

# SEXUAL HARASSMENT

## What is sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment is unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature. It is rarely motivated by sexual desire, but by a desire to exploit or exercise power over another person.

Sexual harassment occurs most commonly when a person in a less powerful position is pressured to meet the sexual demands of an individual in a more powerful position or is subjected to unwanted sexual attention from the person in a more powerful position (e.g., between a professor and a student).

However, sexual harassment can also occur between persons of the same status (e.g., classmates or co-workers).

Sexual harassment creates a learning or working environment that is intimidating, hostile, or offensive, or one that unreasonably interferes with your work or academic performance. Sexual harassment can be accompanied by the suggestion of a tangible benefit — such as a high grade, promotion, or good recommendation — or by an implicit or overt threat — such as, failing a course or losing a job.

Sexual harassment can occur on University premises or off-campus at University – sponsored events. It can occur between members of the same gender or different genders.

## Examples of Sexual Harassment

- A job or a grade in a class depends on your willingness to submit sexually.
- Attempts are made to kiss or fondle you without your permission. You feel intimidated in your classroom, residence hall, or place of study because of sexually offensive behavior or comments.

Sexual harassment can make people feel angry or frightened. The University is committed to maintaining a community free from all forms of sexual harassment.

The University also has a policy on non-harassing faculty-student relationships: if a teacher or advisor (including TAs) has an intimate (sexual or romantic) relationship with a student, the teacher has to remove himself or herself from any and all supervisory or evaluative roles in connection with that student.

## What can you do if you think you are being harassed?

You have choices!

- Tell the offending person directly. Tell him or her that the behavior or comments make you uncomfortable and that you want it to stop. (Sometimes it's easier to write this down in a note to the person!)
- Keep a record of what happened and when it took place.
- Find out to whom the offending person reports (or who is responsible for the physical space where the offense occurred) and tell him or her your concerns. This might be the chair of a department, a dean, or a supervisor. Any University administrator must respond to you complaint.
- Seek support from a close friend, someone you trust, or a counselor.
- Seek assistance from the resources listed below.

If you think you are being sexually harassed, or even if you are not sure, talk to someone. For more information, see:

<http://www.pitt.edu/~provost/har.html>

## **Campus Resources**

Office of Affirmative Action 901 William  
Pitt Union 412-648-7860

University Student Judicial System 738  
William Pitt Union 412-648-7918

Office of the Provost 801 Cathedral of  
Learning 412-624-0790

## **Counseling**

Sexual Assault Services 334 William Pitt  
Union 412-648-7930

Counseling Center 334 William Pitt Union  
412-648-7930