

# SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) is committed to establishing and maintaining a community rich in equality and free from all forms of discrimination and harassment. As an institution rooted in the values of Christian discipleship, community, service, and peacebuilding, EMU commits itself to the highest standards of personal and professional conduct. Relationship violence and sexual misconduct are prohibited at EMU. Relationship violence and sexual misconduct are community challenges and can only be prevented through active community participation.

As a Christian institution of higher education, EMU affirms that relationship violence and sexual misconduct is harmful to the individuals involved as well as to the campus community. Furthermore, instances of relationship violence and sexual misconduct are often experienced as trauma and can thus have lasting impacts even many years after the originating event/incident. EMU recognizes that healing from sexual violence is a process that often takes time, resources, and empathic support. Many individuals in the university community are survivors of multiple forms of trauma, including historic trauma, repeated victimization, marginalization, discrimination, and other forms of violence. EMU seeks to ground this policy and procedures within this awareness and understanding.

The university will take prompt and equitable action to eliminate relationship violence and sexual misconduct, prevent its recurrence, and repair the harm that has been caused. When the conduct has a propensity to create a hostile, manipulative, or coercive environment on campus, the university obligates itself to respond in support of all parties involved, the campus community, and others who have been impacted. EMU commits itself to proactively build a campus community that prioritizes health and safety. The university strives to achieve this by ensuring the safety of those who have been harmed, holding accountable those who have done harm, and addressing the root causes of relationship violence and sexual misconduct.

EMU commits itself to the prevention of relationship violence and sexual misconduct, and commits itself to response efforts that are focused in the following ways: through policies that reflect EMU's values and meet federal and state guidelines; a response procedure that is clear and supportive; ongoing sexual violence prevention and healthy relationship education; and establishing and maintaining a community that is survivor-supportive.

The purpose of the Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct Policy is to define relationship violence and sexual misconduct, describe the process for reporting violations of the policy, outline the procedures used to investigate and resolve alleged violations of policy, and identify resources available to members of the EMU community who are involved in an incident of relationship violence and/or sexual misconduct.

In order to establish and maintain a campus community that values the dignity of all, this policy and resolution procedure commits the university to:

1. identify the forms of relationship violence and sexual misconduct that violate this policy;
2. disseminate clear policies and procedures for responding to relationship violence and sexual misconduct or other forms of conduct prohibited under this policy that are reported to the university;
3. develop an ongoing coordinated effort for delivering prevention and awareness programs and ongoing training and education programs to students, faculty, and staff so that they:
  - a. may identify what behavior constitutes relationship violence and sexual misconduct and other misconduct prohibited under the policy;
  - b. understand how to report such misconduct;
  - c. recognize warning signs of potentially abusive behavior and ways to reduce risks; and
  - d. learn about safe and positive options for bystander intervention that may be carried out by an individual to prevent harm or intervene when there is a risk of relationship violence and sexual misconduct or other forms of conduct prohibited under this policy against a person;
4. engage in investigative inquiry and resolution of reports in an adequate, reliable, impartial, prompt, fair, and equitable way;
5. support those who have been harmed and hold persons accountable for established violations of this policy; and
6. provide a written explanation of the rights and options to every student or employee that has experienced relationship violence and/or sexual misconduct, both the reporting and the responding party, regardless of when or where the conduct occurred.

In addition, this policy identifies and describes the roles of the university's [Title IX coordinator](#), deputy Title IX coordinators, Title IX investigators, and Title IX review board; identifies how students, faculty, and staff can report relationship violence, sexual misconduct, or other forms of conduct prohibited under this policy to the university, confidentially; identifies on- and off-campus resources available to reporting and responding parties, including the right to notify local law enforcement, be assisted in that notification, and/or decline to notify such authorities; and provides the university with a means to take all reasonable steps to identify relationship violence and sexual misconduct, support prevention of its recurrence, and repair the harmful effects on the reporting party, as appropriate.

*Revised January 2019*

*Approved by President's Cabinet, 2017*