Title IX in the Classroom: Your Role as an Educator

Title IX requires that all educational programs be equally accessible to all individuals, regardless of their sex. As an educator, there are simple steps you can take to ensure that your classroom is accessible, and to help students access Title IX related University resources.

Know the University resources.

The entire Brown community has a shared responsibility to cultivate community well-being. You can do your part by being informed about the offices and individuals on campus who are responsible for resolving Title IX issues.

Establish expectations for classroom behavior.

Informing students that you expect respectful and equitable participation in your classroom can set the tone for the entire semester. Something as simple as “different perspectives on the subject matter are encouraged, but discriminatory beliefs and hostile actions will not be tolerated” can establish expectations. Your syllabus or a discussion on the first day of section are ideal opportunities to do this.

Provide a quality educational experience.

Your primary responsibility to your students is providing quality education and evaluating their performance. It can be challenging to accomplish these objectives effectively if you develop romantic relationships with your students. Brown prohibits relationships between instructors—including TAs—and students. You will meet your classroom goals most easily and effectively if you establish and maintain professional boundaries.

Respond compassionately and responsibly to disclosures with LEAD.

As a trusted mentor, it is possible students will confide in you about experiences of sexual and gender-based misconduct before they seek help from University resources. If this happens, remember to LEAD:

L isten without judgment. The single most important way you can support someone is by listening.

E xplain your University status. If you are a responsible employee, you are required to report any known details of an incident to the Title IX Office.

A ccess University resources. Regardless of what a student or colleague tells you, refer them to University resources.

D irect information to the Title IX Office. All other non-confidential employees are strongly encouraged to report.

Sample Syllabus Language:

“If you choose to tell me about an incident of gender-based violence, including sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking, or harassment that you experienced as a student, I am strongly encouraged* to direct the information to the Title IX Program Officer Rene Davis. If you tell me that you want to keep the details of the incident confidential, I will make sure to include that in the notice I send to the Title IX Office. If you would rather speak to a confidential resource, the following services are available to you on campus: [list out names and contact info].”

“If you are a responsible employee, you can replace “strongly encouraged” with “required.” If you are unsure about your obligations, contact the Title IX Office.