

Understanding Sexual Harassment

Some things are not fun, not appropriate, and not even legal...

- **What is Sexual Harassment?**
- **What Behaviors Can Be Considered Sexual Harassment?**
- **When Assessing My Own Behavior, What Should I Consider?**
- **Is My Behavior Unwelcome?**
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Dear UNLV Faculty, Staff and Students:

The subject of sexual harassment is often discussed these days. The topic seems to generate a wide range of emotional responses, including curiosity, vulnerability, fear, and even hostility. With such strong reactions, it is no wonder that every institution struggles to create carefully crafted, legally and ethically sound policy regarding this rather complex issue.

I would like to help simplify the matter on our campus. Sexual harassment has no place here. It can be very damaging, both personally and professionally, to the individuals involved, as well as to our institution. We must keep in mind that sexual harassment not only defies university policy; it is also illegal. Simply put, sexual harassment will not be tolerated on our campus.

All members of the university community must take seriously the implications of this problems. Administrators and supervisors in particular must handle reports of sexual harassment quickly and effectively on a consistent basis. It is our goal, as our policy states, to keep the university environment free of sexual harassment. This brochure has been designed to help meet that end by providing the campus community with a greater understanding of the issue. Please read it carefully. Sincerely,

Dr. Carol C. Harter
UNLV President

What Is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual behavior. However, sexual harassment is not just about sex; it often involves issues of power and personal respect. There are two types of sexual harassment:

1. **Quid pro quo** -- (Latin phrase meaning "this for that") When submission to sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic evaluation.
2. **Hostile environment** -- when unwelcome sexual behavior has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or academic environment.

What Behaviors Can Be Considered Sexual Harassment?

Behaviors that can be considered sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Making suggestive comments about a person's clothing, anatomy, or looks
- Uninvited sexual teasing, telling sexual jokes, or using sexual innuendoes
- Asking inappropriate questions about a colleague's or student's personal life
- Offering any benefit (grades, a promotion, a positive evaluation) in exchange for sexual favors
- Uninvited and deliberate inappropriate touching
- Restricting or hindering another person's movements
- Looking a person up and down with "elevator eyes" or staring
- Making uninvited sexually suggestive facial expressions, sounds, or gestures
- Sending uninvited letters or materials of a sexual nature or making uninvited telephone calls
- Repeatedly asking a person out on a date, even after that person has said no
- Belittling or ridiculing a gender through comments or jokes
- Displaying sexually oriented posters, calendars, cartoons, or other similar material

When Assessing My Own Behavior, What Should I Consider?



Impact vs. Intent. Even if certain behavior is not intended as sexual harassment, it is the impact of that behavior that is regarded as critical in determining if sexual harassment has occurred. It is a misconception held by many individuals that conduct must be intended to harass in order for it to constitute sexual harassment.



Power. Never use the power of your position to gain sexual favors or to influence your personal relationship with an employee or student.



Response. Be sensitive to responses to your behavior. Pay close attention to both verbal and nonverbal communication; if you observe any sign that you are making someone uncomfortable, stop the offensive behavior immediately.

Is My Behavior Unwelcome?

To determine if your behavior is unwelcome, you should ask yourself the following:

-  Would I want any of my behavior to be the subject of a column in my organization's newsletter or to appear on the evening news?
-  Would I behave the same way if my spouse or significant other were standing next to me?
-  Would I want someone else to act this way toward my spouse, child, or significant other?

If You Are a Victim, What Should You Do?

-  If you feel comfortable doing so, tell the harasser firmly that what he/she is doing or saying is unwelcome. Be assertive; use eye contact and body language to help convey your message.
-  Talk about the situation with someone you trust. Be selective. It is essential that you tell someone who will listen and who can be objective. Sometimes sharing will help you gain a better understanding of the situation and what to do.
-  Keep a diary at home.
 -  Make entries the same day the incident occurs and be accurate and concise.
 -  Write down what happened, where it happened, who saw it, and who heard it.
 -  Note when you complained and to whom
-  If the offensive behavior continues, consider following up with a letter to the harasser. State again what was said, how you felt about it, the date and the time of the interaction, and that you would like it to stop.
-  Report it officially. If you feel at any time that you are in danger, file a police report.

If You Are a Victim, Where Should You Go to Report Sexual Harassment?

Initial reports of or inquiries about sexual harassment should be directed to the:

Director of Diversity Initiatives
Ann Casados-Mueller, 895-3891

To discuss filing a sexual harassment complaint against a member of one of the following groups, contact the:

Administrative Code Officer for Complaints Against Faculty/Professional Staff Marc Cardinalli, 895-1865

Administrative Officer for Complaints Against Classified Staff Carla Henson, 895-3504

Student Judicial Affairs Officer Phil Burns, 895-4076

Complaints can also be filed with the Nevada Equal Rights Commission, 1515 East Tropicana Ave., Suite #590, Las Vegas, NV 89119, 486-716, and the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 255 East Temple Street, 4th Floor, Los Angeles, California, 90012, 1-800-669-4000. Students may also file formal complaints with the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, Region X, 915 Second Ave., Room 2210, Seattle, WA 98174-1009 (206) 220-7880.

UNLV's Policy on Sexual Harassment

It is the policy of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, to maintain the university community as a place of work and study for staff, faculty, and students that is free of sexual harassment and all forms of sexual intimidation and exploitation. This stance is consistent with the university's efforts to maintain equal employment opportunity, equal educational opportunity, and non-discrimination in programs, services, and use of facilities.

The determination of what constitutes sexual harassment will vary with the particular circumstances, but it may be described generally as repeated and unwanted sexual behavior, such as physical contact and/or verbal comments or suggestions, that adversely affects the working or learning environment.

Often sexual harassment involves relationships of unequal power and contains elements of coercion -- as when compliance with requests for sexual favors becomes a criterion for granting work, study, or grading benefits. However, sexual harassment may also involve relationships among equals, as when repeated and unwelcome sexual advances or demeaning verbal behavior have a harmful effect on a person's ability to study or work.

For general policy purposes, sexual harassment may be described as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other physical conduct and expressive behavior of a sexual nature when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic standing;
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for academic or employment decisions affecting that individual;
3. Such conduct has the effect of interfering with an individual's academic or work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or demeaning employment or educational environment.

Sexual harassment can be verbal, nonverbal, or physical behavior that is unwelcome and is not reciprocated. Examples of such behavior may include sexual propositions, obscene gestures or remarks, suggestive or insulting sounds, and unacceptable body contact.

In keeping with this policy, the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, is undertaking a plan of action to protect employees, students, and users of university facilities from sexual harassment and to rid the university of such conduct. -- Approved by the Faculty Senate, 10/92.

Compiled by the UNLV Subcommittee on the Status of Women

