



University of
Education
Winneba

Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy

UEW ANTI-SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

THE GENDER MAINSTREAMING DIRECTORATE
ROOM 210, PECKU BUILDING,
UEW, NORTH CAMPUS
WINNEBA

OCTOBER, 2009

This publication was made possible partly by
a grant from Carnegie Corporation of
New York. The statements made and
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FOREWORD

The need to develop a policy to manage harassment on the University of Education, Winneba campuses was initially mooted by the Governing Council of the University when an alleged case of harassment was brought to its attention. In response to the concerns expressed about harassment on the campus, the then Gender Desk was tasked to put the policy together:

During the 2004/2005 academic year, a gender team was put together to carry out a baseline study on the gender situation in the University. Amongst the key gender issues which were identified through the baseline study were sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination which bothered on ethnicity and religion.

This anti-sexual harassment policy is therefore based on the research findings as well as some cases reported to the gender desk. Considering the fact that gender equity is a core value in the University, it is important that all forms of harassment are eliminated from the learning

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environment such that every member of the University Community can make the most out of his/her learning or working experience.

Additionally, the University acknowledges the fact that harassment runs counter to the mission and vision of an institution.

Professor Akwasi Asabere-Ameyaw
Vice-Chancellor

October 2009

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1.0 Preamble

Sexual harassment is any act with a sexual connotation which is unwanted and or offensive. It could be intentional or unintentional. It mostly occurs in relationships of unequal power or authority. This is not to deny the fact that it could take place among peers. Even students could sometimes harass their lecturers.

Since sexual harassment can subvert the vision and mission of an institution, it is considered a serious offence and shall not be countenanced by the University.

Sexual harassment is of particular concern to the University of Education, Winneba because it is discriminatory in nature and is forbidden by the laws of Ghana (The 1992 Constitution, Chap. 5; Art. ii.). Sexual harassment can harm the health and general well being of its victims. It could create a hostile and stifling environment which may run counter to the realization of the goals of

the institution. It could affect the interest and work performance of staff/students as well as affect students' progress on a course or programme.

Finally, it could affect one's appointment, promotion and access to any package offered by the University to staff.

2.0 Statement of Principle

- Sexual harassment in every form is prohibited in the University and it constitutes a punishable offence.
- As much as academic freedom and the right of every member of the University Community to the freedom of expression is permissible, these actions ought to be free from bias and harassment.
- Every member of the University (students, teaching and administrative staff) shall have access to its facilities and services without fear of harassment.
- All persons in responsible positions shall ensure that their positions do not become tools for demanding sexual favours or coercing others into unwanted relationships.
- Sexual harassment violates the basic human rights of its victims.

- All records regarding complaints of harassment shall be treated with utmost confidentiality.
- Reported cases which are proven not to be sexual harassment shall go through the existing grievance handling procedure(s).
- The University shall be mindful of complaints which may be false. Such malicious action(s) shall constitute grounds for disciplinary action to be taken against the complainant.

3.0 Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of the Policy is:

- a) to raise the level of awareness of the University Community of the illegality of sexual harassment.
- b) to eliminate sexual harassment from the learning environment.
- c) to provide an atmosphere that shall be free from any form of sexual harassment and to establish a much more gender-friendly atmosphere.
- d) to encourage members of the University Community to change any negative attitudes they may have toward the opposite sex.

4.0 Jurisdiction

- The policy shall apply to all members of the University, as well as all who transact business with the University.
- Members of the University as stated herein shall refer to all: i.e., Students, Researchers, Senior members (teaching, and non-teaching), Senior and Junior staff.

5.0 Responsibilities of Individuals

- It will be required of all persons holding management positions in the University to assist in implementing the policy in their various Colleges, Faculties, Schools, Departments, Sections, Institutes, Centres and Units by putting in place the necessary measures which would ensure a working and learning environment which is free from sexual harassment.
- All persons in responsible positions (Deans, Directors, Heads of Departments/Sections/Units, Managers, SRC Executives / Hall Executives) are to familiarize themselves with the policy, uphold it and educate students and staff in their departments about it.

6.0 What Constitutes Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment includes the following:

- unlawful and discriminating acts with sexual connotations;
- unwelcome physical contacts;
- suggestive comments with sexual connotations;
- unwelcome derogatory remarks (sexual in nature);
- unwelcome requests for sexual encounters and favours;
- sexual assault;
- threats of academic failure or promise of academic success or other rewards in exchange for sexual favours;
- sexist jokes which cause psychological distress;
- unwanted sexual attention of a persistent nature made by a person who knows or ought reasonably to know that such attention is unwanted;
- gender based bullying or intimidation;
- public display of pornographic material;
- unwanted repeated telephone calls, letters, e-mails, text messages which are derogatory or sexual in nature.

PLEASE NOTE:

- A. *The list is not exhaustive. Behaviours which are acceptable to some people may be offensive to others. The point of view of the complainant, and not the intention of the perpetrator, will guide the Advisors or Committee in deciding whether a reported incident amounts to sexual harassment or not.*

- B. *This policy is not against relationships based on mutual consent of the parties involved, neither does it cover flirtation, "chats," jokes and jesting that make life "interesting" for the parties involved and who find these acts acceptable.*

7.0 Procedures

1. Any member of the University Community may seek advice or informal assistance from the Desk Officer and Advisors whose locations are listed in this policy document (see page 17). No formal action shall be taken until a written complaint has been lodged with the Desk Officer or Advisors.

2. There are two options available to a complainant, namely;
 - (a.) Informal - Advisors will mediate between the parties involved to settle the matter amicably.
 - (b.) Formal - The matter shall be brought before an Investigation Committee.

7.1 Informal

- Any member of the University Community who thinks or feels that he/she has experienced any form of sexual harassment should, as a first step, express his/her disapproval of the act if he/she thinks it is possible to do so. The individual should however, contact the Desk Officer who will monitor the process to ensure that the problem is resolved amicably within seven days of the occurrence or complaint of the incident.

- The complainant may, on the other hand, contact any of the Advisors listed in this document to serve as a mediator.

- The respondent shall be required to render an unqualified apology to the complainant, with a promise not to repeat the alleged offensive act, intimidate or victimise him/her. The apology could be verbal or written.
- It will be pointed out to the respondent that taking reprisals against the complainant for the step taken is also an offence and will complicate matters for him/her.
- But if the informal complaint is not the first that is being made against a respondent, the Advisor, with the consent of the complainant, shall initiate the necessary action using the formal procedure.

7.2 Formal

When attempts at resolving a problem, without recourse to formal procedure fails, the following guidelines shall apply:

- Clearance shall be sought from the Vice-Chancellor or Principal before formal proceedings commence.
- Where a complaint is established to be false, the matter shall be referred to the Vice-Chancellor or Principal. Necessary consultations shall take place after which the matter shall be dealt with under the appropriate disciplinary procedures laid down in the University (viz. Statutes, Conditions of Service for Staff, Students' Handbook and SRC and JCRC Constitutions).
- On the other hand, if a complainant feels that unfair treatment has been meted out to him/her, he/she may appeal to the Vice-Chancellor or Principal who will deal with the matter himself/herself.
- In making a formal complaint, the complainant shall submit in writing details of the alleged harassment indicating time, place, date, how it happened and the names of witnesses (if any).

The complainant may also indicate the type of remedy he/she seeks.

8.0 Time Limit

- A written complaint must be filed within one month of the occurrence of the alleged harassment.
- Where the complaint consists of a series of related incidents, the time limit shall be within two months of the most recent incident.
- If, after one month of filing the complaint, a complainant fails to initiate proceedings, all records pertaining to the incident shall be destroyed.
- Within three working days of receiving a written complaint, the Desk Officer will inform the respondent of the complaint that has been lodged against him/her.

9.0 Sanctions

- If it is established that the unwanted act did take place, appropriate disciplinary action against the respondent as prescribed in the appropriate disciplinary procedures laid down in the University (viz., Statutes, Conditions of Service for Staff, Students' Handbook, SRC and JCRC Constitutions) shall apply.
- In the case of students, sanctions shall range from suspension to dismissal. The gravity of the offence shall determine the form the punishment should take.
- These provisions notwithstanding, a respondent whose name keeps recurring may be punished in any other way deemed appropriate by the Vice-Chancellor.
- The University shall be mindful of complaints which may be false. Such malicious action can constitute grounds for disciplinary action to be taken against the complainant.

10.0 Responsibilities of Advisors

Responsibilities of Advisors shall include but not be limited to the following:

- assist the complainant in sorting out the facts about the complaint. This is to aid the advisor to establish whether the offence constitutes sexual harassment or not;
- discuss the possible ways of redressing the problem with the complainant. The decision to address the issue formally or informally lies with the complainant;
- provide support and counselling services when needed or refer them to the Counselling Centre;
- educate both the harasser and the harassed;
- mediate between parties involved in a given case and resolve the matter amicably;
- draw the attention of both parties to the consequences of resorting to the formal mode as outlined in this document;

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- keep proper record of all reported cases for purposes of improving upon policy, research and quarterly reports submitted to the Vice-Chancellor;
- advisors shall meet at least twice in each semester;
- organize educative campaigns on regular basis to raise the awareness levels of the University Community.

The term of office of the Advisors shall be for two years. Their appointment may be renewed for a further period of two years.

11.0 Investigation Procedures

- All advisors on each campus shall come together to constitute the Investigative Committee and the Vice-Chancellor shall nominate the chairperson. The complainant, respondent and witnesses, if any, shall be interviewed separately. If need be, however, cross-examination shall take place. In order to protect confidentiality, this shall be done off office premises. All discussions shall be documented. Both parties may be accompanied to the interview by trusted friends or union representatives. Upon completion of the outlined proceedings, the Committee's report shall be submitted to the Vice-Chancellor who may request to meet the parties involved if deemed necessary.
- All parties involved in any given case shall be treated fairly. Where the issue involves a lecturer and his or her student, necessary arrangement shall be made for a disinterested party to co-supervise or mark the examination script, course work or dissertation of the student.
- Witnesses to such cases shall be treated same.

12.0 Time Frame and Monitoring

To forestall the occurrence of harassment in the University, this Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy has been developed. Sensitization programmes to prevent the occurrence of sexual harassment shall be carried out from time to time.

To ensure that the policy is implemented and makes a meaningful impact:

- a. an interdisciplinary anti-sexual harassment committee shall be established to ensure that the policy is implemented by different Colleges, Faculties, Schools, Departments, Sections, Institutes, Centres and Units of the University.
 - b. indicators for measuring the progress of policy objectives will be developed by the Committee.
 - c. achievements will be monitored and reported annually.
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- The Policy shall be reviewed regularly to ensure that it continually reflects current good practice.
 - The Policy will be made available to all.
 - The Policy shall be effective from 1st November, 2009.

13.0 Glossary

Complainant: Shall refer to a person who believes that he or she has been harassed and files a complaint.

Respondent: Shall refer to a person who may be alleged to have harassed a complainant.

Desk Officer: A person appointed by the Vice-Chancellor who shall co-ordinate the activities of the Advisors.

Advisors: Contact persons appointed by the Vice-Chancellor to respond to reported cases and provide support services to victims of harassment.

14.0 Contacts

Campus	S/N	Contact Persons	Office	Contact
Winneba	1	Desk Officer, Gender Mainstreaming Directorate	Pecku Building	
	2	Counselling Centre	Adjacent North Campus Library	
	3	Dean	Student Affairs	043221027
Kumasi	4	Gender Desk		
	5	Vice Dean	Student Affairs	051 53621
	6	Director	Counseling Centre	
Mampong Ashanti	7	Gender Desk		
	8	Vice Dean	Student Affairs	056122232

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