

Anti-Harassment Policy

Statement of Policy

It is the policy of the Department of Higher Education to provide its employees with a workplace that is free of sexual harassment. Regardless of whether the conduct results from maliciousness, thoughtlessness, or misguided good will, sexual harassment in the workplace is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations of this policy will be treated as serious disciplinary infractions.

Any employee who believes that he or she is a victim of any form of illegal discrimination, including sexual harassment, or any employee who witnesses or has knowledge of such impermissible conduct is urged to report it through the internal grievance procedures set forth in Section 46 of the Department's Affirmative Action Plan. An investigation will be conducted promptly and appropriate action will be taken to remedy the problem. This Department will take reasonable and appropriate action to protect employees who report illegal discrimination, including sexual harassment, from retaliation.

Definition of Sexual Harassment

The term "sexual harassment" refers to any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature where: (a) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment; (b) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for an employment decision affecting such individual; or (c) such conduct is so severe or pervasive that it has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Examples of Sexually Harassing Conduct

Although not exhaustive, the following are examples of conduct that may constitute sexual harassment:

1. Engaging in sexual flirtation, touching, advance or proposition.
2. Verbal abuse of a sexual nature.
3. Making graphic or suggestive comments about an individual's dress or physical appearance.
4. Using sexually degrading words to describe an individual.
5. Displaying sexually suggestive objects or materials, such as sexually explicit photographs or drawings.
6. Making a comment or spreading a rumor that embarrasses, ridicules or demeans a person because of the individual's gender or sexual orientation.
7. Threatening or insinuating, either explicitly or implicitly, that an employee's refusal to submit to sexual advances shall adversely affect the employee's continued employment, performance evaluation, wages, advancement, assigned duties, or any other privilege or condition of employment.

Employee Responsibilities

1. Each employee shall refrain from engaging in any activity or behavior that may constitute sexual harassment.
2. Any employee who believes that he or she has been subjected to sexually harassing conduct should immediately complain to the commissioner and/or affirmative action officer in accordance with the internal grievance procedures.
3. Any employee who witnesses sexually harassing conduct, or who becomes aware that another employee has been subjected to sexual harassment, is urged to immediately report the harassment to the commissioner or affirmative action officer.
4. No employee shall retaliate against another employee for complaining about or reporting sexually harassing conduct, or for participating in any internal or external investigation of such conduct.

Management Responsibilities

The Department's administration, departmental chiefs, office heads and its affirmative action officer shall make reasonable efforts that every work site is free of sexual harassment. These efforts shall include, but shall not be limited to:

1. Implementing preventive measures, including complying with the training and informational posting requirement of the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, set forth in Sections 46a-54-200 through 46a-54-207 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies.
2. Monitoring working conditions to detect sexually harassing conduct.
3. Conducting a prompt and thorough investigation of each complaint or report received, and communicating the results of the investigation to the employee who was allegedly subjected to harassment.
4. Carrying out expeditious remedial measures reasonably calculated to prevent and correct any sexually harassing conduct that has occurred.