

# Threat Assessment and Violence Prevention Policy

**Responsible Offices:**

Division of Student Affairs  
& Enrollment Services,  
VCU Human Resources &  
VCU Police

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## POLICY STATEMENT AND PURPOSE

Virginia Commonwealth University is committed to using its best efforts to provide faculty, staff, and students with an environment that is safe, secure and free from threats, intimidation and violence. To promote an atmosphere that encourages learning and productive employment, VCU will not tolerate conduct or behavior at the University, including but not limited to:

- Injuring another person physically;
- Engaging in threatening behavior that creates a reasonable fear of injury to another person;
- Engaging in threatening behavior that subjects another individual to undue emotional distress;
- Possessing, brandishing, or using a weapon that is not required by the individual's position while on state premises or engaged in state business;
- Intentionally damaging property;
- Threatening to injure an individual or to damage property;
- Committing injurious acts motivated by, or related to, domestic violence or sexual harassment; and
- Retaliating against any individual who, in good faith, reports a violation of this policy.

Threats are unacceptable regardless of whether the person communicating the threat has the ability to carry them out, whether the threat is made on a present, conditional, or future basis, or whether the threat is made in person, through another person, in writing, over the phone, in the mail, or electronically.

For university employees, as determined by their managers, individuals found to engage in behavior in the workplace in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination and criminal prosecution using existing policies and procedures.

For university students, individuals found to engage in behavior in violation of this policy in an educational setting will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal and criminal prosecution using existing policies and procedures.

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## WHO SHOULD READ THIS POLICY

All VCU faculty, staff, and students should read this policy.

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## RELATED DOCUMENTS

State Policy 1.60, Standards of Conduct  
State Policy 1.80, Workplace Violence  
University Policy on Administrative and Professional Faculty  
VCU Ethics Policy on Computing  
VCU Human Resource Policy, Criminal Conviction  
Investigations  
VCU Promotion and Tenure Policy  
VCU Rules and Procedures  
Policies for Residence Hall Students  
Code of Virginia Section 23-9.2:10

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## CONTACTS

The Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services, Human Resources, and VCU Police, officially interpret this policy and shall revise or modify as necessary to meet the changing needs of Virginia Commonwealth University. Please direct policy questions to the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services.

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## DEFINITIONS

### **Threat Assessment Team**

A team of VCU faculty and staff that assesses campus threats and responds to incidents as appropriate. The team consists of representatives from VCU Police, Human Resources, University Counseling Services, Division of

Student Affairs, General Counsel's Office, and other units as determined necessary.

### **University Safety Committee**

The Provost's University Safety Committee is responsible for education and prevention of violence on campus. The committee is composed of representatives from Student Affairs, VCU Police, University Counseling Services, Human Resources, Residential Life and Housing, students, and other units as determined necessary.

### **Threatening Behavior**

Includes, but is not limited to:

- physical actions short of actual contact/injury (i.e., moving closer aggressively, waving arms or fists, yelling in an aggressive or threatening manner),
- general oral or written threats to people or property (i.e., "you better watch your back" or "I'll get you"), including the use of any electronic means,
- threats made in a "joking" manner,
- stalking behavior,
- hate speech, or
- implicit threats (i.e., "you'll be sorry" or "this isn't over yet").

### **Violent Behavior**

Includes, but is not limited to:

- any physical assault, with or without weapons,
- behavior that a reasonable person would interpret as being potentially violent (i.e., throwing things, pounding on a desk or door, or destroying property),
- specific threats to inflict harm (e.g., a threat to shoot a named individual), or
- use of any object to attack or intimidate another person.

### **Employee**

Any full- or part-time employee of the University, including, but not limited to, classified, hourly, faculty, adjunct faculty, and student workers.

## **Student**

Any person enrolled full-time or part-time in any program of studies at Virginia Commonwealth University and its various schools.

## **Workplace/Educational Setting**

Any location, either permanent or temporary, where faculty, staff, or students perform any work-related duty or are involved in educational activities. This includes, but is not limited to, the buildings and the surrounding perimeters, including the parking lots, field locations, and alternate work locations.

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## **PROCEDURES**

### **Reporting Threats and Violence**

#### *Reporting a Student:*

Any faculty or staff member who is aware of a threat, intimidating conduct, or act of violence made by a student must report the incident to his/her manager or Academic Dean/VP or designated contact and to the Associate Vice Provost and Dean of Student Affairs. Emergencies should be reported to the VCU Police at 828-1234. Faculty and staff working in off-campus locations (i.e., Northern Virginia or other state agencies) should report emergencies to local law enforcement.

Any student who is aware of a threat, intimidating conduct, or act of violence made by another student must report the incident to an appropriate University official including the Associate Vice Provost and Dean of Student Affairs, a faculty member, an academic advisor, a residence hall staff member or a student organization advisor.

#### *Reporting a Faculty Member:*

Any faculty member, staff member or student who is aware of a threat, intimidating conduct, or act of violence made by a faculty member must report the incident to the faculty member's Academic Dean/Department Head/VP. Emergencies should be reported to the VCU Police at 828-

1234. Faculty and staff working in off-campus locations (i.e., Northern Virginia or other state agencies) should report emergencies to local law enforcement.

*Reporting a Staff Member:*

Any faculty member, staff member or student who is aware of a threat, intimidating conduct, or act of violence made by a staff member must report the incident to Human Resources. Emergencies should be reported to the VCU Police at 828-1234. Faculty and staff working in off-campus locations (i.e., Northern Virginia or other state agencies) should report emergencies to local law enforcement.

*Domestic Violence in the University Environment:*

In an effort to promote a safer work environment, employees who are the victims of domestic violence, or who believe they may be the targets or victims of such violence, are encouraged to promptly notify their supervisor, an appropriate administrator, or the VCU Police. Likewise, to promote a safer educational setting, students who are victims of domestic violence, or who believe they may be targets of such violence, are encouraged to promptly notify the Associate Vice Provost and Dean of Student Affairs. Confidential advocacy services are available to students by contacting the Coordinator for Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Services at the Wellness Resource Center. Faculty, staff, and students who have Protective Orders also should provide copies to the VCU Police so that this office can (1) ensure appropriate law enforcement actions occur and (2) assist in maintaining the safety of potential victims. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent allowed by law.

**University Safety Committee Responsibilities**

The Provost's University Safety Committee is responsible for education and prevention of violence on campus. The committee works collaboratively with units on campus to achieve this objective.

**Threat Assessment Team Responsibilities**

As appropriate, VCU Police or other parties will notify the University's Threat Assessment Team to assist with

managing a threatening or violent situation. The threat assessment team is responsible for

- Assessing and managing incidents involving danger or violence;
- Determining appropriate action to assist the departments, faculty, staff and students,
- Conducting an investigation as appropriate;
- Developing and implementing an action plan to respond to specific incidents.

### **Department Responsibilities**

When notified of a threat or violent incident, management should respond in a prompt and effective fashion. Effective response includes a full and prompt investigation, determination of appropriate disciplinary action using existing policies and procedures, and follow-up with any affected faculty or staff, including

- Notifying the VCU Police regarding any threat or act of violence whether the information is known through firsthand knowledge or report;
- Cooperating with the Threat Assessment Team to implement any recommended action plan;
- Familiarizing employees with the University threat assessment and violence prevention policy.

Department heads are encouraged to schedule violence prevention training for supervisors and managers and to provide similar training for other staff as appropriate.

### **Faculty, Staff, and Student Responsibilities**

All faculty, staff and students are encouraged to be alert to the possibility of violence on the part of employees, former employees, students, customers, contractors, and strangers. Any report of violence or threats of violence will be handled in a confidential manner, with information released only on a need-to-know basis.

Faculty, staff and students who act in good faith by reporting real or implied violent behavior or violations of this policy will not be retaliated against or subjected to harassment.

Deliberately false or misleading reports of violence under this policy will be handled as incidents of unacceptable personal conduct, and individuals making such false or misleading reports will be subject to disciplinary action under the University's disciplinary policy.

Faculty, staff, and student responsibilities include

- Being familiar with the threat assessment and violence prevention policy;
- Reporting violations of the policy to the appropriate university official delineated in this policy and to the VCU Police, including threats or perceived threats.