

Discriminatory Harassment

Who can I talk to if I suspect I may have been harassed?

University Harassment Counselor

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617-552-3340

Office: 129 Lake Street, Room 240D

Complaints are treated with confidentiality and acted on as promptly as possible. Retaliation to complaints is prohibited by law and will not be tolerated by the University.

University Policy

Section 1-200-025 of the Boston College Policies and Procedures Manual defines harassment and sets forth the procedures to be followed when filing a formal complaint of discriminatory harassment. It can also be found in the University Harassment Counselor's Office at 129 Lake Street.

Here are some of the most frequently asked questions regarding discriminatory harassment.

To Whom Does It Apply?

University Policy Against Discriminatory Harassment applies to everyone: faculty, staff, students, and third parties (such as contractors and vendors) who are on campus or involved in a University program, activity, or providing a service.

What Is Harassment?

Broadly speaking, harassment occurs whenever offensive or unwelcome conduct (in school or at work) affects a person's performance or environment. Under the law, there are two kinds of discriminatory harassment:

Quid pro quo harassment involves sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. When submission to, or rejection of, such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a condition for employment decisions.

Hostile environment harassment is conduct that involves making abusive, mocking, or disparaging reference to an individual's race, color, national origin, sex, religion, disability, age, or sexual orientation, thereby interfering with an individual's performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating, or sexually offensive environment.

It is possible for both quid pro quo harassment and hostile environment harassment to go by unrecognized or unacknowledged, by either the victim or the person causing the problem.

Words or behaviors considered severe enough to create a hostile environment can be assessed by the following factors:

- the physical or verbal nature of the conduct
- the effects and consequences of the conduct
- the message that the conduct sends
- the position in which the victim is placed as a result of the conduct
- how frequently the conduct is repeated

- whether the conduct is obviously or overtly offensive
- whether the conduct is committed by more than one person or directed at more than one person.

When a problem situation reveals a *pattern* of offensive targeted behavior, or *unwelcome* sexual advances (making a proposition, paying excessive attention, sending obscene electronic messages, etc.) hostile environment harassment may be identified.

The earlier it is recognized, the sooner it can be stopped.

What Are Some Examples Of Harassment?

- My instructor keeps pressuring me for a date and has been hinting lately that I will receive better/worse treatment in the course if I do/do not agree ...
- My supervisor constantly asks about my love life. The questions are becoming increasingly more detailed and offensive to me, making me feel uncomfortable ...
- My co-workers keep teasing me as the only female mechanic in our unit. Though I have told them to stop, their behavior is getting worse. Now they're grabbing me around my waist, stroking, pinching, etc. I feel unsafe and am starting to dislike coming to work ...
- Someone in our department has been posting nude centerfold pictures in our photocopying room. A number of us who use the room frequently have complained about it, but so far nothing has been done and the pictures keep going up ...
- Someone is sending me really offensive electronic mail. I get nervous every time I see that I have new mail because I think it might be another offensive message. I wonder if it's someone who knows where I live ...

How Does the University Respond to Harassment?

Members of the community should report any incidents of sexual harassment to the University Title IX Coordinator or one of the deputy coordinators.

If the University becomes aware of sexual harassment or misconduct involving faculty, staff, students, or third parties, the University will take steps to respond appropriately, with the goal of eliminating a hostile environment, preventing a recurrence of the harassment, and addressing its effects.

The University's Harassment Counselor serves as the primary contact for anyone with a complaint about harassment involving faculty, staff, or University programs. The Discriminatory Harassment Policy outlines the procedures followed by the University in response to complaints regarding faculty and staff. The University Harassment Coordinator, however, is available to assist any member of the University community suffering from discriminatory harassment in connection with the University. In some cases, the matter may be resolved without filing a formal complaint, and the Coordinator may be able to facilitate a resolution. In some cases, interim measures may be taken to alter work, class, or living arrangements while a matter is being investigated or addressed.

For students, the Student Affairs Title IX Coordinator is available to assist with these measures, as well as complaints against students. The Student Sexual Misconduct Policy and Resources includes links to relevant policies and resources for students.

Request for a hardcopy of the policy should be directed to Patricia Lowe, Associate Vice President, Office for Institutional Diversity at patricia.lowe@bc.edu (<mailto:patricia.lowe@bc.edu>)

OFFICE FOR INSTITUTIONAL DIVERSITY

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