CSAW OR OCR: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

This guide explains how the Center for Student Advocacy and Wellness (CSAW) and the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance (OCR) support students specifically. Understanding the differences between these offices can help you access the support you need and have clear expectations heading into each space.

	CSAW	OCR
SCOPE	Serves undergraduate, graduate, and PhD students. While the office isn't able to work long-term with faculty or staff, CSAW can assist with consultation and referrals.	Serves and supports all students, staff, and faculty with reporting, investigations, accommodations, supportive measures, consultations, and referrals.
CONFIDENTIALITY	A confidential office, meaning nothing will be shared outside their office without your consent. There are a few exceptions to this, which your advocate will explain further.	Keeps your information as private as possible and only shares with the necessary parties but is not a confidential office.
NEUTRALITY	A confidential advocate will work with you to find a path forward that works best for your specific needs and situation.	As a neutral, investigatory office, OCR is not permitted to show bias towards or against any student.
INVESTIGATIONS	Does not investigate matters of sexual misconduct but can serve as a confidential advisor during a formal process. An advocate can also speak with you about different resolution options and expectations.	Conducts formal investigations into reports of discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct.
SUPPORT	Provides a supportive space to process your experiences, safety plan and strategize, explain University processes, and connect you with outside resources including therapy and medical and legal advocacy.	Provides supportive measures for those impacted by discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct. Supportive measures are personalized and may include academic, work, and housing accommodations. See Supportive Measures document.
MISSION	Through prevention, outreach, and response, CSAW works to create a Northwestern community where sexual violence, relationship violence, and stalking are not tolerated and to support students who have been impacted.	OCR works to create a culture of access, belonging, and accountability for all Northwestern community members. That includes supporting those impacted by discrimination, harassment, or sexual misconduct and providing individuals with reasonable accommodations related to disabilities, pregnancy, and religion.

Center for Student Advocacy and Wellness (CSAW)

847-491-2054
csaw@northwestern.edu
www.northwestern.edu/csaw

Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance (OCR)

847-467-6165
ocr@northwestern.edu
northwestern.edu/civil-rights-office

©2026 Northwestern University. All rights reserved. Produced by Global Marketing and Communications. 11-26/AE-HM/3757.