

ODUM SCHOOL OF ECOLOGY

Creating a positive environment and addressing challenges¹

The Odum School of Ecology values an interactive community in which students, staff and faculty work together to advance our understanding and appreciation of the natural world. We value a respectful, positive and supportive environment, while seeking excellence in individual and collaborative efforts. Our work is sometimes intense, and often challenging, but we strive to make it always rewarding and often enjoyable. Success usually includes collaboration, mentorship, and friendship. While we strive for positive interactions, challenges will sometimes arise. Some challenges are natural results of differing workstyles and personalities, while others arise from poor understanding of personal boundaries, and others may require the intervention of personnel in other offices (Legal Affairs, Human Resources, Equal Opportunity Office) or even the police.

This document attempts to clarify the types of situations that require particular actions and whom will help if you encounter challenges while working or studying in the Odum School of Ecology. Our goal is to make sure everyone is safe and supported, but when that fails, it is essential that everyone know how to seek help to ensure that problems are addressed and do not escalate.

Work and school-related issues vary greatly and require different approaches, depending on the nature of the situation and the positions of the people involved. Below, we provide a simple guide to help you navigate these complexities; we also provide contact information for various campus resources within and outside of OSE. This guide is not meant to be prescriptive, but rather comprises a general guide to assist you.

There are four broad classes of situations:

- 1) **Immediate danger.** If a situation poses a danger to you or others, you should immediately alert authorities (e.g., call the police or 911). You can later notify personnel in OSE to make them aware of the situation.
- 2) **Discrimination and harassment.** Violations of UGA's non-discrimination and anti-harassment policy (NDAH), as well as sexual misconduct must be reported to the Equal Opportunity Office (EOO). The NDAH policy precludes discrimination and harassment that is *targeted at protected classes* (e.g., based on gender, sexual orientation, race, etc.); other forms of bullying and harassment should be referred to OSE and/or Human Resources (see below). Some OSE members are mandatory reporters, as outlined in the resources below. These allegations should NOT be investigated by OSE; EOO will conduct their own investigation since they are trained in these matters.
- 3) **Workplace violence** (intimidation, bullying, stalking, threats, physical attack, property damage, or domestic and family violence committed by or against a UGA employee, student or visitor) should be referred to your supervisor, the OSE HR representative, or UGA's Human Resources (HR) if the complaint is against a staff or faculty member, or the Office of Student Affairs (if the complaint is directed at a student). UGA defines bullying as "Unwanted offensive and malicious

¹ Last updated, 15 August 2020

behavior that undermines an individual or group through persistently negative attacks. The behavior generally includes an element of vindictiveness, and is intended to undermine, patronize, humiliate, intimidate or demean the recipient.” If this bullying involves any categories protected under NDAH, you should contact EOO rather than HR. In some cases, you should also contact the police (see above).

- 4) **Workplace environment and other day-to-day challenges.** Other matters regarding your workplace environment can be referred to HR, although in these matters, we generally recommend a more local response (if possible):
 - a) First, speak directly with the person to express your concern and see if the issues can be resolved.
 - b) If this approach (4a) is insufficient, or you do not feel safe or comfortable taking this approach, or the situation is more serious, speak with your supervisor (for graduate students, this would be your major advisor, or Graduate Advisor or Graduate Coordinator; for staff this would be the person you report to; for faculty this would be the Dean or Associate Dean of Academic Affairs). If that person is the source of your complaint, then you’ll need to approach a different individual (e.g., if a student’s concern is with their advisor, then they could go to the Graduate Advisor or the Graduate Coordinator or another trusted faculty member; if a staff member’s concern is with their supervisor, then they could go to the HR rep in OSE or the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, or another trusted faculty member).
 - c) If you take a specific concern to your supervisor or another member of the OSE community, and that complaint involves UGA’s NDAH policy, then they will be obligated to make an EOO report (see item #2 above).
 - d) Your supervisor or the responsible person to whom you take your complaint should ensure that you are provided with information about how to proceed and where to obtain further help, including coordination with the appropriate faculty, staff, or administrator to assist you in resolving the issue or in obtaining further information.

It is also helpful to keep in mind two general points:

Confidentiality. To the extent possible, it is important to maintain confidentiality of information related to all parties subject of a report or complaint. This is particularly important while an investigation is being conducted – to maintain a degree of independence of information that is collected.

Investigations. If an incident is to be investigated internally (i.e., by OSE) it is important that the investigating team consult with the Dean, UGA Office of Legal Affairs, and possibly other offices (e.g., the Graduate School, or HR) to ensure that the investigation is conducted in a manner that is consistent with UGA policy.

Below are resources that may be useful to you in resolving or dealing with work-place challenges.

Typically, your first point of contact will be:

<u>If you are a...</u>	<u>Your point of contact will be...</u>
Undergraduate student	Undergraduate Coordinator or Undergraduate Program Advisor
Graduate student	Graduate Coordinator or Graduate Program Advisor
Staff member	OSE HR Liaison or Associate Dean for Research
Faculty member	Associate Dean for Academic Affairs or Dean

Contact information:

OSE HR Liaison:	Jennifer Mathews Email: jtm@uga.edu Ecology Building, Rm. 106C
OSE Associate Dean for Academic Affairs:	John Drake Office: 706-818-4452 Email: jdrake@uga.edu Ecology Building, Rm. 26
OSE Associate Dean for Research and Operations	Sonia Altizer Office: 706-542-9251 Email: saltizer@uga.edu Ecology Building, Rm. 190
Graduate Coordinator:	Craig W. Osenberg Office: 706-713-2051 Cell: 352-262-9201 Email: osenberg@uga.edu Ecology Building, Rm. 25/32
Graduate Program Advisor:	Julie Escobedo Gunby Office: 706-542-3404 Email: gunby@uga.edu Ecology Building, Rm. 19
Undergraduate Coordinator	Amanda Rugenski Office: 706-542-9314 Email: atrugenski@uga.edu Ecology Building, Rm 138
Undergraduate Program Advisor	Misha Boyd Office: 706-542-0800 Email: mlboyd@uga.edu Ecology Building, Rm. 18

Other resources include:

Human Resources

- Workplace Concerns (Involving Faculty and Staff): <https://hr.uga.edu/supervisors/workplace-concerns-faculty-staff-relations/>
- Disability Services and Accommodations for UGA Employees: <https://hr.uga.edu/employees/workplace-concerns/disability-services-accommodations/>
- UGA Workplace Violence Policy: <https://policies.uga.edu/Human-Resources/Employment/Employment-Related-Policies/Workplace-Violence/>

Equal Opportunity Office

- UGA Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy: <https://eoo.uga.edu/policies/non-discrimination-anti-harassment-policy>
- Student Sexual Misconduct Policy: <https://eoo.uga.edu/policies/student-sexual-misconduct-policy>
- UGA Ombudspersons: <https://eoo.uga.edu/Meet-the-Ombudspersons>

Graduate Student Concerns

- <https://www.ecology.uga.edu/academics/graduate-school/>
- Graduate Bulletin: <https://gradweb01.cc.uga.edu/index.php/current-students/policies-procedures/graduate-bulletin/graduate-bulletin-a-c/>
- Graduate School Appeals Procedures: <https://gradweb01.cc.uga.edu/index.php/current-students/policies-procedures/academics/appeals/>
- Graduate School Mentor-Mentee Compacts: <https://grad.uga.edu/index.php/current-students/mentor-mentee-compacts/>
- Graduate Program Faculty Information: <https://gradweb01.cc.uga.edu/index.php/faculty-and-staff/graduate-faculty-information/>

Research Misconduct

- <https://research.uga/misconduct/>

UGA Student Complaint Portal

- UGA Student Complaints Portal (General): <https://studentcomplaints.uga.edu/>
- UGA Student Academic Complaints Portal: https://studentaffairs.uga.edu/site/content_page/academic-complaints-information

Disability Resource Center

- Register for Services: https://drc.uga.edu/content_page/register-for-services

UGA Police Department

- Emergencies: <https://www.police.uga.edu/campus-safety/emergencies/report-emergencies>

Counseling services

- In some cases, work-place conflicts can be emotionally challenging and stressful. If you are having challenges that exceed the support offered by your normal social network and professional mentors and peers, some help is available on-campus. Students can contact the [Counseling and Psychiatric Services](https://www.uhs.uga.edu/caps/welcome) <https://www.uhs.uga.edu/caps/welcome>

For clarification on positions of authority “whom a student could reasonably believe has the authority or duty of reporting” see: <https://eoo.uga.edu/definitions/position-authority>

In addition, the provost’s office provides an On-Campus Resource Guide:

https://provost.uga.edu/faculty-affairs/campus_wide_resources_2019.pdf