



Definitions of Sexual Harassment

Your Experts for Life

For Employees, harassment on the basis of sex is a violation of Section 703 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) guidelines define sexual harassment as follows: Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when: 1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment; 2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or 3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

For students, harassment on the basis of sex is a violation of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which prohibits sex discrimination in educational programs and activities. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when: 1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's status in a course, program, or activity; 2) submission to such conduct is used as the basis for academic decisions affecting the individual, including, but not limited to, grade or academic progress; or 3) when the conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with the individual's academic performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.

Who Can be Sexually Harassed?

Both males and females can be victims of sexual harassment, and both males and females can be perpetrators of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment can occur between supervisor and employee; coworker and coworker; campus visitor and university employee; professor and student, and student and student.

What You Can Do If You Are Sexually Harassed

Know your rights

- Sexual harassment is illegal and college policy prohibits any college employee (faculty, staff exempt, non-exempt, other academic, and student employees) or student from engaging in sexual harassment.

Speak up at the time

- Say "NO!" clearly, firmly, and without smiling. This is not the time to be polite or vague.
- By being quiet, you enable the harassment to continue.
- Speaking up can protect others from being victimized and may decrease your feelings of helplessness.

Don't Blame Yourself

- Sexual harassment is unwanted action that the harasser decides to take. It is not your fault.

Don't Delay

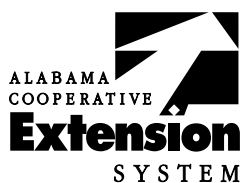
- If you delay action, the harassment is likely to continue. An employee or student may first pursue informal channels for resolving the situation.
- Employees may initially want to discuss the situation with a department head, dean or personnel officer.
- Students may first want to contact the appropriate dean or department head, or the dean of students.

If you are an observer of what you perceive to be sexual harassment, you can also take steps to stop this form of discrimination. You can:

- **Speak Up:** Inform the harasser that his/her actions may be perceived as sexual harassment.
- **Support the Victim:** Provide comfort and assurances to the victim.
- **Report the Incident:** Talk to appropriate persons within the department, or to the Office of Personnel Services.

CLOSING STATEMENT

It is important for persons (victims and observers) to seek advice in determining if what they are experiencing is sexual harassment. Seeking advice can also provide information on how to keep what are initial overtures from developing into harassment. Oftentimes, persons may feel that they can handle the situation when in fact they cannot. It is helpful to the college to know if such activities are occurring. Reporting the incident whether one decides to file an official complaint or not, benefits the victim, the college or university, and future students or employees.



Your Experts for Life

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For more information, call your county Extension office. Look in your telephone directory under your county's name to find the number.

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