
Policy Number: 3.9

Policy Title: Religious Belief Nondiscrimination Policy

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the institution's full compliance with Arkansas Act 677, which prohibits government entities, including institutions of higher education, from discriminating against individuals or organizations based on sincerely held religious beliefs about marriage or biological sex.

II. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, students, student organizations, contractors, and any other individual or entity interacting with or operating within the university environment.

III. Policy Statement

The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff strictly prohibits discriminatory actions against any individual or organization based wholly or partially on their sincerely held religious beliefs regarding:

- The definition of marriage (e.g., belief that marriage is between one biological man and one biological woman); or
- The definition of biological sex (e.g., belief that sex is determined by anatomy at birth).

Discriminatory actions are broadly defined under **Ark. Code Ann. § 16-123-602(1)** and include, but are not limited to, denial of services, employment actions, academic decisions, and access to benefits.

IV. Prohibited Discriminatory Actions

The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff shall not:

1. **Deny, revoke, or withhold** a degree, license, certification, or other credential due to an individual's refusal to provide services that conflict with their religious beliefs.
2. **Mandate participation** in occupations, organizations, or practicum experiences requiring activities that conflict with an individual's religious beliefs.
3. **Disqualify, penalize, or retaliate** against students or employees for expressing or acting in accordance with religious beliefs related to marriage or biological sex.
4. **Discriminate against religious organizations** for making decisions consistent with their beliefs, including but not limited to:
 - Declining to solemnize marriages;
 - Providing or refusing services related to marriage celebrations;
 - Making faith-based employment decisions;
 - Maintaining sex-specific facilities based on biological sex.

V. Employee Speech and Expressive Conduct

The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff shall not take any negative employment action against an employee who:

- **Expresses beliefs about marriage or biological sex**, provided that the speech is lawful and:
 - Occurs **on campus** in accordance with policies governing time, place, and manner of expression (e.g., FORUM Act, Student Due Process and Protection Act), or
 - Occurs **off campus** in the employee's personal capacity.

VI. Application to Degree, Licensure, and Certification Programs

The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff shall not:

- **Refuse or revoke licensure or certification** based on a student's or applicant's refusal to support goals or outcomes contrary to their religious beliefs.

- **Condition graduation or program completion** on actions conflicting with the student's religious beliefs unless the university can demonstrate:
 - A **compelling governmental interest**, and
 - That such a requirement is the **least restrictive means** of achieving that interest.
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VII. Implementation and Reporting

- The Office of Integrity, Title IX & Compliance, and the Dean of Students shall oversee the implementation of this policy.
- Complaints of discrimination under this policy may be submitted to the Office of Integrity, Title IX, and Compliance, or Human Resources.
- All reported violations will be reviewed and addressed consistently with university grievance procedures.

Reports can be submitted through any of the following channels:

- **Online Submission:**
Complete the Bias/Discrimination Incident Reporting Form, available at:
https://uapb-advocate.symplicity.com/titleix_report/
- **Email Submission:**
Title IX Coordinator at:
titleix@uapb.edu
- **Phone or In-Person Reporting:**
Individuals may also contact or visit the following offices during normal business hours:

Office of Integrity, Title IX & Compliance
Location: Delta Housing Complex II, Suite 112
Phone: 870-575-8052
Email: titleix@uapb.edu

Office of the Dean of Students
Location: Caldwell Hall Room 201
Phone: 870-575-8361
Email: dsl@uapb.edu or owensr@uapb.edu

VIII. Retaliation Prohibited

Retaliation against individuals who assert or defend their rights under this policy is strictly prohibited and will be grounds for disciplinary action.

IX. Exceptions

Any exception to this policy must be approved in writing by the University's General Counsel and must satisfy the **strict scrutiny** standard under applicable law.

X. References

- **Arkansas Act 677 (2023)**
- **Ark. Code Ann. §§ 16-123-601 to -607**
- **FORUM Act**
- **Arkansas Student Due Process and Protection Act**

Effective Date: August 1, 2025, to comply with Act 677

Responsible Office: Office of Integrity, Title IX & Compliance, Dean of Students, and Academic Affairs