

5 Ways Institutions Can Strengthen Their Title IX Response

Policy matters. Lived experience proves why.

Title IX compliance is more than a checklist — it is a living institutional practice. The following five strategies are drawn from Dr. Grant's work as a civil rights compliance strategist, investigator, and educator. They are designed to help institutions move from reactive response to proactive, equity-centered accountability.

1

Train Beyond Compliance — Build Toward Culture Change

Annual Title IX training that checks a regulatory box is not enough. Institutions must invest in **ongoing, layered professional development** that reaches faculty, staff, administrators, and students with content that is contextually relevant, trauma-informed, and intersectionally grounded. One-size-fits-all modules rarely shift behavior or institutional culture.

Ask: When did we last audit who receives training and what it actually covers?

2

Take Retaliation Seriously — Before It Escalates

Retaliation is the most underenforced provision of Title IX — and the most damaging to complainants who come forward. Institutions must develop **clear, proactive retaliation monitoring protocols** that begin at the moment a report is filed, not after harm has already occurred. Staff must be trained to recognize subtle forms of retaliation, including social exclusion, grade manipulation, and professional sabotage.

Ask: Do our investigators and coordinators know how to identify and document retaliation in real time?

3

Center Pregnancy and Parenting Protections Explicitly

Title IX's protections for pregnant and parenting students are among the most underutilized and least understood provisions in higher education. Institutions must **proactively communicate** these rights — not wait for students to ask. Graduate students, student-athletes, and students in clinical or field-based programs are particularly underserved by vague or absent pregnancy accommodation policies.

Ask: Does our Title IX policy explicitly address graduate student pregnancy, medical leave, and lactation access?

4

Examine Who Is Investigated — and Who Is Not

Equity in Title IX enforcement requires examining **patterns in reporting, investigation, and sanctioning** across race, gender, disability status, and institutional role. If your institution's data shows that certain populations are disproportionately investigated or that certain complaints are routinely dismissed, that is a compliance concern — and a civil rights one.

Ask: Has our institution ever disaggregated Title IX data by race, disability, or student status?

5

Invest in Respondent Education — Not Just Sanctions

Institutional accountability does not end with a finding. **Psychoeducational intervention for respondents** — such as the CAER Model (Conduct Awareness & Equity Response) — provides a structured pathway for behavioral accountability that complements sanctions and reduces the likelihood of future harm. Education-based responses also strengthen an institution's defensible record of good-faith compliance efforts.

Ask: What educational resources does our institution offer respondents after a finding of responsibility?



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Dr. Grant is the founder of Grant Equity Consulting and creator of the CAER Model. She specializes in Title IX, gender-based harassment, disability access, and Black feminist policy analysis. Her training series are designed to move institutions from procedural compliance toward genuine culture change.

Ready to strengthen your Title IX response?

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