

What Are Other Types of Prohibited Harassment?

Harassment may take many forms, including physical, verbal, and nonverbal acts and written statements. Harassment does not have to include intent to harm, be directed at a specific target, or involve repeated incidents. A single incident involving severe misconduct may sometimes rise to the level of harassment.

Under this policy, harassment is defined as unwelcome words, conduct, or actions based on any protected category that are sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent and have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with work or academic performance, denying or limiting the ability to participate in or to receive benefits, services, or opportunities in the university's programs, or creating a hostile, intimidating, or offensive working or educational environment.

Whether something is offensive must be viewed from the perspective of a reasonable person; the mere fact that a complainant is offended does not necessarily mean the conduct at issue constitutes harassment. Harassment does not include words, conduct, or actions with reasonable educational or professional justification. Harassment also does not include behavior of a reasonably socially acceptable nature. However, some behavior that is appropriate in a social setting may not be appropriate in the workplace or academic environment. It is not always easy to define precisely what conduct constitutes harassment; examples of conduct that may constitute harassment include, but are not limited to:

- epithets, quips, slurs, or negative stereotyping that relate to any protected category;
- threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts that relate to any protected category;
- written or graphic material (including graffiti) that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group because of actual or perceived membership in any protected category and that is placed on walls, bulletin boards, or elsewhere on a university premises or circulated or displayed in the workplace or via electronic communications; or
- joking, pranks, teasing, or other forms of "humor" that are demeaning or hostile with regard to any protected category.