



## University Policy: Threat Assessment Policy

**Policy Category:** Safety & Risk Management

**Subject:** Assessment of violent or threatening behavior on the University's premises or in any of its programs or activities.

**Responsible Executive:** Chief Financial Officer, Vice President & Treasurer

**Office(s) Responsible for Review of this Policy:** Office of Finance and Treasurer

**Supplemental Documents:** N/A

**Related University Policies:** Student Conduct Code; Interim Suspension for Students; Staff Personnel Policies; Faculty Manual

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### I. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all faculty, staff, and students of American University, and contractors, volunteers, and visitors (collectively "AU Community Members").

### II. POLICY STATEMENT

American University is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all AU Community Members and to prohibit all forms of violence on its premises or in any of its programs or activities. This Policy establishes procedures to prevent, deter, and respond to concerns regarding acts of violence. The University also offers assistance to departments and individuals in detecting indicators for concern and resources to protect themselves and their surroundings. AU Community Members are responsible for cooperating to maintain a safe environment. This Policy complements, and should be read together with, other policies governing student, faculty, and staff conduct.

### III. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Threats of Violence.** Threats of violence are language or behavior that (i) threatens physical injury to any person or intentional damage to property; and (ii) has the effect of intimidating, frightening, coercing, or provoking others, using a reasonable person standard. A threat can be verbal or nonverbal. It can be communicated orally, in writing, through gestures, or by any other means, including electronic transmission. It can be communicated directly to an intended recipient or through a third party including but not limited to social media sites.
  
- B. **Threat Assessment and Management Team (“TAMT”).** The Threat Assessment and Management Team is a multidisciplinary administrative group formed to address situations that may involve violence, threats, intimidation, or property damage. The TAMT is comprised of representatives from the following offices: American University Police Department, University Counseling Center, Risk Management, and Office of General Counsel. The TAMT will be convened and chaired by either the University’s Title IX Coordinator, the Assistant Vice President of Human Resources, the Deputy Provost and Dean of Faculty, or the Dean of Students on a case by case basis. The convening chair may appoint additional university representatives to the TAMT as needed.
  
- C. **Violence.** Violence is any physical action or behavior, whether intentional or reckless, that (i) harms or threatens the safety of any individual, group, or the campus community; or (ii) damages property.

#### IV. POLICY

##### A. General

1. The University does not tolerate violence or threats of violence against AU Community Members on its premises or in any university program or activity.

##### B. Process & Reporting

1. AU Community members employed by the University (including, but not limited to, student employees such as teaching assistants, resident assistants, and orientation leaders) and individuals covered by the University’s Out-of-State Staffing Policy have a duty to report any violence or threat of violence to the appropriate University offices as described in this Policy when they become aware of such conduct. AU Community members who have a duty

to report such conduct may be subject to discipline or corrective action for failing to fulfill this obligation.

2. Any other AU Community Member who are not employed by the University are highly encourages to report violence or threats of violence to the appropriate University offices as described in this Policy but they do not have a duty to do so.
3. AU Community Members who experiences or observes immediate violence or a threat of violence on the University's premise or in a university activity or program should immediately contact American University Police Department ("AUPD").
4. In cases of an emergency, AU Community Members can reach AUPD at (202) 885-3636. For all other non-emergency situations, AU Community Members can reach AUPD at (202) 885-2527. AUPD will notify other University offices as necessary, depending on the circumstances and individuals involved.
5. All activities or behaviors that are not imminent but have the potential to become threatening or violent should be reported promptly to the appropriate university official as stated below:
  - a) such behaviors by a staff member should be reported to the Assistant Vice President of Human Resources.
  - b) such behaviors by a faculty member should be reported to the Deputy Provost and Dean of Faculty.
  - c) such behaviors by a student should be reported to the Dean of Students.
6. Reports of violence or a threat of violence will be taken seriously and will be handled in a confidential manner to the extent possible.
7. The appropriate university official identified above will consult with the Assistant Vice President for University Police Services & Emergency Management regarding the report of violence or threat of violence and develop a recommended means of intervention.
8. Depending on the nature and severity of the report, the appropriate university official identified above may also convene the TMAT, as

appropriate, to assess the report of violence or threat of violence and consider and recommend means of intervention.

9. In addition, the University's Title IX Coordinator will contact the Assistant Vice President for University Police Services & Emergency Management as necessary to convene the TMAT to provide consultation regarding an emergency removal of a respondent pursuant to the University's Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy.
10. The TMAT will conduct an individualized and objective fact-based threat assessment. The TMAT is authorized to consult with external professionals as needed. To the extent possible, the assessment will determine the nature, duration, and severity of the threat, the probability that the potentially threatening injury will actually occur, and whether reasonable modifications of policies, practices, or procedures will sufficiently mitigate the threat. An individual's observed conduct, actions, and statements will be considered, not mere knowledge or belief that the individual has a mental health condition and/or disability. An individual with a mental health condition and/or disability will not be subjected to an adverse action based on unfounded fears, prejudice, and stereotypes.
11. If a student is reported to have committed such behaviors in violation of this Policy, then the student may be subject to discipline under the Student Conduct Code. The recommended means of intervention can include administrative and disciplinary remedies available under the Student Conduct Code including but not limited to: (i) interim suspension; (ii) disciplinary probation; (iii) suspension; (iv) removal from university housing; or (v) dismissal.
12. If a faculty or staff member is reported to have committed such behaviors in violation of this Policy, then the faculty or staff member may be subject to discipline under the Staff Personnel Policies or Faculty Manual. The recommended means of intervention can include administrative and disciplinary remedies available under those policies include: (i) temporary leave; (ii) written warning; or (iii) termination.
13. If an individual who is not a student, faculty, or staff member is reported to have committed such behaviors in violation of this

Policy, the individual will be removed from the University's premises and may be barred from the University's premises.

14. In addition to possible internal disciplinary action, such behaviors in violation of this Policy may also be referred to local law enforcement for further criminal action.

**C. Non-Retaliation and False Claims**

The University prohibits retaliation against persons who in good faith report violations of this Policy or cooperate in a threat assessment. The University also prohibits knowingly false or misleading information in a threat assessment. Discipline or other action can result from either of these acts in violation of this Policy.

**D. Confidentiality**

The University will make every reasonable effort to maintain the confidentiality of information shared throughout the threat assessment process. However, disclosures may be required for the purpose of fact-finding or efforts to resolve the threat assessment. In the limited instances where disclosures must be made by the University, disclosures will be limited to those persons necessary to proceed in the fact-finding process, to otherwise address the threat assessment, or in accordance with local and federal laws and University policies. All persons involved in the threat assessment will be advised of the importance of confidentiality throughout the process.

**E. Resources and Preparedness**

AUPD and the TMAT will educate the community about violence prevention.

**V. EFFECTIVE DATE AND REVISIONS:**

This Policy is effective as of December 15, 2008.

This Policy was reviewed or revised October 2010 and November 2020.