

# NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Office of Equal Opportunity

***Purpose:*** To establish uniform guidelines in order to promote a work and educational environment at Tufts University that is free of discrimination and harassment, and to affirm the University's commitment to equal opportunity and affirmative action.

**Revised:** September 2023

**Applicability:** This policy applies to faculty, staff, and applicants for employment, students, and third parties (including visitors and community members).

## I. POLICY STATEMENT

**Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination at Tufts University:** Tufts is enriched by the many experiences and perspectives each individual member brings to our community. Tufts does not discriminate in admissions, employment, or in any of its educational programs or activities on the basis of race (including traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles<sup>1</sup>), color, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, age, religion, disability, sex or gender (including pregnancy, sexual harassment and other sexual misconduct including acts of sexual violence such as rape, sexual assault, stalking, sexual exploitation, sexual exploitation and coercion, relationship/intimate partner violence and domestic violence), gender identity and/or expression (including a transgender identity), sexual orientation, military or veteran status, genetic information, the intersection of these identities or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal, state or local law. Retaliation is also prohibited. Tufts will comply with state and federal laws such as M.G.L. c. 151B, Title IX and its supporting regulations, Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment and Rights Act, Executive Order 11246 and other similar laws that prohibit discrimination, all as amended. Tufts is an equal employment opportunity/affirmative action employer. See [Tufts Non-Discrimination Statement](#).

Tufts University is committed to the principle of equal opportunity in education and employment. Tufts prohibits discrimination against and harassment of any student, employee, applicant for employment, third party or community member because of race (including traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles); color; national or ethnic origin; age; religion; disability; sex; sexual orientation; gender; gender identity and expression; including a transgender identity; genetics; veteran status; retaliation; and any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law, herein called “**protected categories.**” The University expects all Tufts employees, students, and community members to join with and uphold this commitment.

Tufts University also prohibits retaliation based on a protected activity, such as the filing of a complaint of discrimination or participation in the investigation of such a claim. Any witness, complainant or respondent involved in an investigation ought not to be retaliated against for their participation in the fact-finding process.

All Tufts personnel at the exempt level who are responsible for hiring, promoting, and managing employees and/or University programs are required to promptly escalate all potential violations of this policy to a manager or supervisor, a dean, any senior member of the University administration, directly to the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) at 617.627.3298 or to EthicsPoint at [tufts-oeo.ethicspoint.com](https://tufts-oeo.ethicspoint.com) or by using the hotline at 1.866.384.4277.

Tufts University’s OEO is also responsible for planning and implementing the University’s affirmative action program and monitoring affirmative action-related decisions and activities in accordance with state and federal law. Tufts University seeks to maintain an internal system of audit and reporting that shall facilitate the identification and removal of inequities and deficiencies in its employment and those policies and practices that could preclude the fair and equal treatment of minorities, women, individuals with disabilities, and all protected veterans.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2022/Chapter117>, known as “The CROWN Act.”

## II. DEFINING AND RECOGNIZING DISCRIMINATION

Unlawful discrimination occurs when a person is harassed or treated arbitrarily or differently because of the person's real or implied membership in a **"protected category"** such as race (including traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles); color; national or ethnic origin; age; religion; disability; sex; sexual orientation; gender; gender identity and expression; including a transgender identity; veteran status; genetics (or the intersection of any of these identities); retaliation or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law.

For the purposes of this policy, protected veteran status includes (1) disabled veterans; (2) recently separated veterans; (3) active-duty wartime or campaign badge veterans; and (4) Armed Forces service medal veterans. The classifications of protected veterans are defined as follows:

- A "disabled veteran" means: (1) a veteran of the U.S. military, ground, naval or air service who is entitled to compensation (or who but for the receipt of military retired pay would be entitled to compensation) under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, or (2) a person who was discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability.
- A "recently separated veteran" means any veteran during the three-year period beginning on the date of such veteran's discharge or release from active duty in the U.S. military, ground, naval or air service.
- An "active-duty wartime or campaign badge veteran" means a veteran who served on active duty in the U.S. military, ground, naval or air service during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized, under the laws administered by the Department of Defense.
- An "Armed Forces service medal veteran" means any veteran who, while serving on active duty in the U.S. military, ground, naval or air service, participated in a United States military operation for which an Armed Forces service medal was awarded pursuant to Executive Order 12985 (61 FR 1209).

In the employment context, discrimination may begin with an adverse employment action, which is something an employer has done that is unfair to an employee (for example: terminating the employee or not selecting them for hire or a promotion, harassing the employee, denying the employee's request for a reasonable accommodation, etc.). If OEO determines, through fact-finding, that the employee or applicant's membership in a protected category was the reason for the adverse employment action, this may lead to a policy violation of the non-discrimination policy and/or any other policy herein.

Personality differences or conflicts, general mistreatment not based on the above protected categories, or a response to poor performance are usually employee relations issues, not discrimination matters. To contact your Human Resource Business Partner (HRBP) to discuss an employee relations matter, please call the Human Resources Department on your campus. HR can

also help you determine what type of issue you may be experiencing and will refer you to the appropriate resources.

#### Tufts University Human Resources:

Medford: 617.627.3272  
Boston: 617.627-2446  
Grafton: 617-627-5608

Similarly, if a student or community member believes that they were treated differently in their education program or activity because of their real or implied membership in a protected category as defined above, the appropriate Dean's Office (or OEO, if asked) will conduct a fact-finding investigation to determine whether or not the Complainant's protected class was the reason for the different treatment and if that treatment violated the non-discrimination policy and/or any other policy herein.

Contact OEO immediately at 617.627.3298 or the EthicsPoint anonymous hotline [Tufts-OEO.ethicspoint.com](https://tufts-oeo.ethicspoint.com) or at 1.866.384.4277 if you feel that you are being retaliated against for filing a complaint, participating in a complaint or speaking out against a potential discriminatory practice. Retaliation is prohibited by Tufts University policies and by state and federal anti-discrimination laws. Retaliation at Tufts University is also subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination from employment for employees or expulsion for students from Tufts.

### III. PROCESSES & PROCEDURES

#### A. OEO Complaint Procedures

If you have questions about the Processes and Procedures after filing a complaint, or if a complaint has been filed against you, please contact the Executive Director and Title IX Coordinator of OEO, Jill Zellmer at 617.627.3298 or at [jill.zellmer@tufts.edu](mailto:jill.zellmer@tufts.edu).

If you are a student please review the University's Sexual Misconduct Adjudication Policy and Process.

If you are an employee or third party please review the Discrimination Complaint Resolution Guidelines.

Both of these procedures may be accessed at: <http://oio.tufts.edu/>

*Where complaints involve students and/or employees and/or third parties, the complaint process which applies to the respondent will normally control.*

**Note:** Mediation will not be used as a means to address or resolve cases of sexual assault or other sex-based violence and those who have reported/experienced sexual harassment will not be required to resolve the matter directly with the respondent or to confront respondent(s). See the [Discrimination Complaint Processing Guidelines](#).

### IV. RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

As a member of the Tufts community, you have the right to work, learn and live in an environment free from discrimination and harassment. You have the right to equal opportunity and equal access to all University programs and activities.

### **A. Duty to Report**

Managers, supervisors, faculty and other “responsible employees” of the University are required by law to promptly report allegations of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual misconduct that they observe or learn about to OEO or to another reporting officer. The University defines “responsible employees” to include managers, supervisors and officials with significant responsibility for student and campus activities including but not limited to student housing, discipline and campus security. Please contact us at 617.627.3298 or at <http://o eo.tufts.edu/> or please contact EthicsPoint at 1.866.384.4277 or at [tufts-o eo.ethicspoint.com](http://tufts-o eo.ethicspoint.com).

Failure to report a known or suspected incident of discrimination or harassment to OEO may result in disciplinary action.

### **B. Duty to Cooperate**

Faculty, staff, and students must cooperate with University investigations concerning allegations of discrimination or harassment. Refusal to cooperate with an investigation may result in disciplinary action. Please contact us at 617.627.3298 or at <http://o eo.tufts.edu/> if you have any questions or concerns about your cooperation.

### **C. Freedom from Retaliation**

Any member of the University community has the right to raise concerns or make a complaint regarding discrimination or harassment under this policy without fear of retaliation. It is a violation of University policy to retaliate against an individual for filing a complaint of discrimination or harassment or for cooperating in an investigation of alleged discrimination or harassment. Any person at Tufts University found in violation of this policy is subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or expulsion from Tufts. If you have any questions or concerns about this, please contact the Executive Director and Title IX Coordinator of OEO, Jill Zellmer at 617.627.3298 or at [Jill.Zellmer@tufts.edu](mailto:Jill.Zellmer@tufts.edu).

### **D. Confidentiality**

The University recognizes the importance of confidentiality and understands that some individuals filing complaints of harassment/discrimination or who are otherwise involved in an investigation may want their identity to remain anonymous and/or confidential. In all cases, issues of confidentiality must be balanced against the University’s need to investigate and take appropriate action.

The University will respect the privacy and confidentiality of individuals involved in an investigation to the fullest extent possible. If you have concerns about this please call the Executive Director and Title IX Coordinator of OEO, Jill Zellmer at 617.627.3298 or at [Jill.Zellmer@tufts.edu](mailto:Jill.Zellmer@tufts.edu).

## **V. REPORTING RESOURCES**

## ***A. Where can I file a complaint if I am an employee?***

### **I. The Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) for Tufts University**

<http://o eo.tufts.edu/> or 617.627.3298

Tufts University prohibits discrimination based on race (including traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles); color; national or ethnic origin; age; religion; disability; sex; sexual orientation; gender; gender identity and expression; including a transgender identity, veteran status; genetics; retaliation; or any other characteristic protected under applicable state and federal law.

There is no statute of limitations to file a complaint in OEO. However, please understand that our response to a complaint may be more limited in scope as a result of the length of time between the alleged incident and the report of the incident.

You may also contact us using the Tufts University anonymous hotline, EthicsPoint, at 1.866.384.4277 or at Tufts-OEO.ethicspoint.com.

### **2. Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD)**

John McCormack Building  
One Ashburton Place  
Sixth Floor, Room 601  
Boston, MA 02108  
617.994.6000

Worcester City Hall  
455 Main Street  
Room 101  
Worcester, MA 01608  
508.799.8010

The MCAD prohibits employment discrimination based on race (including traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles), color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender, age, criminal record (applications only), disability, retaliation, sexual harassment, sexual orientation, a transgender identity, genetics and military personnel. Any employee in a work environment with six or more employees can file a complaint with the MCAD. The statute of limitations for filing a complaint is 300 days from the last date of discrimination.

### **3. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)**

JFK Federal Building  
475 Government Center  
Boston, MA 02203  
800.669.4000

The EEOC prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, retaliation and national origin. The statute of limitations for filing a complaint is 300 days from the last date of discrimination.

## ***B. Where can I file a complaint if I am a student?***

For student-on-student discrimination or harassment allegations, you may report by contacting OEO in the following ways: <http://oio.tufts.edu/> or 617.627.3298 or anonymously using the Tufts University anonymous hotline, EthicsPoint, at 1.866.384.4277 or at [Tufts-OEO.ethicspoint.com](http://Tufts-OEO.ethicspoint.com). You could also contact an [OEO Liaison](#).

## **I. The Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) for Tufts University**

<http://oio.tufts.edu/> or 617.627.3298

Tufts University prohibits discrimination based on race (including traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles); color; national or ethnic origin; age; religion; disability; sex; sexual orientation; gender; gender identity and expression; including a transgender identity, veteran status, genetics, retaliation; or any other characteristic protected under applicable state and federal law.

There is no statute of limitations to file a complaint in OEO. However, please understand that our response to a complaint may be more limited in scope as a result of the length of time between the alleged incident and the report of the incident.

You can also choose to file a complaint through the Tufts University anonymous EthicsPoint hotline phone number or website at 1.866.384.4277 or [tufts-oio.ethicspoint.com](http://tufts-oio.ethicspoint.com).

## **2. U.S. Department of Education (DOE)**

Office for Civil Rights (OCR) 5  
Post Office Square  
Eighth Floor  
Boston, MA 02109-3921  
617.289.0111

The DOE and the OCR prohibit discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, and age. While OCR complaints should generally be filed within 180 days of the last date of alleged discrimination, OCR may extend this filing deadline in a variety of circumstances.

### ***A. Where can I file a complaint if I am a third party or community member?***

#### **I. The Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) for Tufts University**

<http://oio.tufts.edu/> or 617.627.3298

Tufts University prohibits discrimination based on race (including traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles); color; national or ethnic origin; age; religion; disability; sex; sexual orientation; gender; gender identity and expression; including a transgender identity; veteran status; genetics; retaliation; or any other characteristic protected under applicable state and federal law.

There is no statute of limitations to file a complaint in OEO. However, please understand that our response to a complaint may be more limited in scope as a result of the length of time between

the alleged incident and the report of the incident.

You can also choose to file a complaint through the Tufts University anonymous EthicsPoint hotline phone number or website at 1.866.384.4277 or [tufts-oeo.ethicspoint.com](http://tufts-oeo.ethicspoint.com)

## VI. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### ***A. What is the goal of equal opportunity?***

The goal of equal opportunity is to ensure equal access in all phases of the employment and educational processes. Employment decisions are based solely on merit and qualifications related to the specific job. These employment decisions should not be made on the basis of someone's real or implied membership in a protected class (as defined on pages 2 & 3). Similarly for students, educational program decisions are based solely on merit and qualifications related to the program and should not be made on the basis of someone's real or implied membership in a protected class. Equal opportunity is hiring the most qualified person for the job or selecting the most qualified student(s) for the educational program without regard for status in any protected category.

### ***B. What is unlawful discrimination?***

Unlawful discrimination is the unfair or unequal treatment of an individual or group based on certain characteristics that are specifically protected by law or the University. Specifically, at Tufts, discrimination is prohibited based on race (including traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles); color; national or ethnic origin; age; religion; disability; sex; sexual orientation; gender; gender identity and expression; including a transgender identity; genetics; veteran status; or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law. In addition, Tufts prohibits retaliation against a person or group for reporting about discrimination or for participating in the investigation of such a complaint.

### ***C. What is affirmative action?***

Affirmative action refers to programs that promote equal opportunity and the commitment to apply a good faith effort to eliminate the present effects of past discrimination or to prevent discrimination against minorities, women, individuals with disabilities, and all protected veterans. It is not a numerical quota system or program of preferential treatment.

### ***D. Where do I go if I have questions about this policy?***

Tufts University's Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) is responsible for enforcing the University's non-discrimination policy. Please contact the Executive Director and Title IX Coordinator of OEO, Jill Zellmer, at 617.627.3298 or visit <http://oeo.tufts.edu/>.

## VII. NON-DISCRIMINATION SCENARIOS



This policy applies to students, faculty, staff, patients, visitors to campus and others, all known as community members, in the scenarios below. Each scenario is intended to be illustrative of what *could* be discrimination or harassment although every allegation received by OEO is reviewed and assessed based on the individualized fact patterns of the case.

**1. A staff member reports they overheard contractors on campus talking about other community members of color in a derogatory manner. What needs to happen next?**

*OEO will review these allegations and if the contractors are found responsible for engaging in race discrimination, for instance, this could be a violation of the Non-Discrimination Policy.*

*The staff member overhearing the comments is obligated to report this matter to OEO according to Tufts policy and the law in Massachusetts. Anyone who is the target of the comments can also report this to OEO or to a Tufts supervisor, who will report it. All Tufts employees, except for Chaplaincy, Health Services and CMHS, have an obligation within our policy and in the Commonwealth to report discrimination concerns to OEO immediately. If a student overhears, is a witness to, or is the target of this type of conduct, they can report it directly by calling OEO, emailing the office or filing an [Ethicspoint](#) complaint online.<sup>2</sup>*

*Employees (faculty or staff) have an obligation to report discrimination and harassment concerns to OEO immediately if they hear about, are the target of, or are a witness to this type of conduct. Reports can be made by calling or emailing the office or filing an [Ethicspoint](#) complaint.*

**2. A sign is posted in a lab on campus saying, “all members must speak English-only in this space.” Most of the staff, faculty, undergraduates, graduate students and post-docs who share the lab speak many other languages, in addition to English. The lab manager, who does not know who put up the sign, calls OEO to express concern that many of those who share the lab are upset with the sign and feel the directive is humiliating, exclusive and discriminatory.**

*OEO will review this matter and evaluate whether there are legitimate non-discriminatory reasons for requiring English in the workplace. However, OEO will explain that individuals should be able to talk/chat in their native languages to others in the workplace during breaks. Work directions and work-specific communication, in general should be in English at Tufts however, signs of this type will typically be removed.*

**3. There is a conversation in a Political Science classroom about Israel and Palestine related to an academic article the professor assigned. The conversation becomes**

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<sup>2</sup> The Ethicspoint link is [Tufts-OEO.ethicspoint.com](https://tufts-oeo.ethicspoint.com) and has an anonymous feature if reporters do not want to be known or include their name in a report. These scenarios focus on internal/Tufts/OEO reporting options. Reporters who use Ethicspoint should understand that while anonymous complaints are permitted, OEO may be limited in addressing anonymous reports. Once you file an anonymous complaint on Ethicspoint, the system will give you a random keycode so you can return to your case for updates, questions or if an OEO investigator sends you a chat through the anonymous chat feature.

heated and some students become upset with others in the class for making comments about political decisions the Israeli government has made.

Later, in the dorm where many students from the class happen to live, an extension of this classroom discussion erupts and disparaging comments about both Jews and Muslims circulate until several students leave the conversation in tears.

*OEO will review these two matters to determine the nature of the speech and/or the conduct at issue. In cases where community members engage in communications or conduct in the context of the exchange of ideas, including political perspectives such as those engaged in during classroom discussions and/or pursuant to academic freedom, OEO may not make a finding of discrimination or harassment.*

*However, where speech involves discriminatory language or conduct that is targeted against individuals because of their religion, ethnicity, national origin or the intersection of their identities, OEO may find a Non-Discrimination Policy violation.*

- 4. A graduate student employee is the first teaching assistant (FTA) for a section of a very large class of undergraduates. Several undergraduates convey to the second TA (STA) a feeling of getting less help in the class from the FTA than others in this class. Initially, the STA dismisses these concerns but notices the FTA may be favoring certain students in the class. Finally, another undergraduate discloses to the STA that she feels the FTA always ignores her questions in the class. She believes the FTA treats her poorly because he has an Indian Brahmin name with a Tamil accent. The reporting undergrad believes the FTA considers her to have a Dalit identity.**

*The STA is obligated as a student employee partially responsible for this class, to report this complaint to OEO immediately. The STA could also encourage the reporting student(s) to report to OEO as well or they could all report together. OEO will review this matter out of concern for discrimination based on caste. If the FTA is treating students differently based on an intersectionality of identities, this could be a violation of the Non-Discrimination Policy.*

- 5. A faculty member returns to campus after a 6-month sabbatical and announces they are pregnant. Students and other colleagues express surprise about the faculty member's pregnancy and some of them are overheard gossiping about the faculty member's sexual orientation and gender identity.**

*Anyone overhearing these comments can and should file a report with OEO by either calling or emailing the office or filing a complaint using [Ethicspoint](#). OEO will review this matter out of concern for the comments which may be related to sex stereotyping, sexual orientation and gender identity and expression categories of the Non-Discrimination Policy.*

- 6. A faculty member asks all the students with accommodations in the class to sit in the back while they take a course exam. Several students move to the back but two students who have accommodations do not move to the back because they do not want their peers to know they are students with disabilities. The faculty member announces to the class a second time that anyone with an accommodation should move to the back of the class to take the exam since they will take longer to finish the exam and it will be easier to monitor them if they all sit together in the back of the class. After no one else gets up to move to the back of the class, the faculty member jokes that anyone with an accommodation who does not move to the back of the class will be docked 10 points on the exam.**

*Anyone with knowledge about these comments can and should file a report with OEO by either calling or emailing OEO or filing a complaint using [Ethicspoint](#). OEO will review this matter which could be a violation of the Non-Discrimination Policy related to disability discrimination and/or harassment.*