

Valdosta State University
Office of Social Equity

Need to file a complaint?

Please know that we are neutral.

OSE does not take sides. We are committed to providing fair and unbiased review, and our investigations are focused on evidence. We also help Complainants and Respondents by providing information about support and advocacy services.

Complaint process:

1. Individuals or groups must submit a written statement providing full detail of the incident(s) including date, time and names of any third party witnesses.
2. The respondent will be notified in writing by investigating officer that a formal complaint has been filled and they are to cooperate during the investigation.

All parties involved in the complaint will be granted due process.

3. After the OSE receives all necessary information from the complainant and understands the nature and scope of the complaint, the respondent is interviewed. They are asked about the allegations and given a full and fair opportunity to respond. The respondent is also asked to provide any documentation and witnesses relevant to the complaint. The complainant is not present during the respondent's interview and vice versa.

Evidence is gathered.

4. The OSE reviews documentation and interviews all named witnesses. Note is made of each individual not willing to assist in the investigation. The OSE may also contact the complainant and respondent to request additional information or with additional questions when necessary.

After the investigation is complete:

OSE's investigating officer will complete a written investigation report of the total findings. The complainant and respondent will receive a written summary of the investigative findings. To ensure accuracy, the complainant and respondent are given equal opportunity to provide clarifying statements on the summary. The OSE reviews the statements submitted by each party, if any, and modifies the report as needed. Updated summaries will then be distributed. All statements from the parties and their witnesses are thoroughly reviewed in order to complete an investigation.

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Can the investigating officer's decision be appealed?

Yes. Once all parties have received a written summary of the investigative report, anyone wishing to appeal the findings must submit a written *Letter of Appeal* to the Office of the President within 10 days of receiving the OSE complaint summary letter.

The threat of retaliation:

Retaliation is not tolerated at Valdosta State University. Complainants who feel they are being subjected to any kind of retaliatory behavior are strongly advised to contact the OSE immediately. Necessary actions will be administered.

Definitions:

Complainant: any person(s) who feel they have been discriminated against or harassed and file an official complaint.

Respondent: any person(s) accused of discriminating or harassing another.

Due Process: principles and procedures that are in place to ensure a fair and impartial investigation.

Retaliation: to repay with hostility or take vengeful actions toward the complainant. (Example-physical or online abuse)