



HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Area: Harassment

Subject: Harassment in the Workplace

Applies To: Campus employees

Sources:

Number: 2010

Issued: September 2011

Revised: 2/2013

Page(s): 1 of 3

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to educate employees in the recognition and prevention of illegal workplace harassment and to provide an effective means of eliminating such harassment in the workplace.

Policy

The University strictly prohibits employees from engaging in offensive or inappropriate harassing behavior at work. All employees are personally responsible for ensuring that the workplace is free from harassment, including sexual harassment.

Definitions:

1. The terms "harassment, intimidation, and bullying" shall mean any intentionally written message or other visual communication, verbal communication or physical act, gesture or omission, including but not limited to one shown to be motivated by race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation including gender expression or identity, mental or physical disability or other distinguishing characteristics, when engaged in with the intent to, creating a substantial and unjustifiable risk of, creating the threat of, or with the natural end result of the following::

- a) Physically, emotionally or mentally harming a student, faculty, staff member, volunteer, patron or a member of such person's immediate family, or damaging the student, staff member, volunteer, or patron's property or that of the immediate family such persons; or
- b) Being so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or
- c) Subjecting any student, faculty, staff member, volunteer, or patron to unwanted or illegal pornographic material; or
- d) Portraying any student, staff member or faculty member in a state of nudity, engaging in sexual acts, or in such a state of near nudity as to subject such person to shame and embarrassment;

2. Gossip: Rumor or talk of a personal, sensational, intimate or non-factual nature which may be trivial, untruthful, a time-waster, etc., and may cause discord to the detriment of morale; negative communications outside the presence of the subject of the communication.

3. The term "cyber-bullying" shall mean any harassment, intimidation or bullying, as defined above, when such is accomplished utilizing electronic communication media. Such media includes, but shall not be limited to, email messages, text messages, instant messages, social networking sites, internet based video sites, and posting of blogs.

4. Attempts - the taking of substantial steps toward engaging in harassment, intimidation, non-factual gossiping or slandering, bullying and cyber-bullying activity shall be regarded for purposes of this policy in the same way as if the actor had been successful in completing the harassment, intimidation, bullying or cyber-bullying activity.

5. Solicitation - the solicitation of another person to engage in harassment, intimidation, non-factual gossiping or slandering bullying and cyber-bullying activity shall be regarded for purposes of this policy in the same way as if the actor had been successful in him or herself completing the harassment, intimidation, bullying or cyber-bullying activity.

6. Conspiracy - conspiring with two or more others to engage in harassment, intimidation, non-factual gossiping or slandering bullying and cyber-bullying activity shall be regarded for purposes of this policy in the same way as if the actor had been successful in him or herself completing the harassment, intimidation, bullying or cyber-bullying activity.

7. Aggressor - the individual who engages in the harassment, intimidation, non-factual gossiping or slandering bullying, or cyber-bullying of a student.

8. Retaliation - when an aggressor harasses, intimidates, bullies, or cyber-bullies an individual who has reported incidents of bullying. Please refer to the Non-Retaliation Policy #2576.

Conduct that may rise to the level of harassment, intimidation, bullying, and cyber-bullying may take many forms, including, but not limited to:

- Unwelcome sexual advances or request for sexual favors
- Any conduct that threatens or insinuates that submission to or rejection of sexual advances will influence any aspect of employment.
- Conduct that interferes with an employee's ability to do their job
- Conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment
- Other sexual harassing behavior including, but not limited to, comments about an individual's body, sexually degrading words to describe an individual, off-color jokes or language, innuendoes, and materials that are sexually suggestive
- slurs
- rumors
- jokes
- innuendoes
- demeaning comments
- drawings
- cartoons
- non-factual rumors or gossip
- pranks
- physical attacks or threats

Or acts relating to an individual or group whether electronic, written, oral, or physically transmitted messages or images, which can negatively impact the moral and productivity of a department.

Procedure

Georgia Southern University is committed to a safe and civil educational environment for all students, employees, volunteers and patrons free from harassment, intimidation bullying, slandering, or cyber-bullying.

This policy is not intended to prohibit expression of religious, philosophical, or political views provided that the expression does not substantially disrupt the educational environment. Many behaviors that do not rise to the level of harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyber-bullying may still be prohibited by other policies or building, classroom, or program rules.

Employees seeking additional information concerning the Sexual Harassment Policy at Georgia Southern University are encouraged to contact the Office of Diversity Services or the Department of Human Resources.

Reporting Harassment

Anyone who experiences harassment from another employee, a visitor to the campus or any such persons who may have knowledge of sexual harassment is urged to report the incident to University officials.

1. The Department of Human Resources will investigate all allegations of hostile workplace harassment.
2. The Office of Diversity will investigate all allegations of sexual harassment.

Retaliation for reporting sexual harassment or assisting in the investigation of a complaint will not be tolerated (see Non- Retaliation policy #2576). The University will make every effort to keep all information provided in the course of the investigation confidential. The University may take disciplinary action up to and including termination against any employee providing false information during the investigation of a complaint.

