

RUTGERS

Office of Employment Equity

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The Office of Employment Equity (OEE) serves faculty, staff, and students from all Rutgers campuses who believe that they have been subjected to harassment or discrimination. As an office within University Human Resources, we coordinate prevention, education, and the harassment complaint process.

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Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, is dedicated by law and by purpose to serving all people on an equal and nondiscriminatory basis.

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Office of Employment Equity

Harassment on Campus:

A Guide for Staff

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, is an exciting place, and we want you to be able to do your job here without the fear or intimidation of harassment. Rutgers has a policy against harassment and a process to resolve issues of harassment.

If you feel that you are being harassed because of your

- sex
- race
- religion
- color
- national origin
- ancestry
- age
- sexual orientation
- gender identity and expression
- disability
- atypical hereditary cellular or blood trait
- domestic partnership and civil union status
- marital status
- veteran status

this brochure will guide you to the resources you need to resolve the issue.

Copies of the complete Policy Prohibiting Harassment and the Harassment Complaint Process are available on request through the Office of Employment Equity, or on the office's website at uhr.rutgers.edu/equity.

What is harassment?

Harassment is any conduct directed toward an individual or group based on one or more of the traits covered by the university's nondiscrimination policy that creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment and is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter an individual's employment conditions, educational environment, living environment, or participation in a university activity. The university's policy against harassment also prohibits retaliation against anyone who complains about harassment, is accused of harassment, or assists in an investigation of harassment.

Harassment is not acceptable in any workplace. It is particularly serious at a university, where diversity is encouraged and valued. Rutgers takes harassment very seriously. It has dedicated substantial resources to investigate and resolve claims of harassment. The Office of Employment Equity was established to coordinate the university's response to harassment complaints on campus.

What behaviors constitute harassment?

Harassment takes many different forms. An obvious case would be a request from a superior for sex in exchange for a raise or a good report. It can also be repeated name calling, a display of shocking pictures in the workplace, more frequent or harsher discipline of minority employees, teasing about a disability, religious or ethnic stereotyping, attention you don't want from someone you used to date, or many other behaviors. And it can come from a coworker, a faculty member, a student, or a supervisor. You might not even know the person who's doing it. You might feel harassed if others get benefits or favors that you don't get because

of your race, sex, age, or other characteristic. This kind of harassment is also prohibited.

Here are key elements that can help you decide whether you are being harassed:

Power: At its core, harassment is an effort to gain power over someone else. People who use harassment tactics usually have more power or status than their victims, and they generally use this power to gain control of, maintain their power over, or obtain favors from their victims. If you feel demeaned because of someone else's behavior, or find yourself acting against your own best interests, you may be the target of harassment.

Frequency and/or severity: Harassment is conduct that is severe enough, or happens often enough, to cause the person it's directed against to do something they otherwise wouldn't. For instance, if a staff member calls a colleague by a racist or sexist name day after day, so that the victim avoids passing that staff person's desk, that might very well be harassment.

What should I do if I suspect I'm being harassed?

- Take careful notes of any harassing behavior so that you can remember exactly what happened, when, and who else was there.
- Tell someone you trust what is happening.
- Tell a supervisor—yours or the harasser's.
- If you feel it is safe to confront the harasser, tell him or her that you find the behavior disturbing. Sometimes people do not know their behavior is offensive to you, or they want to believe that you welcome the behavior.

- If you want to confront the harasser, you may find it helpful to rehearse a phrase with a friend ahead of time so that it will automatically spring to mind when you need it. "Don't use that word in my presence," or "Please don't stand so close; it makes me uncomfortable," is easier to say if you have practiced.
- Call the Office of Employment Equity at 732-932-3020, ext. 4030, to get a list of trained harassment advisers throughout campus. (The list is also available on the office's website at uhr.rutgers.edu/equity.) Then choose an adviser and make an appointment to talk with her or him.
- If you do not feel safe confronting the harasser, the adviser can tell you about other steps you can take.

There are many reasons why it is important to act as soon as possible. Most importantly, the sooner you act, the sooner you can make things better. In addition, the sooner you act, the more useful detail you will remember. If there are witnesses, they will be easier to find and will remember what happened more clearly.

Why should I call an adviser?

The harassment adviser has been specifically trained to work through harassment issues. The adviser also has lists of resources available to you. He or she will listen to your situation, discuss the available resources, and can coordinate the complaint process for you.

Should I report harassment even if I'm not the target?

Yes. Victims are often afraid to report harassment themselves, don't recognize the harassment, or

think it's their fault. You can help to create a safe and open atmosphere for everyone by reporting harassment you witness, whether you're involved or not.

What options do I have for dealing with harassment?

Depending on your situation, there are different ways to address the issue of harassment.

Informal: You may choose to handle the problem informally, by letting the person whose behavior is hurting you know about it and asking that the person stop. The adviser can help you do this, or even do it for you so you can remain anonymous.

Formal: You may want to file a written complaint, which may result in disciplinary action against the alleged harasser, if appropriate.

University action: The university has an obligation to address harassment swiftly and effectively. The university may use informal or formal means to address harassment once it is aware that harassment may have occurred.

Is the complaint process confidential?

Only those necessary to this process will be informed of any complaint you file, either formal or informal. If the issue is resolved informally, all identifying information may be kept confidential. However, if you file a formal complaint, the accused person, or "respondent," may be subject to discipline and normally will be given a chance to respond to the complaint before action can be taken.

What if the harasser gets angry with me?

If the respondent retaliates because of the harassment complaint, this is a violation of Rutgers' policy against harassment and will be treated as a separate complaint. Rutgers takes retaliation in these cases extremely seriously. Let an adviser know immediately of any retaliation.

What should I do if I am accused of harassment?

Make an appointment as soon as possible with a harassment adviser. The adviser will explain your rights. If you wish, the adviser can help you determine what action you want to take.

How quickly are harassment complaints resolved?

If safety is an issue, the university will take immediate action. However, harassment issues are complex, and some resolutions can take time. In some cases, interim steps can be taken (such as reassignments) to separate the parties while the problem is being resolved.