Respect in the University

Respectful University Services
Human Resources Department

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Respectful University Policy

The purpose of this policy is to cultivate a respectful workplace and learning environment through the prevention and swift resolution of harassment and discriminatory incidents.

This Policy covers:
- Discrimination
- Harassment
- Personal Harassment or Bullying
What is Discrimination?

Discrimination is intentional or unintentional differential treatment based on one’s membership in a **protected group** for which there is no reasonable justification.

- Based on one or more protected characteristics, generally referred to as “prohibited grounds”
- Treatment imposes burdens, obligations or disadvantages; denies opportunities
Prohibited Grounds

Also referred to as protected characteristics

- Country of origin, nationality, ancestry, race, colour
- Religion, belief system or creed
- Sex, sexual orientation, gender
- Disability
- Marital or family status
- Receipt of public assistance
- Age, physical size or weight
What is Harassment?

Objectionable, offensive comments or conduct that is:

• unwanted and unwelcome

• behaviour which a “reasonable person” would know (or ought to know) would be humiliating, intimidating, offensive or constituting a threat to the health or safety of an individual; or

• would reasonably be perceived to constitute a hostile, intimidating or humiliating environment or perceived as a promise of reward or threat of reprisal

• constitutes a threat to health or safety
Harassment can include:

- Unwelcome physical contact
- Inappropriate looks or gestures
- Circulating offensive materials
- Persistent criticism and unreasonable demands
- Harassing emails or posts to social media sites
- Offensive jokes
- Malicious gossip
- Insulting and demeaning verbal comments

Harassment usually involves repeated harassing behaviour; one incident that is serious enough to significantly impact your ability to cope might also constitute harassment.

http://hres.mcmaster.ca/resources-1
Sexual Harassment

Attention of a sexual nature or attention based on gender, or sexual orientation that is unwanted and unwelcome

• Intimidating, demeaning, humiliating
• Threat of punishment/promise of reward (quid pro quo) or hostile environment
• Threat to health or safety
  – Can be behaviour that includes sexual attention of an interpersonal nature
  – Can be behaviour that is derogatory and demeaning based on sex or gender
Examples of Sexual Harassment

- Staring, leering or gesturing
- Sexual jokes, innuendoes or teasing
- Persistent and unwanted flirting, requests for dates, gifts, phone calls, love letters
- Gender-based comments such as those about sex life or body parts, or gender derogatory comments
- Unwanted touching, patting, rubbing against or pinching
- Stalking, rape and other explicit sexual aggression
- Quid pro quo
What is Personal Harassment?

**Personal harassment** refers to objectionable and unwanted behaviour with no legitimate purpose that is:

- not based on a prohibited ground, but which constitutes a clear pattern of mistreatment by a person who knows, or ought reasonably to know, that the behaviour is unwanted and/or unwelcome, and

  a) would reasonably be perceived to be severe enough to create a hostile, intimidating, or humiliating environment for working or learning; and/or

  b) constitutes the abuse of an unequal institutional power relationship, or misuses authority.
What is the Difference between Offensive and Harassment?

- Not everything that causes concern or gives offense is harassment.
- If this were true, then no interaction is safe.
- Harassment is a serious accusation which should not be used as a label for petty acts and foolish words.
- We are not perfect. All of us, on occasion, are stupid, heedless, thoughtless, and insensitive.

Heather Laing, 1994 Board of Inquiry Decision BC
What is Not Harassment?

- Appropriate disciplinary action
- Insistence on academic excellence
- Academic study of controversial topics
- Appropriate direction of the workforce
- Correction, grading or assessment of academic work
- Mildly bothersome behaviour which is not harmful
- Relationships or interactions of mutual consent
- Jokes and teasing that are not offensive to others
- Practices required or permitted by law
Conflict is unavoidable. It is inherent within all organizations and groups. Conflict is not the same as disrespect, although people may behave disrespectfully within conflict.
When it comes to issues of respect and conflict, it is the impact of our actions that matters, not our intentions. An individual may have no intent to be disrespectful, but if he or she is perceived as disrespectful, then the behavior is disrespectful.

If our intent was not malicious but the effect was negative, we must acknowledge, apologize for, and change our behavior, even when we meant no harm.
BEFORE DOING ANYTHING, REMEMBER:

Email and social media are very poor ways to address disrespect and conflict. They typically only escalate the situation. Address issues in person, or if that is not possible, over the phone.
Questions
Comments
Discussion
Contact Information

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www.uregina.ca/hr/services/respectful-university-services/index.html