose of chilling the exercise of a person's rights under UA System Office Policy is not protected);
- Mutual restrictions on contact between the parties;
- Advising the parties and participants in any proceeding of the consequences of making false statements;
- Warning the parties and witnesses that retaliation is prohibited and informing the parties and witnesses of the consequences of retaliating against another for exercising their rights;
- Warning the parties not to discuss or disseminate the allegations in a manner that constitutes retaliation or unlawful tortious conduct.

Reporting and Procedures

Reports of protected class discrimination or harassment, sexual misconduct, or related retaliation may be directed to the University of Alabama Office of Equal Opportunity and Title IX Programs, 2418 Capital Hall, Box 870259, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0300, (205) 348-5496 (Voice), (205) 348-5573 (TDD), or by email at titleix@ua.edu or eop@ua.edu. Reports will be processed pursuant to the applicable UA System Office Policy.

Individuals with Disabilities and Protected Veterans

To further ensure the UA System Office's commitment to equal employment opportunity, the UA System Office, as a federal contractor, complies with applicable laws, regulations, executive orders, and government directives. The UA System Office has taken and will continue to take, consistent with applicable laws, action in the employment context to recruit, employ, advance and not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities and protected veterans. The UA System Office's compliance with Federal laws should not be construed as a justification to extend a preference to any individual, select an individual, or adversely affect an individual's employment status, on the basis of that person's race, color, religion, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, genetic or family medical history information, disability, protected veteran status, or any other legally protected basis.

Review of Individuals with Disabilities Plan or Protected Veterans Plan

The UA System Office prepares annual plans for protected veterans and individuals with disabilities in accordance with applicable law. Those plans are available for inspection upon request and during regular business hours in the UA System Office Department of Human Resources.

Voluntary Self-Identification

To gather data necessary to report data and perform analysis required by applicable law in its Individuals with Disabilities Plan and Protected Veterans Plan, the UA System Office invites: (i) job applicants to voluntarily self-identify their disability status or protected veteran status at the pre-offer stage of the hiring process; (ii) job applicants to voluntarily self-identify their disability or veteran status at the post-offer stage of the hiring process; and (iii) employees to voluntarily self-identify their disability or protected veteran status post-employment.

Employees are also periodically reminded of the invitation to self-identify. Voluntary self-identification forms can be found under the Federal Reporting Data menu in isolved. The information is requested on a voluntary basis and will be used and kept confidential in accordance with Federal law. Refusal to provide this information will not subject any applicant or employee to any adverse treatment. The information is used solely for inclusion in the Plans; therefore, individuals who self-identify as having a disability who also require reasonable accommodations to apply or to perform the essential functions of their job should contact the UA System Office Department of Human Resources for additional information and/or for instructions on how to make a request for accommodations.

Reasonable Accommodations

Disability: The UA System Office makes reasonable accommodations to the known physical or mental impairments of an applicant or employee who is a qualified individual with a disability or is a qualified disabled veteran, unless such accommodations would impose an undue administrative or financial hardship on the operation of UA System Office's business or fundamentally alter the UA System Office's program and services. The UA System Office will not deny employment opportunities based on its need to make a reasonable accommodation to such an individual's physical or mental impairment. However, per the Americans with Disabilities Act, an employee must be able to perform the essential job functions of the job, with or without an accommodation. Contact the UA System Office Department of Human Resources for additional information and/or for instructions on how to make a request for accommodations.

Pregnancy: Eligible staff who are pregnant or have pregnancy-related conditions may be reasonably accommodated, including approved leave. Contact the UA System Office Department of Human Resources for additional information regarding pregnancy accommodations that may be available.

Religious Beliefs: The UA System Office also provides reasonable accommodations for sincerely held religious beliefs or practices of employees and applicants unless doing so would create an undue hardship on the conduct of UA System Office's business or operations, resulting in more than a minimal cost to the operations of the UA System Office's business. Contact the UA System Office Department of Human Resources for additional information and/or for instructions on how to make a request for accommodations.

Responsibility for Implementation

The UA System Office Department of Human Resources has been designated to oversee implementation of the UA System Office's equal opportunity and non-discrimination programs. However, every employee and community member is urged to comply with this Policy.

Scope

This policy applies to staff, contractors, and volunteers.