

BOSTON UNIVERSITY LIFEBOOK

[Contact](#)


SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

Boston University is committed to the principle that no employee, student, or applicant for employment or admission should be subject to sexual harassment. The University strives to provide workplaces and learning environments that promote equal opportunity and are free from illegal discriminatory practices, including sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment is a violation of federal and state laws and of University policy, as is retaliation against any individual who in good faith files a complaint of sexual harassment or cooperates in the investigation of such a complaint. Upon receipt of a complaint of sexual harassment or retaliation, Boston University will undertake a fair and thorough investigation, with due regard for the rights of all parties. Every reasonable effort will be made to protect the confidentiality of the parties during the investigation. After an investigation, any person who is found to have sexually harassed or retaliated against another will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment and, if a student, expulsion from Boston University.

Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is defined as sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and any other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, whether intentional or unintentional, where:

- an individual's submission to or rejection of the conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of employment or of status in a course, program, or activity, or is used as a basis for employment or academic decision; or
- the conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance, academic performance, or educational experience, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating, or offensive working, educational, or living environment.

Examples of Conduct Which May Constitute Sexual Harassment

It is not possible to list all circumstances that might constitute sexual harassment. In general, sexual harassment encompasses any sexually related conduct which causes others discomfort, embarrassment, or humiliation, and any harassing conduct, sexually related or otherwise, directed toward an individual because of that individual's sex.

Such conduct is subject to this policy whenever it occurs in a context related to the employment or academic environments, or if it is imposed upon an individual by virtue of an employment or academic relationship.

A determination of whether conduct constitutes sexual harassment is dependent upon the totality of the circumstances, including the pervasiveness or severity of the conduct. The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination lists the following examples of conduct which may constitute sexual harassment:

- Unwelcome sexual advances —whether they involve physical touching or not;
- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life;
- Comment on an individual's body, comment about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess;
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, or cartoons;

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

[University Resources](#)
[Student Resources](#)
[University Policies & Procedures](#)
[Code of Student Responsibilities](#)
[Academic Policies](#)
[Nonacademic and Residential Policies](#)
[Residential Conduct and the Judicial Process](#)
[University Conditions of Use and Policy on Computing Ethics](#)
[Sexual Harassment Policy](#)
[University Statement on Illegal Drugs and Alcohol](#)
[University Policy Regarding Hazing](#)
[Crime Statistics](#)

- Unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing against the body, sexual gestures, or suggestive or insulting comments;
- Inquiries into one's sexual experiences; and
- Discussion of one's sexual activities.

In order to constitute sexual harassment, conduct must be unwelcome. Conduct is unwelcome when the person being harassed does not solicit or invite it and regards it as undesirable or offensive. The fact that a person may accept the conduct does not mean that he or she welcomes it.

As a university, Boston University, its employees, and students also must be aware of the need for freedom of inquiry and openness of discussion in its educational and research programs, and must strive to create and maintain an atmosphere of intellectual seriousness and mutual tolerance in which these essential features of academic life can thrive. No university can or should guarantee that every idea expressed in its classrooms or laboratories will be inoffensive to all; pursued seriously, education and scholarship necessarily entail raising questions about received opinions and conventional interpretations. Boston University does guarantee, however, that credible accusations of inappropriate sexual remarks or actions will be investigated promptly, thoroughly, and fairly.

Complaints

If you have any questions or concerns about sexual harassment, or if you wish to file a complaint of sexual harassment, you are strongly encouraged to contact immediately the appropriate person listed below:

Faculty, staff, or applicants for employment: contact the Equal Opportunity Officer in the Office of Equal Opportunity, 25 Buick Street, Room 274, 617-353-9286. Medical campus employees and applicants may also contact the Director of Personnel at the Medical Campus Personnel Office, 560 Harrison Avenue, Room 401, 617-638-4610.

Students: contact the Director of Judicial Affairs in the Office of Judicial Affairs and Student Safety Programs, 19 Deerfield Street, 617-358-0700. Students living in campus residences may also contact their local hall or area office. All students may also contact the Office of Equal Opportunity.

Applicants for admission: contact the Equal Opportunity Officer in the Office of Equal Opportunity, 25 Buick Street, Room 274, 617-353-9286.

Employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement: specific provisions of the agreement may provide additional options for addressing a sexual harassment complaint.

Some of the Schools and Colleges at Boston University have also established their own procedures for handling issues of sexual harassment. Faculty, students, and staff who are members of academic units may contact the office of their dean to determine whether to use these complaint procedures. They are not required to do so.

Nothing in this policy is intended to limit the authority of Boston University to take appropriate disciplinary action against any individual who violates University rules or policies, whether or not the conduct constitutes sexual harassment under law or University policy.

State and Federal Agencies

In addition to the above, you may file a formal complaint with the government agencies listed below:

Faculty, staff, applicants for employment, or students:

Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination
One Ashburton Place, Room 601
Boston, Massachusetts 02108
617-727-3990

Faculty, staff, or applicants for employment:

United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
John F. Kennedy Building, 475 Government Center
Boston, Massachusetts 02203
617-565-3200

Students, applicants for admission, faculty, staff, or applicants for employment:

Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Education
33 Arch Street, Suite 900
Boston, Massachusetts 02110
617-289-0111

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[SEARCH](#)

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