

THE RIPPLE EFFECT

*Sexual Harassment
and Students*

UC DAVIS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Helpful Links

UC Davis Sexual Harassment Policy
<http://manuals.ucdavis.edu/PPM/380/380-12.htm>

Sexual Harassment Education Program
<http://shep.ucdavis.edu>

Please call (530) 752-9255 to request a copy of this booklet.

Sexual Harassment Education Program
Temporary Building (TB) 115 (corner of Shields and California Streets)

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to our colleagues from these campus units:

International Programs
Student Housing
Women's Resources and Research Center
Campus Unions & Campus Recreation
Teaching Resources Center
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Resource Center

What is sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment can be defined as: **unwanted sexual attention or behavior** which negatively affects the work or learning environment. In some cases, this occurs when a person in a position of power uses that power **to coerce a subordinate into providing sexual favors**. The imbalance of power creates a situation in which the subordinate does not feel free to say “no.” Some examples of this type of behavior include:

- ✓ unwanted, repeated requests for dates
- ✓ offering employment or educational benefits in exchange for personal attention
- ✓ repeated attempts to turn a professional relationship into a personal one

In some instances of sexual harassment, there is behavior of a sexual nature in the workplace or learning environment which creates **an intimidating, offensive or hostile environment** that disrupts people’s ability to do their job or learn. This behavior may occur between peers or between people with unequal power. Some examples of this type of behavior include:

- ✓ personal comments or questions
- ✓ sexual jokes and innuendo, including in email
- ✓ unwanted, repeated requests for dates
- ✓ suggestive looks, gestures and sounds
- ✓ sexual touching
- ✓ posters or cartoons

Sexual harassment produces a far-reaching “ripple effect” wherever it occurs. Of course, the individuals directly involved are affected by the emotional, physical and often financial repercussions of sexual harassment, and the ripple effect extends to others, too. Co-workers, classmates, friends and family members can also be hurt.

Sexual harassment may occur in other scenarios as well; the examples listed above are just some of the forms it may take. **Retaliating** against someone for complaining about sexual harassment is also illegal and against university policy.

Remember, everyone at UCD is entitled to an environment free of sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment and students

Sexual harassment can occur between students and other students, Teaching Assistants (TAs), Resident Assistants (RAs), professors, and other campus members. It can take place in the classroom, residence halls, sports fields, buses and even off campus. When unwelcome sexual behavior is serious enough or happens often enough to interfere negatively with either one's work or learning environment, this could constitute sexual harassment. If the same type of behavior prevents a student from participating in campus sponsored activities, such as intramural sports, student organization meetings or field trips, this also could be sexual harassment.

Sometimes a student may not be the direct recipient of the unwelcome behavior. For example, a student may observe others engaged in sexualized behavior or overhear a conversation that turns into an intimate sexual discussion or jokes. This can also disrupt the learning or work environment and could be considered "third party" sexual harassment.

At times, our words and actions are perceived differently from how we intend them. It is important to note that it is the **impact** of the behavior, not the **intent**, which is used to determine whether the behavior constitutes sexual harassment.

Consensual relationships on campus

Can students date their professors or TAs?

By university policy (APM-015), instructors may not date or enter into a consensual sexual or romantic relationship with a student when they teach, supervise or evaluate that student. The same rules apply if the instructor reasonably expects to teach, supervise or evaluate that student in the future, due to the student's major or interest in a faculty member's area of expertise.

Please visit <http://www.ucop.edu/acadadv/acadpers/apm/apm-015.pdf> for more information.

Can students date their supervisors? Can students date employees they supervise?

Because of power differences, it is a risk for students to enter into any kind of romantic or sexual relationship with their supervisor, whether a staff member or another student. Employees and supervisors must consider the impact of their relationship on the working environment. Perceptions of favoritism, retaliation, damage to reputations or an awkward work environment could be the result of the following situations:

- ✓ A student employee is dating the supervisor and the student receives a raise.
- ✓ A student employee breaks up with the person who makes the schedule and this student becomes unhappy with hours subsequently assigned.
- ✓ Because they have just broken up, two student employees refuse to work the same shift or on the same project.
- ✓ Another employee overhears a student and their supervisor making plans for a weekend.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender students

The UCD sexual harassment policy (PPM 380-12) includes situations that involve parties of the same sex. Other university policies cover negative behavior or comments targeting someone's real or **perceived** gender, gender expression, or sexual orientation.

Undergraduate students and Teaching Assistants

- ✓ **Crushes/romantic interest:** It is not uncommon for undergraduate students to become romantically interested in their TAs. TAs may also be attracted to their students. It would be inappropriate for a TA to enter into a consensual romantic or sexual relationship with a student they teach, supervise or evaluate. Doing so could lead to disciplinary consequences for the TA.
- ✓ **Boundaries:** Due to the informal nature of the college campus and sometimes even a TA's personal communication style, TAs should establish clear professional boundaries. For example, if there are social gatherings in the context of a class, everyone should be invited and TAs should intervene if their students' behavior and conversations become sexualized.

Student employees

- ✓ **Conversations and electronic communication:** Interacting with your peers at work is different from interacting with them socially. Sexually explicit or sexist comments in conversations or e-mails could constitute sexual harassment if they affect the work environment. Sexual or sexist comments on Facebook, MySpace or in instant messages can also negatively impact others.
- ✓ **Campus vendors, customers, clients and visitors:** If a client, customer, vendor or visitor behaves in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable, including comments, gestures or looks that are sexual in nature, students are protected by the sexual harassment policy. If this happens, students can speak to their supervisor or contact the Sexual Harassment Education Program.

Residence halls

- ✓ **Posters and bulletin boards:** The living environment is unique and protected, especially because other people must work in the residence halls. Hanging posters or leaving notes with sexualized content on bulletin boards could violate the sexual harassment policy. This includes sexual jokes or comments about bodies, appearance or personal relationships.
- ✓ **Public displays of affection:** Students need to be aware of their behavior with their romantic or sexual partner in public areas, such as lounges, meeting rooms and hallways.
- ✓ **Roommates and sex:** Having sex in the presence of a roommate will usually create an uncomfortable situation. Open communication with roommates about expectations **before** this occurs is particularly important. A resident can speak with their roommate directly or contact a resident hall staff member.

Student organizations and sports clubs

- ✓ The university's policies, including the sexual harassment policy, also cover student organizations and sports clubs.
- ✓ Members of all UCD student organizations and sports clubs are responsible for the content of promotional flyers, e-mails and cyberspace postings. This includes posters or flyers displayed during any event. Officers should review these materials before distribution.
- ✓ Officers need to be aware that sexualized behavior and conversation topics during meetings and events can make some students uncomfortable. These types of behaviors could be a violation of the sexual harassment policy.

Students from other countries

- ✓ **Romantic interest:** It may be challenging for international students to know when someone is communicating romantic interest and if it's appropriate in a particular setting. International students may also perceive behaviors as sexual or romantic interest when someone may simply be expressing friendliness or collegiality. When in doubt, listen and ask questions to clarify the situation. It can help to ask someone who has lived in the U.S. for feedback.
- ✓ The same type of misinterpretation could apply to a native-born student who misunderstands the intent of an international student's words and gestures. Again, it is important to clarify, ask questions and in some cases inform the person about the impact of their behavior.

About Confidentiality

IMPORTANT: When you talk with a university official about a situation that may be sexual harassment, this person will probably have to call the Sexual Harassment Education Program to report and consult.

If you wish to discuss your situation openly and **NOT** have it officially reported, please contact one of the Confidential Resources listed on the back of this brochure.

When you call the Sexual Harassment Education Program or any of the Sexual Harassment Advisors, you have the option to remain anonymous as long as you do not reveal your identity or the identities of others involved in your particular situation.

Who can help?

UCD offers numerous resources for everyone concerned about sexual harassment. Some are completely confidential, some offer complaint processes and some are available just to talk. If you need assistance or would like more information, the following resources are available:

Sexual Harassment Anonymous Call Line (530) 752-2255
(530) 75A-CALL

Sexual Harassment Advisors

The advisors are specially trained staff and faculty who have expertise in sexual harassment laws, the UC Davis policy, and sexual harassment complaint resolution. Please call the Sexual Harassment Education Program for referral, or check the list at: <http://shep.ucdavis.edu/advisors.htm>

**Sexual Harassment Education Program/
Sexual Harassment Officer** (530) 752-9255

Please call this office to make a report of sexual harassment, for a referral to a sexual harassment advisor, to schedule an educational presentation or request materials.

Confidential Resources/Emotional Support Services

There are additional campus units available for confidential assistance. Your conversations with these units are not considered official reports of sexual harassment, so you can speak openly without giving up any control over your situation.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) (530) 752-0871

Dealing with a sexual harassment problem can be stressful, whether you have a complaint, have been accused or are otherwise involved. Speaking with a counselor may be helpful.

Women's Resources & Research Center..... (530) 752-3372

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Resource Center..... (530) 752-2452

Campus Violence Prevention Program..... (530) 752-3299

Mediation Services (*Graduate Students only*) (530) 297-4480