

Support on Campus

Counselling and Person Enrichment Section (CoPE) of CEDARS

Tel: 3917 8388

E-mail: cedars-cope@hku.hk

Equal Opportunity Advisors (EOAs)

EOAs serve as the first contact point in the Department/Unit/Hall/College to assist students, staff and other workplace participants, and advise on equal opportunity-related matters.

Find your EOA



Equal Opportunity Unit (EOU)

Tel: 3917 1768

E-mail: eounit@hku.hk

Online form for seeking advice/assistance or lodging a complaint



Security Control Centre

If you are worried about your personal safety on campus, call the Security Control Centre (24-hour) at 3917 2882.

Enquiries Outside Campus

Equal Opportunities Commission

The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) has an anti-sexual harassment hotline: 2106 2222. You can also find more information and contacts of external support services from the EOC's Anti-Sexual Harassment Resources.

How to Deal with Sexual Harassment?



- **Say "No"**
Tell the harasser that the behaviour is unwelcome and must be stopped immediately. Don't ignore the behaviour as it might be taken as tacit consent.
- **Keep a record**
Write down the details of the incidents, including the dates, times, location and witnesses, as well as your reactions and feelings.
- **Seek advice or assistance**
Consult the Equal Opportunity Advisors (EOAs) of your Department/Unit/Hall/College, Head of Department/Unit, Hall Warden or College Master, or the Equal Opportunity Unit (EOU). They are impartial and will support you to make your own decision on how to resolve the matter, for example, through mediation between you and the respondent. All the information provided will only be disclosed to relevant parties on a need-to-know basis.

In addition, students may seek psychological support from the Counselling and Person Enrichment Section (CoPE) of the Centre of Development and Resources for Students (CEDARS). Staff members may seek counselling and consultation services under the Employee Assistance Programme of the Human Resource Section.

- **Lodge a complaint**
Notwithstanding EOU's continuous efforts to raise awareness of anti-sexual harassment among students, staff and other workplace participants, it is recognised that problems may still arise. The University has put in place the Procedures for Handling Discrimination/Harassment Complaints ("the Procedures"), which apply to current staff and students. Under the Procedures, you may opt to resolve the complaint through mediation or other informal measures, or decide to proceed with the formal procedures. You can contact EOU to discuss your case confidentially.

Retaliation against complainants and witnesses are prohibited by the Equal Opportunity Policy and the SDO. No action will be taken if a complaint which proves to be unfounded is judged to have been made in good faith.

You may also lodge a complaint directly with the Equal Opportunities Commission of Hong Kong, or take civil action at the District Court; and in potential criminal cases such as indecent assault or rape, make a report to the police.

Flow Chart of Procedures



Handling Sexual Harassment: A Guide for Staff and Students



EQUAL OPPORTUNITY UNIT
THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

The University's Standpoint

As set out in the Equal Opportunity Policy ("the Policy"), the University is committed to creating, promoting and maintaining an environment of equality of opportunity for members of the University community, free of any discrimination/harassment. Hence, the University takes a zero-tolerance stance towards sexual harassment. The University will take whatever action may be needed to prevent, and if necessary, discipline behaviour which violates the Policy.

Why is Sexual Harassment such a Serious Concern?



Sexual harassment can have serious negative impact on an individual, affecting academic or work performance, and physical or psychological health. It also hinders the University's efforts to create a respectful, inclusive and productive learning and working environment. Sexual harassment is unlawful under the Sex Discrimination Ordinance (SDO) of Hong Kong, and the harasser is personally liable under the law for his or her acts of sexual harassment.



What is Sexual Harassment?



There are two types of sexual harassment as defined under the SDO:

1. Person-to-person sexual harassment

A person makes an unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature to another person, where an objective, reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would have anticipated that the person being harassed would be offended, humiliated or intimidated. It includes any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other conduct of a sexual nature, whether physical, verbal or electronic. Examples:

- Inappropriate touching by a hallmate/colleague, which makes you feel offended.
- A classmate/colleague sends you pornographic images or text messages on social media, which make you feel offended.
- A hallmate takes photos at parts of your body without your consent, making you feel offended and intimidated.
- Your supervisor/tutor asks you questions about your sex life, making you feel humiliated.
- Your boss offers you a promotion in return for your sexual favours, which makes you feel humiliated.

2. Sexually hostile or intimidating environment

Another form of sexual harassment occurs when a person, alone or together with other persons, engages in conduct of a sexual nature which creates a sexually hostile or intimidating environment for another person. The behaviour need not be directly or consciously targeted at an individual. Examples:

- Display of pornographic pictures or posters at the workplace or student residence
- Sexual or obscene jokes at the workplace or during sports activities in the presence of other colleagues or students
- Sexually suggestive games in orientation camp
- Turn classroom discussion into sexual topics that are not related to the course

What is Not Sexual Harassment?



A conduct that is not unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature is not sexual harassment. Hence, conduct of a sexual nature but is welcome, or unwelcome conduct of a non-sexual nature is not sexual harassment. Examples:

- Mutual flirtation between two students
- Hugs or kisses which are not unwelcome between friends

Related Guidelines and Information



- Guidelines Governing Relationships Between and Among University Staff and Students

Teachers and supervisors should be familiar with the University's Guidelines Governing Relationships Between and Among University Staff and Students. Staff members must remain professional in all places and on all occasions associated with their capacity at the University, and in all forms of communications at all times. The speed and informality of social media communications do not change the nature of teacher-student or professional relationships.



- FAQ on Sexual Harassment

