

What do you think?

Q. As a supervisor you are aware that an employee is pestering another employee for a date. The employee is also sending love letters. The other employee hasn't complained about it, but you've heard from others that she/he is uncomfortable with the situation. What do you do?

A. *You should ask the employee about it. If she/he confirms what you've heard, tell the employee to stop and give information about harassment.*

Q. Several men and women are standing around telling dirty jokes. If no one objects to the jokes can you assume it's OK?

A. *Silence does not mean consent. Folks may be unwilling to speak up. Keep various, up-to-date brochures about harassment available at counters or on bulletin boards, so every employee can be made aware of his/her rights.*

Q. What if you know about a harassing situation, but no one has complained, do you have to do anything about it.

A. *YES, Supervisors may be liable for failure to prevent or correct harassment. Contact the Affirmative Programs Office to talk about appropriate actions and strategies.*

Q. Is it all right for a faculty member and student or supervisor and employee to have a sexual relationship?

A. *The University considers sexual relations between a faculty member and student or supervisor and employee to be unwise. Should a complaint be made, under these circumstances, the faculty member or supervisor has the burden of proving the situation was actually mutual consent.*

Types of sexual harassment:

Quid Pro Quo – “this for that” occurs when employment or academic decisions are based on an employee or student's submission to, or rejection of, sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other behavior of a sexual nature.

Hostile Environment - generally involves a pattern of continuing unwelcome sexual behavior that unreasonably interferes with the student's academic performance or the employee's work performance or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive academic or work environment.

Training for Supervisors

All Supervisors are encouraged to take the online sexual harassment training course at:
www.admin.mtu.edu/aao/SH/?p=introduction

The Affirmative Programs Office has a variety of books and videos available for use. If you are interested in checking them out call 487-3310 or visit our website:

www.admin.mtu.edu/aao/library.htm.

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Supervisors Guide For Dealing with Sexual Harassment

Michigan Technological University

Affirmative Programs Office

906-487-3310

As a supervisor you are responsible for preventing sexual harassment. Strive to provide a workplace in which employees are safe and comfortable.

Your responsibilities as a supervisor:

Discourage discriminatory or harassing behavior, Such as jokes and offensive remarks directed towards individuals or groups.

Recommend all employees complete MTU's online sexual harassment training. (admin.mtu.edu/ao/SH/?p=introduction)

The law requires those in positions of authority to take action if they know, or should have known of harassing or discriminatory behavior. This means you should not wait until a complaint is filed.

When a complaint is brought to your attention you should immediately deal with the situation.

Be supportive of the complainant.

Contact the AA Officer for assistance to conduct a fair investigation.

Following an investigation you should continue to monitor the situation.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is crucial. At least two people have their reputations on the line. The more care taken the better for all concerned.

Retaliation

Retaliation against individuals who report and/or file complaints of discrimination or harassment, who cooperate in investigations, or who participate in hearings will not be tolerated. Acts of retaliation should also be reported to the Affirmative Action Officer.

If someone complains about sexual harassment take the situation seriously and respond promptly. Failure to act promptly could be a violation of federal and state law and of MTU Policy.

Questions you may ask

1. Encourage the alleged recipient to talk specifically. Ask, "What brought you here?" or "Please describe the last situation."
2. Where did the behavior occur? Who was involved? Were there any witnesses? Did you talk with anyone else about this?
3. Has this happened before? How long has this been going on?
4. Was the person told the behavior was unwelcome? What was the person's reaction when told that the behavior was unwelcome?
5. Find out exactly what happened. Don't make assumptions. Ask "Is there anything else the person has done that we've not talked about?"
6. Listen carefully. Get all the facts. Contact the Affirmative Programs Office at 487-3310 for assistance.

Questions not to ask

1. Avoid "why" questions such as, "Why didn't you do something about this before?"

"Why" questions are perceived as judgmental, implying the complainant did something wrong.
2. Don't ask leading questions such as, "Would you want to continue working here if he/she continues his/her behavior?"
3. Avoid asking multiple choice questions such as, "Did he/she touch you on the arm or shoulder?" Instead ask, "Where did the person touch you?"

A person being harassed may show the following signs:

- Depression
- Anger, fear
- Insecurity embarrassment
- Feeling powerless
- Shame and low self-esteem
- Headaches
- Sleep disturbances
- Phobias, panic reactions
- Withdrawal from work or school

A person being sexually harassed may not come forward because they:

- do not want everyone to know.
- are afraid of retaliation/losing their job.
- feel responsible.
- feel nothing can be done about it.
- want only for the behavior to stop.
- fear the harasser will be disciplined too harshly.

Sexual harassment may include:

- Sexually degrading words or gestures
- Displaying sexually explicit pictures
- Sexual bantering, jokes or teasing
- Demands or requests for sex
- Unwanted email or letters
- Spreading rumors
- Unwelcome touching, hugging, rubbing shoulders, brushing against a person's body, pinching.
- Bashing due to sexual orientation
- Favoritism based on sexual attractiveness