The Final Rule: Title IX Hearing in a New Era
About Us

Grand River Solutions provides Title IX, equity, and Clery Act consulting services. Together, our experts have decades of direct, on-campus experience at both small and large, public and private institutions. This practical expertise derived from years of hands-on experience enables our team to offer customized solutions unique to your educational institution’s needs. Grand River has a suite of creative, cost-effective and compliant solutions to help schools meet their needs in innovative ways.
Today’s Agenda

01 Regulatory Overview
02 The Infrastructure for Compliance
03 Roles and Responsibilities
04 Pre-Hearing Tasks
05 The Hearing
06 Evidentiary Issues
07 Post-Hearing
The Infrastructure for Compliance

An overview of what is required and what is needed to comply
Regulatory Overview

Narrowed jurisdiction and expansive procedural requirements
Procedural requirements for Investigations

NOTICE TO BOTH PARTIES

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT EVIDENCE

AN ADVISOR OF CHOICE

WRITTEN NOTIFICATION OF MEETINGS, ETC., AND SUFFICIENT TIME TO PREPARE

OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW ALL EVIDENCE, AND 10 DAYS TO SUBMIT A WRITTEN RESPONSE TO THE EVIDENCE PRIOR TO COMPLETION OF THE REPORT

REPORT SUMMARIZING RELEVANT EVIDENCE AND 10 DAY REVIEW OF REPORT PRIOR TO HEARING
Procedural Requirements for Hearings

- Must be live, but can be conducted remotely
- No Compelling participation
- Standard of proof used may be preponderance of the evidence or clear and convincing; standard must be the same for student and employee matters
- Cross examination must be permitted and must be conducted by advisor of choice or provided by the institution
- Decision maker determines relevancy of questions and evidence offered
- Exclusion of Evidence if no cross examination
- Written decision must be issued that includes finding and sanction
What do we need to do all of this?

- Space
- Technology
- Clear & Comprehensive Procedures
- Staff
- Expertise and Confidence
The Infrastructure for Compliance
The Essential Elements of All Hearings

Due/Fair Process

Fair, Equitable, and Neutral

Consistency

Trauma Informed
Clear Procedures

Due Process

Fairness

Equity

Consistency

Trained Personnel
Roles and Responsibilities

People, Functions, and Impartiality
Other Considerations
Panel

- Number of panelists?
- Can you have a panel of one?
- Must finding be unanimous?
- Internal, external, or some combination?
The Players
Hearing Advisors

• Will conduct examination/cross
• Roles
• Training/Qualifications
• Communicating their role
• Enforcing their role
The Players
The Coordinator/Chair

- Oversees the Process
- Maintains order/decorum
- Supports the panel
- Makes ruling
- Voting or non-voting
- Writes the decision
- Trained
The Players
The Decision Maker

- May be Hearing Chair or on panel
- Determines whether policy was violated
- Cannot be investigator, Title IX Coordinator, or Appeals Officer
The Players

The Panel

- Fact finders
- Number of panelists?
- Composition?
- Makes the finding
- Unanimous?
- Pool?
- Recruitment and retention
Impartiality

WHAT DOES THIS *REALLY* MEAN?
Logistics of a Hearing
Considerations for the Physical Space

- Room location and set-up
  - Entrances, exits, and proximity
- Privacy screens & partitions
- Technology
- Hallway control
- Space for extra visitors
Remote Participation

- In whole or in part?
- Communication considerations
  - Chat function or emails
- Private consultation between parties and advisors
  - Use of breakout rooms
  - Communication considerations
- Practice runs
- Connectivity Considerations
Other Considerations

- Time Limits
- Breaks
- Formality, Order and Gate-Keeping
- Handling disruptions and interruptions
- Poor behavior?
- Recording
The Hearing

PART 2
Pre-Hearing Tasks

What should be done in advance of the hearing
Logistics

- Scheduling participants
- Reserving space
- Provision of accommodations
- Requests for delays; adjournments
Preparing the Parties and their Advisors, and the Witnesses

Pre-hearing instructions
- Via conference or meeting
- In writing

Set expectations
- Format
- Roles of the parties
- Participation
- Evidence
- Decorum
- Impact of not following rules
## Preparing the Decision Maker(s)

- Review evidence and report
- Review applicable policy and procedures
- Preliminary analysis of the evidence
- Determine areas for further exploration
- Develop questions of your own
- Anticipate the party's questions
- Anticipate challenges or issues
The Hearing
Opening Instructions by the Chair

- Set the stage
- Reiterate charges
- Reiterate rules and expectations
- Reiterate logistics for the day

*This should be scripted and used consistently.*
Cross Examination
Who does it?

- Must be conducted by the advisor
- If party does not appear or does not participate, advisor can appear and cross
- If party does not have an advisor, institution must provide one
Cross Examination
Role of the Decision Maker

- Rulings by Decision Maker required
  - Explanation only required where question not permitted
Cross Examination
Impact of Not Appearing

- Exclusion of all statements of that party
- Exception- DOE Blog
- What if a party or witness appears, but does not answer all questions
Common Challenges

• Non-appearance by a party or witness
• Non-appearance by an advisor
• Party or witness appears but declines to answer some (or all) questions
• Disruptions
• Maintaining Decorum
Evidentiary Issues
Evidence

“Something (including testimony, documents, tangible objects) that tends to prove or disprove the existence of an alleged fact; anything presented to the senses and offered to prove the existence or non-existence of a fact.”

Black’s Law Dictionary
Some Other Evidentiary Issues

- Character evidence
- Polygraph examinations
- SANE reports
- Articles from journals
- Past conduct of complainant, respondent
- Unlawfully obtained evidence
Logical connection between the evidence and facts at issue

Assists in coming to the conclusion – it is “of consequence”

Tends to make a fact more or less probable than it would be without that evidence
Relevance is Not...

- Strength of the evidence
- Believability of the evidence
- Based on type of evidence: circumstantial, direct
- Based on complicated rules of court
After the Hearing
Deliberations
Weighing the Evidence & Making A Determination

1) Evaluate the evidence collected to determine what factually is more likely to have occurred, and then

2) Analyze whether the conduct that happened constitutes a violation of the school’s policies
Policy Analysis

- Break down the policy into elements
- Organize the facts by the element to which they relate
Preponderance of the Evidence

- More likely than not
- Does not mean 100% true or accurate
- A finding = There was sufficient reliable, credible evidence to support a finding, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the policy was violated
Final Report

- The allegations
- Description of all procedural steps
- Findings of fact
- Conclusion of application of facts to the policy
- Rationale for each allegation
- Sanctions and Remedies
- Procedure for appeal
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