



COUNTERING IDENTITY-BASED HARM, DISCRIMINATION, AND HATE AT MSU

Last updated: September 2025

Identity-based harm refers to hurtful experiences based upon a part (or multiple parts) of someone’s identity, such as race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. It can be caused by acts that are verbal, physical, written, or digital and can occur at the **individual/interpersonal level** and the **institutional/structural level**.

Identity-based harm can be caused by prejudice, hostility or unjust treatment toward race, color, and/or national origin (including shared ancestry and caste), such as:

Anti-Blackness
(Black identity)

Antisemitism
(Jewish identity, Judaism)

Islamophobia/Arabophobia
(Muslim, Arab identity)

University Response for Potential Discriminatory Harassment vs Protected Speech

	EXAMPLES	RESPONSES
Potential Discriminatory Harassment	• Slurs, threats or intimidation • Patterns of offensive jokes/symbols/treatment targeted at individuals	• Investigation under the Anti-Discrimination Policy • Potential sanctions, outreach and support, prevention and education • Potential law enforcement referrals for hate crimes • Monitoring patterns of harmful behavior
Protected Speech	• Personal opinions • Non-disruptive protests • Academic debate • Controversial symbols	• Support for those impacted by harm • Evaluate need for public response • Education • Tracking to inform strategic climate efforts

POLICY APPLICATION

MSU’S ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICY PROHIBITS DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT BASED ON PROTECTED IDENTITIES

(a full list of these identities can be found in the policy)

Who can report?
Students, employees, patients, and visitors (anyone)

Where to report?
MSU Office for Civil Rights and Title IX Education and Compliance (civilrights.msu.edu)

How may OCR respond?
Supportive measures, education, investigations, and corrective action

If a **hostile environment** is identified, the university may offer education or support to help restore access to programs and activities. For more details, see the [Hostile Environment infographic \(civilrights.msu.edu/file-a-report/Hostile-Environment-Infographic1.pdf\)](https://civilrights.msu.edu/file-a-report/Hostile-Environment-Infographic1.pdf).

FILE A REPORT

OCR’s Investigation, Support and Resolution Department
408 W. Circle Dr. Suite 105, Olds Hall,
East Lansing, MI 48824
ocr.isr@msu.edu
517-353-3922
Incident Reporting Form
<https://msu.guardianconduct.com/incident-reporting/>

Report a Hate Crime
MSU Dept. of Police and Public Safety
by calling 911 or (517) 355-2221

EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

- MSU Dialogues - go.msu.edu/msudialogues
- MSU Student Support - msu.edu/students/support-resources
- MSU Antisemitism Guide - go.msu.edu/antisemitismguide
- MSU Hillel Jewish Student Center - msuhillel.org
- Conversations on Antisemitism and Islamophobia - go.msu.edu/conversations
- Serling Institute for Jewish Studies & Modern Israel - jsp.msu.edu
- Religious, Spiritual & Secular Identities - mosaic.msu.edu
- Protected Speech Resource: <https://msu.edu/freespeech/resources/>