

Contractor and Grantee Whistleblowing

All Western University employees that contract with, or receive grants from, the federal government, including subcontractors, subgrantees and personal services contractor, can make protected whistleblowing disclosures about misconduct to federal agencies. Disclosures must be based on a reasonable belief that wrongdoing has occurred.

Examples of whistleblowing disclosures include:

- Gross mismanagement of a federal contract or grant
- Gross waste of federal funds
- Abuse of authority relating to a federal contract or grant
- Substantial or specific danger to public health or safety
- Retaliation because of a protected disclosure
- Violation of laws, rules, or regulations related to a federal contract (including the competition for or negotiation of a contract) or grant.

Complaints of this nature must be submitted within three years of the date of the alleged claim to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) of the federal agency that issued the contract or grant. OIGs maintain a hotline which offers a confidential means for reporting complaints. The following federal agency websites provide procedures for submitting complaints (this is not an exhaustive list):

- **Department of Agriculture:** <https://usdaoig.oversight.gov/resources/whistleblower-protection-coordinator>
- **Department of Defense:** <https://www.dodig.mil/components/administrative-investigations/DoD-hotline/>
- **Department of Education:** <https://oig.ed.gov/oig-hotline>
- **Department of Health and Human Services:** <https://oig.hhs.gov>
- **Department of Justice:** <https://oig.justice.gov/hotline/whistleblower-protection>
- **NASA:** <http://oig.nasa.gov/hotline.html>
- **National Science Foundation:** <http://www.nsf.gov/oig/>

After receiving such a complaint, the OIG will generally perform an investigation and submit a report to the federal agency, which then determines whether sufficient basis exists to conclude that misconduct occurred. Once the head of the agency involved received the OIG's report, the agency will grant (or deny) relief to the whistleblower and recommend effective corrective measures. If the agency denies relief, the whistleblower can take their claim to federal district court and may request a jury trial. The University has the right to appeal any agency order to the relevant United States court.