

## ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

Harassment or abuse of any individual (physically, verbally, or electronically) by the University employee, University student, or anyone from VaYU is strictly prohibited. It is VaYU's policy to prohibit intentional and unintentional harassment of or against job applicants, contractors, interns, volunteers, or employees by another employee, supervisor, vendor, customer, or third party based on actual or perceived race (including hair texture, protective hairstyles and other traits historically associated with race), color, creed, ancestry, national origin and ancestry, citizenship, sex or gender (including pregnancy, childbirth, and pregnancy-related conditions), gender identity or expression (including transgender status), sexual orientation, marital status, religion, age, physical or mental disability, medical condition, Pregnancy (including childbirth and related medical conditions), genetic information, military or veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state, or local laws and ordinances. Such conduct will be considered severe or pervasive if it unreasonably interferes with the person's work or equal access to education, or creates a hostile, intimidating, or offensive work or academic environment. The University adheres to the Non-discrimination Policy and Anti Sexual Harassment Policy, which prohibit harassment based on legally protected classifications, including racial and sexual harassment. This policy statement respects the University's commitment to equality of opportunity, human dignity, diversity, and academic freedom.

### 1. DEFINITION OF "UNLAWFUL HARASSMENT"

"Unlawful harassment" is conduct that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, a hostile, or an offensive work environment. has the purpose or effect of substantially and unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance. or otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities because of the individual's membership in a protected class.

Unlawful harassment includes but is not limited to, epithets. slurs. jokes. pranks. innuendo. comments. written or graphic material. stereotyping. or other threatening, hostile, or intimidating acts based on race (including hair texture, protective hairstyles, and other traits historically associated with race), color, creed, ancestry, national origin, and ancestry, citizenship, sex or gender (including pregnancy, childbirth, and pregnancy-related conditions), gender identity or expression (including transgender status), sexual orientation, marital status, religion, age, physical or mental disability, medical condition, Pregnancy (including childbirth and related medical conditions), genetic information, military or veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state, or local laws and ordinances.

The University will not allow any form of retaliation against individuals who raise concerns of harassment. Individuals who feel they have been subjected to any such retaliation should bring it to the attention of the HR manager at [hr@vayuusa.org](mailto:hr@vayuusa.org)

Furthermore, any retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual or other harassment or retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a harassment complaint is similarly unlawful and will not be tolerated. VaYU will take all reasonable steps necessary to prevent and eliminate unlawful harassment.

Retaliation means adverse conduct taken because an individual reported an actual or a perceived violation of this policy, opposed practices prohibited by this policy, or participated in the reporting and investigation process described below. "Adverse conduct" includes but is not limited to:

- Shunning and avoiding an individual who reports harassment, discrimination, or retaliation.
- Express or implied threats or intimidation intended to prevent an individual from reporting harassment, discrimination, or retaliation. Or
- Denying benefits because the individual reported harassment, discrimination, or retaliation or participated in the reporting and investigation process.

Other examples of retaliation include firing, demotion, denial of promotion, unjustified negative evaluations, increased surveillance, harassment, and assault.

## 2. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If an employee, Faculty, Student, or any individual believes that they have been subject to or have witnessed unlawful discrimination, including sexual or other forms of unlawful harassment, or other inappropriate conduct, they are required to follow the procedure below;

- i. Students can raise their Grievances by following the procedures outlined in the "*Student Grievance and Complaint Policy*" listed on [VaYU Policy Page](#).
- ii. Faculty members can consult Section 9.4 of the Faculty Handbook, titled "*Faculty Grievance Policy and Procedure*".
- iii. Staff members can find guidance in Section 7 of the Staff Handbook known as the "*Staff Grievance Policy*."

All complaints will be investigated promptly, and confidentiality will be protected to the extent possible. A timely resolution of each complaint should be reached and communicated to the parties involved.

If the investigation confirms conduct that violates this policy has occurred, VaYU will take immediate, appropriate, corrective action, including discipline, up to and including immediate termination.

No reprisal, retaliation, or other adverse action will be taken against an employee for making a complaint or report of discrimination or harassment or for assisting in the investigation of any such complaint or report. Any suspected retaliation or intimidation should be reported immediately to one of the persons identified above.

**Note:** VaYU is an online university, so your message to us may not be responded to immediately. Since we are unable to respond to personal emergency situations, call '911' if you are in the US or your local emergency or police system.

To share your feedback and ideas email us at [hr@vayuusa.org](mailto:hr@vayuusa.org).

## References:

[Anti-Harassment Policy Statement. | University of Pittsburgh.](#)  
[SHRM - The Voice of All Things Work](#)