

# Discrimination and Harassment Policy

**Category:** Human Resources

**Approval:** Board of Governors

**Responsibility:** Vice-President, Human Resources

**Date:** December 2, 2016; revised March 28, 2025

## Part I. Discrimination & Harassment Policy

### Table of Contents

1. The Ontario Human Rights Code (“The Code”)
2. Trent’s Commitment
3. Protected Grounds
4. Coverage
5. Academic Freedom
6. No Limitation on Collective Agreement
7. Definitions

- 7.1 Discrimination (General)

- 7.2 Constructive Discrimination

- 7.3 Systemic Discrimination

- 7.4 Harassment (General)

- 7.5 Sexual Harassment

8. Reprisal
9. Frivolous or Vexatious Complaints
10. Prevention, Education and Awareness
11. Resolution Procedures
12. Roles and Responsibilities
13. Review of Policy

1. The Ontario Human Rights Code (“The Code”)

Under the Code, every person has the right to freedom from discrimination and harassment based on specified protected grounds. Trent University prohibits any form of discrimination and harassment that constitutes a violation of a person’s rights under the terms of this Policy on Discrimination and Harassment (“the Policy”) and the Code. This Policy affirms Trent University’s commitment to compliance with the Code.

2. Trent’s Commitment

Trent University is firmly committed to ensuring awareness of rights and responsibilities under this Policy and to the goal of eliminating discriminatory barriers. Indispensable to an institution that values, supports and upholds the central role of equality, access and respect for its faculty, students and staff, is an

environment that is free of discrimination and harassment. Trent University is fundamentally committed to the promotion of free inquiry and expression, and strives to provide a working, learning and an on-campus residential environment that is supportive of study, scholarship, teaching and research while ensuring a safe, inclusive, and respectful space for all individuals. Trent University acknowledges and promotes individuals' freedom to express diverse viewpoints; however, this does not extend to expression that is, or incites racism, hate, discrimination, harassment or violence against any person or group based on any Code-protected characteristic.

### **3. Protected Grounds**

Consistent with the Code, this Policy prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of the following grounds as defined by the Code and precedents established through jurisprudence:

- Age
- Ancestry
- Citizenship
- Place of Origin
- Race
- Colour
- Creed (religion)
- Disability
- Ethnic origin
- Family status
- Gender Identity/Expression
- Marital Status (married, single, widowed, divorced, separated or living in a conjugal relationship outside of marriage, whether in a same sex or opposite sex relationship)
- Receipt of public assistance (in housing only)
- Record of offences (in employment only)
- Sex (including sexual harassment, pregnancy and breastfeeding)
- Sexual orientation

This policy prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of all forms of racism and hate, including but not limited to anti-Indigenous racism, anti-Black racism, antisemitism, and Islamophobia.

Discrimination is often multi-dimensional with cumulative impacts. A complaint of discrimination or harassment may be based on multiple grounds (e.g., age and disability), and/or overlapping grounds (e.g., race and ethnic origin). Members of the Trent University community are also protected against discrimination and harassment due to association or relationship with a person identified by one of the protected grounds, as well as due to the perception that a protected ground applies (for example, perception that a person has a mental disability).

### **4. Coverage**

This Policy applies to all members of the Trent University community including:

- Employees (full-time, part-time, sessional, contract, temporary, casual and otherwise);
- Students (full-time and part-time);
- Members of the Board of Governors, and its advisory and ad hoc

committees;

- Volunteers, coaches, interns and contractors who provide products, services or research, while on campus;
- Individuals who are located on campus while employed by another organization (e.g., employees of faculty/employee/student unions).
- Visitors, including guest speakers.

This Policy and its complaint procedures will apply to members of the Trent community in situations with a substantial connection to the University including those occurring:

- on University property;
- with the use of Trent's computer and telecommunications network, and in Trent or private vehicles being used for University business or for travelling between work and study locations;
- at a University sponsored event including but not limited to off-site delivery and field trips.

Incidents occurring off campus or through electronic means outside the University network which have no or little likelihood of impact on the University work, study or on-campus residential environment generally are outside the jurisdiction of this Policy and normally would be pursued through the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario, police services, private legal action or other processes.

Students on placement are covered by this Policy and the Code. Employees of institutions that provide placements for Trent students (e.g. schools, hospitals) are not covered by this Policy. If an incident occurs on placement (including those outside Ontario and Canada), University representatives will engage in discussions with the student(s) and placement agency to take reasonable steps to address complaints of discrimination and harassment.

All contractual relationships entered into by the University will be governed by a standard clause stating the contractors must comply with the Code and relevant University policies.

## **5. Academic Freedom**

Academic freedom is a fundamental tenet of University life and is a condition of employment expressly extended to academic employee groups pursuant to the terms of their respective collective agreements. Academic freedom includes the right to question and challenge traditional norms, and the freedom to define research questions, to pursue answers to those questions by way of unrestricted but proper investigative techniques and to disseminate the knowledge gained to students, academic colleagues and society as a whole. Academic freedom does not require neutrality on the part of the individual. Rather, academic freedom makes commitment possible. Academic freedom carries with it the duty to use that freedom in a manner consistent with the scholarly obligation to base research and teaching on an honest search for knowledge. The exercise of academic freedom may challenge and/or offend the ideas, sensibilities and beliefs of others. However, academic freedom does not confer immunity from the terms of this Policy.

## **6. No Limitation on Collective Agreement**

Nothing in this Policy shall limit or amend the provisions of collective agreements between Trent University and collective bargaining units including provisions

related to academic freedom.

## **7. Definitions**

### **7.1 Discrimination (General)**

Any form of unequal treatment based on one or more prohibited grounds, whether imposing extra burdens or denying benefits. It may be intentional or unintentional. Discrimination may take obvious forms or it may occur in very subtle ways. Where there are many factors affecting a decision or action, if discrimination is one factor, it is a violation of the Code and, therefore, this Policy. It is not discrimination or a contravention of this Policy to plan, advertise, adopt or implement a program that has as its objective the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups identified by the protected grounds.

### **7.2 Constructive Discrimination**

Where a requirement, qualification or factor exists that is not discrimination on a prohibited ground but that results in the exclusion, restriction or preference of a group of persons who are identified by a prohibited ground of discrimination except where the requirement, qualification or factor is reasonable and bona fide in the circumstances.

### **7.3 Systemic Discrimination**

Where patterns of behaviour, policies or practices which are part of an organization's structure unintentionally create or perpetuate disadvantage for a group of persons who are identified by a prohibited ground of discrimination.

### **7.4 Harassment (General)**

A course of vexatious comment or conduct that is based on a protected ground and that is known, or ought to be known, to be unwelcome. A single egregious incident may constitute harassment.

### **7.5 Sexual Harassment**

A form of harassment involving comment or conduct of a sexual nature that is known, or ought to be known, to be unwelcome where:

- submission to such comment/conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, academic status, or academic accreditation; or
- submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment, or for academic performance, status or accreditation decisions affecting such individual; or
- such conduct interferes with an individual's work or academic performance; or
- such conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or academic environment.

Sexual harassment can include but is not limited to: sexual assault or threats of a sexual nature; unwelcome sexual advances, invitations or requests; demands for sexual favours; innuendos, taunting or degrading words about a person's body, appearance or gender/sexual orientation; leering; sexually derogatory or offensive remarks about an individual; inquiries or comments about a person's sex life; and displays of degrading or offensive sexual material including sexual jokes.

## **8. Reprisal**

Every individual has the right to raise an issue or complaint of discrimination or harassment, and to participate or cooperate in any role under the Policy and/or procedures, without fear of retaliation or reprisal. Retaliation or reprisals will be treated as harassment and/or discrimination.

### **9. Frivolous or Vexatious Complaints**

The University retains the right not to proceed where there is sufficient evidence that a complaint is frivolous or vexatious, and, in such cases, may impose sanctions and remedies that it deems appropriate.

### **10. Prevention, Education and Awareness**

Trent University is committed to an education and training strategy to promote widespread understanding about what constitutes harassment and discrimination and why in their many forms they can be harmful to individuals and the Trent community. This Policy provides the conceptual framework for related educational initiatives in areas such as:

- employment equity;
- disability accommodation;
- community engagement;
- diversity management; and
- other areas that could assist in building a culture of respect.

Trent University will promote awareness of this Policy by:

- making the policy available to existing and new members of the University;
- offering training to persons with management, supervision, leadership and collegial decision-making responsibilities; and
- conducting on-going awareness campaigns.

### **11. Resolution Procedures**

Trent University shall provide both informal and formal mechanisms to address issues that fall within the jurisdiction of this Policy. These mechanisms are outlined in the Resolution Procedures (“Procedures”) to this Policy.

### **12. Roles and Responsibilities**

All members of the Trent University community are expected to refrain from any form of harassment and discrimination, and co-operate in any resolution procedure if necessary. Exception: Students have the right not to participate in any investigation into sexual violence. Persons in positions of authority have the additional responsibility to respond to allegations of discrimination or harassment in an appropriate and timely manner, consistent with this Policy.

### **13. Review of Policy**

This Policy may be reviewed periodically. Any changes to the Policy must be consistent with prevailing collective agreements, applicable legislation and with the Code (which prevails over all university policies and collective agreements).

## **Part II. Resolution Procedures**

### **Table of Contents**

- 1. Complaints and Resolutions Process**
  - 1.1 General Procedures**
  - 1.2 Relevant Parties to a Complaint**
  - 1.3 Early Communication Encouraged**
  - 1.4 Exceptions**
  - 1.5 Resolution Options**
- 2. Equity and Human Rights Office**
  - 2.1 Role in the Complaints Process**
  - 2.2 Confidentiality**
- 3. Timing for Filing a Complaint**
  - 3.1 Deadline to File a Complaint**
  - 3.2 Exception**
- 4. Representation**
  - 4.1 Supportive Persons**
  - 4.2 Bargaining Agent Notification and Representation**
  - 4.3 Use of Independent Legal Counsel**
- 5. Other Issues in The Complaints Process**
  - 5.1 Multiple Complaints**
  - 5.2 Interim Measures**
  - 5.3 Reprisal (General)**
  - 5.4 Frivolous or Vexatious Complaints**
  - 5.5 Alternative Proceedings**
  - 5.6 Withdrawal**

**5.7 Due Diligence**

**5.8 Constructive/Systemic Discrimination/Issues of Public Interest**

**6. Initiating a Complaint**

**6.1 Responsibilities of the Parties**

**6.2 Complaint to be Made in Writing**

**7. Complaint Process**

**7.1 Assessment by the Equity and Human Rights Office**

**7.2 Notification to Respondent**

**8. Informal Resolution**

**8.1 Request for Informal Resolution**

**8.2 Willingness to Participate**

**8.3 Facilitating Agreement**

**8.4 Appointment of an Independent Mediator**

**8.5 Withdrawal From Informal Resolution**

**8.6 Three Weeks to Conclude Informal Resolution**

**8.7 Extension of Time**

**8.8 Confidentiality of Informal Resolution Process**

**8.9 Informal Process and Investigation**

**9. Formal Investigation**

**9.1 Referral by Equity and Human Rights Office**

**9.2 Situations Involving Multiple Respondents**

**9.3 Investigation Procedure**

**9.4 Submissions to the Investigator**

**9.5 Equity and Human Rights Office Availability**

**9.6 Extent of Investigator's Scope**

## **9.7 Time for Completion of Investigation**

## **9.8 Investigator's Report**

## **9.9 Investigator's Notes Maintained in Equity and Human Rights Office**

## **9.10 Vice-President's Review and Decision**

## **9.11 Extension of Timelines**

## **10.0 Limited Appeal of Outcome of Investigation**

### **10.1 Appeal on Grounds of Procedural Error or New Evidence**

### **10.2 Review of Appeal**

### **10.3 Extension of Timelines**

## **11. Human Rights Code/Grievances**

### **11.1 No Bar to Exercise of Rights Outside the Policy**

### **11.2 Cessation of Policy Resolution Process**

## **12. Remedies and Sanctions**

### **12.1 Remedies**

### **12.2 Sanctions**

### **12.3 Criteria Considered**

## **13. Records**

### **13.1 Time for Retaining Records**

### **13.2 Use of Non-Identifiable Statistical Information**

## **1. Complaints and Resolutions Process**

### **1.1 General Procedures**

It is the University's intention that complaints related to protected grounds will be resolved in a respectful and timely manner. However, where a situation cannot be resolved by speaking with the relevant party(ies), the objective of resolution procedures is to provide a mechanism to allow human rights issues to be brought to the attention of the University and addressed. The following resolution processes are available to members of the University community who initiate human rights complaint(s):

- informal resolution;

- formal investigation;
- grievance procedures (unionized employees);
- Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (“HRTTO”).

### **1.2 Relevant Parties to a Complaint**

The relevant parties to a complaint under this policy are the complainant(s) and the respondent(s). The complainant(s) is the party(ies) initiating the complaint and who is seeking redress for a perceived injury or wrong. The respondent(s) is the party(ies) named by the complainant(s) as having committed the perceived injury or wrong and who is required to answer to the complaint.

### **1.3 Early Communication Encouraged**

Any person who feels that they have been harassed or discriminated against is encouraged to initiate discussion(s) with the person(s) whose action gave rise to the issue. This allows an opportunity for the complainant(s) to inform the respondent(s) of the nature of the distress experienced and the remedy being sought, and an opportunity for response and resolution of the issue(s) in question. Individuals are strongly encouraged to explain to the offending party(ies) what they believe to be the negative impact of a decision, policy, behaviour, or unwelcome conduct but are not obliged to do so. Each situation should be assessed and considered based on its unique facts and circumstances.

### **1.4 Exceptions**

If an individual believes that addressing the offending party(ies) could lead to escalation of discrimination and/or harassment, or create safety risks, or where a power differential limits an individual’s ability to express concerns, the individual may choose to not interact directly.

### **1.5 Resolution Options**

In the event that a complaint situation cannot be resolved by communication between parties directly, a request may be made to the Human Rights Advisor for information about making a complaint under these Procedures.

Where alternative mechanisms are available and their application is mandated by legislation or another University policy (e.g.: complaint process under Trent’s Annual Access Plan for persons with disabilities; Ontario Teachers’ Federation guidelines regarding harassment complaints that arise during practicum placements for students in programs in the School of Education), individuals should pursue resolution through those measures, prior to accessing these Procedures. Nothing in these Procedures or the Policy on Discrimination and Harassment prohibits an employee represented by a bargaining agent from pursuing their rights under the applicable collective agreement or otherwise in accordance with the law.

## **2. Equity and Human Rights Office**

## **2.1 Role in the Complaints Process**

The Human Rights Advisor is available to any member of the Trent University community to assist and provide individuals and groups with information about the Policy, Procedures and other human rights matters. The Human Rights Advisor's role is not to act as an advocate for either the complainant(s) or the respondent(s) nor to provide legal advice. The Human Rights Advisor is charged with:

- Helping the parties understand and access the Policy and Procedures.
- Reviewing complaints or potential complaints under the Policy to determine if they properly fall within the scope of the Policy.
- Working with the party(ies), if so requested, to explore early resolution options through voluntary informal resolution either directly and/or in securing an independent mediator (internal or external).
- Acting as an investigator in a complaint under the Procedures.

## **2.2 Confidentiality**

Any and all oral and/or written communications with the Equity and Human Rights Office are confidential and cannot be shared with any other party(ies) without written consent from both the complainant(s) and respondent(s). The University and all parties to a complaint will treat all information as confidential, subject to the following exceptions: where disclosure is required to investigate and/or resolve a complaint consistent with the Policy and Procedure; or where disclosure is to the complainant's or respondent's union; or where otherwise required by law or under Trent's Campus Violence & Harassment Policy.

## **3. Timing for Filing a complaint**

### **3.1 Deadline to File a complaint**

Complainants are expected to file their complaint as soon as possible after the incident(s) giving rise to the complaint has occurred. Subject to [3.2](#), a complaint that is filed more than five (5) months after the last incident giving rise to the complaint will not be processed.

### **3.2 Exception**

A complaint may be initiated beyond five (5) months in circumstances where the delay was incurred in good faith and no substantial prejudice exists such that proceeding with the complaint would deprive the respondent(s) of a fair opportunity to respond to the complaint.

## **4. Representation**

### **4.1 Supportive Persons**

Complainants and respondents may bring a "supportive person" (e.g., colleague, student representative, parent/guardian, University counselor) to any meetings through the proceedings. Supportive persons are required to uphold confidentiality and are not permitted to intervene and/or disrupt the process.

## **4.2 Bargaining Agent Notification and Representation**

A complainant or respondent who is a member of a collective bargaining unit is encouraged to consult with their bargaining agent about a complaint. If an investigation has not yet been initiated, the bargaining agent shall accompany the member in any meetings or related proceedings under this policy unless the member requests otherwise. If an investigation has been initiated, the bargaining agent shall accompany the member in any meetings or related proceedings under this policy.

Where a respondent is a member of a bargaining unit, the union shall be notified that a complaint has been filed against the member. The notice shall not contain any details other than the date of the complaint, and the respondent's identity. The respondent will be advised of their right to have all information related to the complaint shared with their union and to seek assistance and counsel respecting their rights under their respective collective agreement(s).

Where a respondent is a member of a bargaining unit, the Human Rights Advisor shall provide the bargaining agent with notice when a complaint is filed, and shall provide the bargaining agent with a copy of the investigation report when it is distributed.

## **4.3 Use of Independent Legal Counsel**

A complainant or respondent may choose to seek independent counsel or advice at their own expense. Legal counsel (for non-unionized employees) may attend meetings as supportive persons but cannot act as legal representatives.

## **5. Other Issues in the Complaints Process**

### **5.1 Multiple Complaints**

Two or more complaints alleging a violation of the Policy by the same respondent, or having facts in common, may be dealt with in the same proceeding, at the discretion of the decision-maker.

### **5.2 Interim Measures**

In instances where, in the opinion of the decision-maker, there is clear and convincing evidence of a threat to personal health and safety, or to the ability to carry out duties and responsibilities, the University will separate the complainant(s) and respondent(s) in order to stabilize the situation before a resolution procedure is initiated and/or concluded. Other interim measures include, but are not limited to, temporary transfers or class schedule adjustments, enhanced security measures, provision of access to support services, and in exceptional circumstances and where appropriate temporary paid leaves for parties who are employees. Where such measures are taken, a timeframe for review of the interim measures will be established and communicated to the complainant(s) and respondent(s) and, in such cases, where either the respondent(s) or the complainant(s) is a member of a bargaining unit, their respective bargaining agent shall be advised of the action taken. Any interim

measure taken shall be in accordance with the applicable collective agreements.

### **5.3 Reprisal (General)**

Every individual has the right to file a complaint of discrimination or harassment, and to participate in any role under the Policy and Procedures, without fear of retaliation or reprisal. Retaliation or reprisals will be treated as a form of harassment and/or discrimination.

### **5.4 Frivolous or Vexatious Complaints**

The University retains the right not to proceed where there is sufficient evidence that a complaint is frivolous or vexatious. Such a finding is made by the relevant Vice-President further to a concern being raised by a respondent or the Human Rights Advisor or by a person serving as a mediator or investigator. Where a finding is made that a complaint is frivolous or vexatious, the University may impose sanctions and remedies that it deems appropriate provided that where the complainant is represented by a bargaining agent, such discipline shall be imposed in a manner which is in accordance with the provisions of the applicable collective agreement.

### **5.5 Alternative Proceedings**

The University encourages the internal resolution of complaints, and therefore encourages complainants to make use of the Policy and Procedures whenever it is possible to do so. However, the Policy and Procedures in no way preclude any complainant(s) or respondent(s) from utilizing alternative options (e.g., Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario, civil lawsuit, grievance), subject to [10.2](#). For further clarity, nothing in this Policy or Procedures shall limit the rights of any party under any collective agreement. Any complaint not addressed through the Policy and procedures may be referred to the Ontario Ombudsman

### **5.6 Withdrawal**

The complainant(s) retains the right to withdraw a complaint at any time during the process up to and including the conclusion of the formal appeal process. Upon written notification of withdrawal or alternative proceedings, a resolution procedure under the Policy and Procedures shall cease, subject to the University's responsibility for due diligence and any investigation of frivolous or vexatious complaints.

### **5.7 Due Diligence**

On receiving a complaint of discrimination or harassment, a person in a position of authority is required to take appropriate and timely action in order to address the situation consistent with the Policy and Procedures. Information disclosed to University counsellors, doctors or any position covered by the Personal Health Information Protection Act ("the PHIPA") is privileged and will not be disclosed except as required or permitted by the PHIPA.

### **5.8 Constructive/Systemic Discrimination/Issues of Public Interest**

In the event that a University policy, procedure or practice is the subject of a

complaint of constructive or systemic discrimination, the complaint will be brought to the attention, in writing, of the university administrator who is responsible for that policy, procedure or practice. The university administrator will engage in discussion, research, an informal process or formal investigation, as appropriate, following the principles of and considering the timelines in the Procedures. It is recognized that any policy and procedural changes will require extended time for consultation and approval.

## **6. Initiating a Complaint**

### **6.1 Responsibilities of the Parties**

Each party to a complaint is advised to keep written notes about the events at issue, as well as maintain any relevant documentation. Parties are responsible for knowing and understanding the Policy and Procedures.

### **6.2 Complaint to be Made in Writing**

A complaint shall be made in writing and must include all of the following details:

- What happened – a description of the events or situation
- When it happened – dates and times of the events or incidents
- Where it happened
- Names of witnesses, if any
- Remedy(ies) sought

In addition to making a written complaint, the complainant will be expected to attend meetings with the Human Rights Advisor and/or external consultant or university representative(s) who are responsible for informal resolution, or fact-finding/investigative processes, and to provide any required additional information. This is not a requirement for students reporting sexual violence.

### **6.3 Anonymous Complaints**

Complaints may be submitted anonymously through the Equity and Human Rights Office reporting tool. Anonymous complaints will be reviewed by the Office and the processes outlined in this policy for resolution and/or investigation will be applied with any necessary modifications given that the identity of the complainant is unknown.

## **7. Complaint Process**

### **7.1 Assessment by the Equity and Human Rights Office**

Upon receipt of a written complaint, the Human Rights Advisor shall determine whether the complaint appears, on the face of it, to be within the scope of the Policy. A complainant must receive initial communication from the Equity and Human Rights Office, no more than 30 days from filing the complaint along with an outline of the process/ next steps and the estimated time for the issue to be addressed (including interim measures, where appropriate).

### **7.2 Notification to Respondent**

Having determined that a complaint appears to be within the scope of the Policy, the Human Rights Advisor will provide a copy of the written complaint to the respondent and where applicable, to their union.

## **8. Informal Resolution**

### **8.1 Request for Informal Resolution**

Any member of the university community may request assistance from the Human Rights Advisor to reach an informal resolution of a complaint. Informal Resolution is a voluntary option that is intended to help parties settle disputes on mutually agreeable terms. In some cases, complainants may be advised that their concerns can, should or need to be brought to the attention of some other official of the University for proper and full resolution.

### **8.2 Willingness to Participate**

Where the Human Rights Advisor believes there is a possibility of reaching an informal resolution, of a complaint or where at least one of the parties requests that such efforts be made, the Human Rights Advisor shall contact the other party(ies) to determine their willingness to participate in a voluntary process to help the parties settle the dispute on mutually agreeable terms.

### **8.3 Facilitating Agreement**

Where an informal resolution process has been initiated, the Human Rights Advisor shall make a good faith effort, through the use of any viable technique (e.g., discussion, consultation, conciliation, mediation) directly and/or in securing an independent mediator, to facilitate a mutually acceptable agreement.

### **8.4 Appointment of an Independent Mediator**

In some cases, including where a party so requests, informal resolution may involve the retention of another person trained in mediation internal or external to the University. The Human Rights Advisor may recommend the appointment of an independent mediator in instances where the Advisor has identified a possible conflict of interest.

### **8.5 Withdrawal from Informal Resolution**

Because the informal resolution process is voluntary, any party may withdraw at any time from the process by providing written notice to the Human Rights Advisor.

### **8.6 Three Weeks to Conclude Informal Resolution**

Resolving the complaint through informal resolution shall normally be completed within three (3) weeks of all parties' agreement to participate.

### **8.7 Extension of Time**

In exceptional and compelling circumstances the timeframe may be extended at the discretion of the Human Rights Advisor where to do so is likely to result in an agreement. If the Human Rights Advisor determines there is no reasonable prospect to reach agreement, the Advisor will notify the parties in writing to

conclude the process.

### **8.8 Confidentiality of Informal Resolution Process**

In order to support the chances of successful resolution, except where disclosure is required by law, any and all information that is created and maintained by the Human Rights Advisor/Independent Mediator during the informal resolution process is to remain confidential to the mediation process and may not be introduced in the formal process. Sanctions may not be implemented other than through the formal resolution process unless the sanctions form part of a mutually agreeable, voluntary settlement.

### **8.9 Informal Process and Investigation**

No person having conducted the informal mediation process shall be appointed as the investigator of the complaint in question.

## **9. Formal Investigation**

### **9.1 Referral by Equity and Human Rights Office**

Where informal resolution is not successful or suitable, or where a party does not wish to participate in an informal resolution process, the Human Rights Advisor will refer the complaint to:

- the Vice-President of the respondent's division if the respondent is an employee;
- the Vice-President Academic if the respondent is a student.

A complaint against a Vice-President will be filed with the President. A complaint against the President or a Governor will be filed with the Chair of the Board of Governors. A complaint against the Chair of the Board of Governors will be filed with the Vice-Chair. In such cases, subsequent references to "Vice-President" will be substituted accordingly.

### **9.2 Situations Involving Multiple Respondents**

In situations involving multiple respondents, the Vice-Presidents will determine who will oversee the investigation process based on the substance of the complaint. This responsibility may be delegated, in which case references to "Vice-President" in this section will refer to the delegate.

### **9.3 Investigation Procedure**

An investigation will proceed as follows:

1. The relevant Vice-President and Human Rights Advisor will meet with the respondent(s), bargaining agent representative(s), as applicable, and supportive person chosen by the respondent(s) to review the process and provide a copy of the written complaint if it has not already been provided.
2. The respondent will have ten (10) working days to provide a written response, a copy of which will be provided to the complainant.
3. The Human Rights Advisor may be responsible for the conduct of the

investigation. Where the Human Rights Advisor is not available, or where the Advisor has conducted an informal mediation process, or where the Advisor has identified a conflict of interest, the relevant Vice-President, in consultation with the Vice-President Human Resources or the Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, will appoint an investigator, who may be external to the Trent community, who possesses expertise in the following areas:

- human rights issues and principles;
- the requirements of the Ontario Human Rights Code;
- methods for conducting effective human rights investigations.

#### **9.4 Submissions to the Investigator**

The investigator will be provided with a copy of the complaint, written response, and the Policy and Procedures.

#### **9.5 Equity and Human Rights Office Availability**

The Human Rights Advisor will be available to any external investigator, the relevant Vice-President, complainant(s) and respondent(s) to advise on the Policy and Procedures as necessary.

#### **9.6 Extent of Investigator's Scope**

The investigation will be limited to the jurisdiction of the Policy and normally to the complaint that has been filed. The investigator will meet with the complainant(s) and respondent(s) separately to obtain information relevant to the investigation. The respondent(s) will be given a full and fair opportunity to respond to the complaint. The investigator will determine whether and which witnesses will be interviewed, and may request the production of documents that may be relevant to the investigation. Both the complainant(s) and the respondent(s) have the responsibility to provide information as accurately and promptly as possible. The investigator may refer the complaint back to informal resolution with the agreement of the parties if it appears that informal resolution is possible.

#### **9.7 Time for Completion of Investigation**

The investigator will make every effort to complete the investigation within thirty (30) working days of being in receipt of the complaint and written response but failure to do so shall not invalidate the process.

#### **9.8 Investigator's Report**

At the conclusion of the investigation, the investigator will write a report outlining the findings which may also include an overview of human rights principles. The investigator will provide a copy of the report, on a confidential basis, to the complainant(s) and the respondent(s), and the respondent(s)'s bargaining agent (if applicable), the relevant Vice-President and the Human Rights Advisor (if applicable).

#### **9.9 Investigator's Notes Maintained in Equity and Human Rights Office**

The investigator's notes and transcripts (if applicable) will be maintained in the Equity and Human Rights Office in a secure and confidential file in accordance with the requirements of these Procedures.

### **9.10 Vice-President's Review and Decision**

The relevant Vice-President will review the report and decide on the complaint. If the complaint is found to be substantiated, or was found to be frivolous or vexatious, the Vice-President will determine appropriate remedies/sanctions, if applicable. For unionized employees, any disciplinary action will be undertaken in accordance with the applicable collective agreement provisions and will be imposed in accordance with the procedural requirements of the collective agreement, and all rights thereunder shall be preserved.

The Vice-President's decision will be communicated in separate letters to the complainant(s) and respondent(s) and, where the respondent is a union member, to the party's union. In cases of sexual violence, where the complainant is a Trent University employee, the Vice-President will also inform the complainant of any corrective action that has been, or will be, taken as a result of the investigation.

### **9.11 Extension of Timelines**

Timelines may be extended in good faith by the relevant Vice-President, and such extension will be communicated in writing to the complainant(s), respondent(s), bargaining agent(s) as applicable, investigator, and the Human Rights Advisor. The extension granted shall not ordinarily exceed 12 months from the time the complaint was received. If the investigation cannot be concluded within 12 months due to extenuating circumstances, the parties will be advised accordingly and the need will be explained through the annual reporting process described in section 13.2 below.

## **10. Limited Appeal of Outcome of Investigation**

### **10.1 Appeal on Grounds of Procedural Error or New Evidence**

Either the complainant(s) or respondent(s) may appeal the outcome of an investigation on the grounds of procedural error or that significant new evidence has become known after the final report but before the expiry of the appeal period. Appeals must be submitted in writing, within ten (10) working days of receiving the decision, to the Human Rights Advisor. The Human Rights Advisor will refer the appeal to another Vice-President (i.e. not the decision-maker) on the basis of availability. Where the respondent was a Vice-President or President, the appeal will be referred to the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Board of Governors which is substituted accordingly.

### **10.2 Review of Appeal**

The Vice-President receiving the referral will review the appeal submission, the investigation report and the decision, and will issue a decision on the appeal within fifteen (15) working days of receipt.

### **10.3 Extension of Timelines**

Timelines under this appeal procedure may be extended in good faith by the Vice-President receiving the referral, and such extension will be communicated in writing to the appellant(s), all other parties to the complaint, and the Equity and Human Rights Office.

## **11. Human Rights Code/Grievances**

### **11.1 No Bar to Exercise of Rights Outside the Policy**

The University encourages the internal resolution of complaints, and therefore encourages complainants to make use of the complaint procedure whenever it is possible to do so. However, the provisions of this Policy and Procedures in no way affect the right of any person to exercise rights under the Code, or grievance procedures for unionized employees within the time limits specified by each.

### **11.2 Cessation of Policy Resolution Process**

Upon written notification of a grievance or HRTO proceedings, a resolution procedure under this Policy will stop subject to the University's responsibility for due diligence, having regard for its responsibility to respond appropriately to allegations of discrimination and harassment, police involvement (if any) and any other considerations applicable to the circumstances, unless the relevant bargaining agent has filed a formal request to hold the grievance in abeyance consistent with the relevant collective agreement.

## **12. Remedies and Sanctions**

### **12.1 Remedies**

Remedies are intended to restore individuals to the position they would have experienced had the discrimination or harassment not occurred. Examples include but are not limited to an apology, reinstatement, compensation for actual losses, provision of services, and adjustment of fees. The intention of the Policy is restorative and educative.

### **12.2 Sanctions**

Where warranted, disciplinary sanctions as well as other, non-disciplinary measures may be used to ensure that violations of the Policy and the Ontario Human Rights Code are taken seriously. Examples include but are not limited to remedial training, prohibited or restricted access to campus verbal or written warning, loss of privileges, suspension, demotion, and expulsion (students) or dismissal (employees).

For unionized employees, any disciplinary action will be consistent with collective agreement provisions and will be imposed in accordance with procedural requirements of the collective agreement and all rights thereunder shall be preserved.

### **12.3 Criteria Considered**

The following criteria will be considered to determine the appropriate level of

remedy or sanction:

- seriousness/severity of the incident(s);
- reliability of the evidence;
- remedies sought by the complainant;
- any documented history of substantiated and related history on the part of the respondent(s), or on the part of the complainant(s) in the case of frivolous or vexatious complaints, provided such documentation has been maintained in accordance with relevant collective agreements.

## **13. Records**

### **13.1 Time for Retaining Records**

All records shall remain secure and confidential files are to be maintained in the Equity and Human Rights Office for:

- two (2) years beyond April 30 for confidential advice that concludes between May 1 and April 30 each year, after which time the contents will be destroyed;
- seven (7) years beyond April 30 for formal investigation proceedings that conclude between May 1 and April 30 each year, after which time the contents will be destroyed.

Where a complaint has not been substantiated no reference will be placed in any personnel or student file.

Where a formal investigation results in sanctions for an employee or student beyond a verbal warning/reprimand, documentation will be placed in the personnel or student file.

In the case of unionized employees, all records shall be kept in a manner and for a time period which is in accordance with the provisions of the collective agreement.

### **13.2 Use of Non-Identifiable Statistical Information**

Non-identifiable statistical information on the number, nature and type of complaints, as well as the number of complaints that did not proceed to review, will be reported annually by the Equity and Human Rights Office to the Presidential Advisory Committee on Human Rights, Equity & Accessibility (PACHREA), the Board of Governors, the Ministry of Colleges and Universities and the University community at large. As applicable, the associated Code group and subcategory will be contained in the annual report, as well as outcomes. These reports shall not contain personal information that would compromise personal privacy or that would otherwise reveal information that should remain confidential.