Sexual Harassment Information & Resources

How You Can Prevent Sexual Harassment in Your Classroom

Sexual harassment

- A form of sex discrimination that involves unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when
  - a person’s job, pay, or career is placed at risk OR
  - an employee’s conditions of employment or career are affected OR
  - an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment is created.

While the Civil Rights Act refers specifically to the “workplace,” this term also applies to CLASSROOMS, LABS, dormitories, and cafeterias.

What does that mean in terms of behavior in the academic arena?

- Verbal comments
- Nonverbal gestures
- Physical contact

Verbal Comments

Examples of sexual harassment:
- Telling “off-color” jokes
- Using profanity
-Expressing threats
-Making sexual comments
-Whistling in a sexual manner
-Asking about one’s sexual fantasies/preferences
-Describing one’s physical sexual attributes or appearance
-Using terms of endearment such as “Honey”, “Babe”, “Dear”, “Stud”, or “Hunk” when referring to co-workers, employees or students

Nonverbal Gestures

Examples of sexual harassment:
- Staring at someone
- Blowing kisses
- Winking
- Licking one’s lips in a suggestive manner
- Displaying sexually oriented pictures or cartoons in a classroom, lab, or office
- Using sexually oriented screen savers on classroom, lab, or office computers
- Sexually oriented notes, letters, faxes, or email
Nonverbal forms of sexual harassment may take on a more hostile appearance after the victim has rejected the advances of the offender.

Physical Contact
Examples of sexual harassment:
- Touching
- Patting
- Pinching
- “Accidentally” bumping
- Grabbing
- Cornering or blocking a passageway
- Kissing
- Providing unsolicited back or neck rubs

Is this sexual harassment?
An easy way to determine whether a specific incident or behavior constitutes sexual harassment is to ask the following questions:
- Is the behavior sexual in nature?
- Is the behavior unwelcome?
- Does the behavior create a hostile or offensive environment?
- Would you behave that way if someone you respected were present?

Identifying sexual harassment
- Sexual harassment can manifest itself in a number of ways. If you are uncertain, call the Women’s Resource Center or the Office of Diversity Management for assistance.
- Remember: men can be victims of sexual harassment, also.

How Can I Prevent Sexual Harassment In the Classroom?
- Don’t allow sexual harassment to take place in your classroom, lab space or work area. If you witness an incident, do something about it.
- Support those you know who are having harassment problems. Encourage them to take action or report it yourself.
- Don’t accept sexual harassment as “the way things are” or be fooled into thinking sexual harassment is a joking matter.
- Share information about sexual harassment with others.

Preventing sexual harassment
Direct Approach
- Confront the harasser and tell him or her that the behavior is not appreciated, unwelcome, illegal and that it must stop.
- Stay focused on the behavior and its impact, not the individual person.
- Use common courtesy.
- Write down thoughts before approaching the individual involved.
Preventing sexual harassment

Indirect Approach

Send a letter to the harasser stating the facts, personal feelings about the inappropriate behavior, and expected resolution.

Third Party Approach

- Request assistance from another person to talk to the harasser, accompany the victim, or intervene on behalf of the victim to resolve the conflict.
- This could be a supervisor, manager, HR official, or Student Affairs official.

Supervisory Involvement

Report the behavior to immediate supervising faculty member or others in chain of command and ask for assistance in resolving the situation.

To File A Formal Complaint

- Contact the Office of the Dean of Students (or Office of Diversity Management). Keep notes of dates, locations, and witnesses.
- If you are uncertain about whether or not you would like to file a complaint, you may contact these offices for assistance. Until you name a person or department, you can remain anonymous.
- Review Georgia Tech’s policy on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct for further information.

A complaint must be presented within one year of the alleged harassment.

Contacts for complaints and questions

- For faculty-to-student, student-to-faculty or student-to-student harassment, contact:
  Office of the Dean of Students, Student Services Building, Room 210, (404) 894-6367
  Dean Gail DiSabatino or Dean Stephanie Ray (404) 894-6367
  Women’s Resource Center, Student Services Building, Room 217 (404) 385-0230
  Yvette Upton, WRC Coordinator. (404) 385-1563

- For employee-to-employee harassment:
  Office of Diversity Management, 490 10th Street, (404) 894-0410
  Pearl Alexander, Director (404) 894-0300
  Thomas Vance, Sr. Diversity Management Specialist (404) 894-3249
  Nicole Shinnoster Stephens, Diversity Management Specialist (404) 385-0338