



UW-MADISON SEXUAL HARASSMENT INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

[Sexual Harassment Home](#)

[What is sexual harassment?](#)

[What to do about sexual harassment?](#)

[Consequences of sexual harassment](#)

[Campus policies](#)

[Campus resources](#)

[Informational sessions](#)

[Safety and sexual assault](#)

[Site index](#)

What is Sexual Harassment?

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- submission to such conduct is a condition of employment, academic progress, or participation in a university program; or
- submission to or rejection of such conduct influences employment, academic or university program decisions; or
- the conduct interferes with an employee's work or a student's academic career, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work, learning, or program environment.

[Tangible Action or Quid Pro Quo \(This for That\) Sexual Harassment](#) and [Hostile Environment Sexual Harassment](#) are both illegal and unacceptable.

Key Points About Sexual Harassment

Differences in power or status can be a significant component in sexual harassment. A person who seems to acquiesce to sexual conduct may still experience tangible action harassment or hostile environment harassment if the conduct is unwelcome.

Harassment can occur between men and women or between members of the same gender.

Sexual harassment may or may not involve a tangible injury (e.g., economic loss, lowered grades). A sexually harassing environment, in and of itself, may constitute a harm.

Sexual harassment must be addressed and corrected regardless of the position or status of the harasser or the person being harassed.

Conduct is not always offensive or unwelcome to the same degree when perceived by different people. Courts use a "reasonable person" standard to determine whether contested behavior constitutes sexual harassment.

Individuals in positions of authority are responsible for ensuring that employees, students or others do not harass. In the workplace, offenders can be supervisors, co-workers, or non-employees such as vendors, customers and suppliers. In an academic or program setting, offenders can be faculty, instructors, lecturers, teaching assistants, coaches, tutors, or fellow students or program participants.

The person filing a sexual harassment charge does not have to be the person harassed but could be anyone significantly harmed by the harassing conduct.

Harassment does not have to be reported immediately, but a significant delay may be a factor in the evaluation of a complaint. A delayed report may result in a dismissal of the complaint (e.g., 300 days, Wisconsin Personnel Commission).

Allegations involving classroom and teaching expression will be assessed using the university's Prohibited Harassment Policy as it applies to academic speech (Faculty Document 1402c, as amended on 1 March 1999).

Some behavior that is not in violation of university policy may, nonetheless, be unprofessional under the circumstances. Consequences of such unprofessional behavior may include poor performance evaluations or possible discipline.

UW-Madison | Provost | OED | Sexual Harassment

File last updated: February 2, 2007

Feedback, questions or accessibility issues: jisc@bascom.wisc.edu

Copyright © 2007 The Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System.