

Human Rights Office

# Personal & Workplace-Related Harassment

*This pamphlet provides general information about personal and workplace-related harassment to the University of Ottawa community and should not be construed as legal advice.*

## Rights and Responsibilities

University of Ottawa community members - including students, staff and faculty members - have a right to a learning and workplace environment that is respectful, safe, healthy and free from harassment and discrimination under Policy 67a - Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination (Policy 67a). All UOttawa community members have a responsibility to maintain this environment and adhere to the university policy.

## The Human Rights Office (HRO)

The HRO is a neutral and impartial office responsible for receiving and responding to human rights-related discrimination and harassment, personal and workplace harassment, and sexual violence concerns and complaints. The HRO also provides education and training on these matters and offers guidance and consultation to all community members on these issues. This pamphlet provides information personal and workplace related harassment, which is prohibited by the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act.

For more information about human rights-related discrimination and harassment or sexual violence, please contact the HRO.

## What is harassment?

**Personal Harassment** means engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome and that affects the dignity, psychological or physical integrity of a person. A single unwelcome incident of sufficient severity may meet the definition of personal harassment.

Examples when repeated or one single severe incident:

- Verbally abusive behaviour such as yelling, insults, threats and name calling
- Discrediting a person, spreading rumours, ridiculing him or her, humiliating him or her, calling into question his or her convictions or his or her private life
- Isolating the person by no longer talking to him or her, denying or ignoring his or her presence, distancing him or her from others.

**Workplace Harassment** means engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace, conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. A single unwelcome incident of sufficient severity may meet the definition of workplace harassment. Workplace Harassment does not include legitimate performance management.

Examples when repeated or one single severe incident:

- Undermining or deliberately impeding a person's work by withholding necessary information or purposefully giving the wrong information
- Unreasonably criticizing the performance of an individual
- Humiliating a person in front of colleagues, smear campaigns

## Some of the Effects of Harassment include:

Anger, fear, self-consciousness or embarrassment, stress and anxiety, panic attacks, higher blood pressure, ulcers, difficulty sleeping, loss of self-esteem, eating disorders, having trouble paying attention and staying focused and lower productivity.

## Contact the Human Rights Office if:

- *You have questions or concerns about personal harassment or workplace harassment*
- *You are seeking personal harassment or workplace harassment education*
- *You want to make a personal harassment or workplace harassment complaint.*