

Co-op Procedures for Dealing with Incidents of Harassment on the Worksite

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline for co-op students and co-op teachers what harassment is and how to deal with incidents that may arise at the co-op work placement.

What Is Harassment?

Harassment can take a variety of subtle and overt forms that involve comments or conducts that are known to be unwelcome (Ref. Ontario Human Rights Code Section 9(1) (f).)

Harassment Can Take Many Forms: For example...

- Racial, religious or ethno cultural jokes are generally based on negative stereotyping.
- Name calling is the use of names or titles which are meant to demean or degrade.
- Graffiti and other forms of written communication which implies inferiority of a particular group of people.
- Threats, bullying and physical intimidation or harassment.

What Is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment is any unwanted attention of a sexual or gender related nature, or sexual advantage that negatively affects a person's work, study or well-being. It is not limited to demands for sexual favours, does not require a specific target, and is not necessarily intentional, whether subtle or overt.

Sexual Harassment Can Take Many Forms:

Ex.

- Leering and sexually suggestive remarks.
- Demeaning jokes and comments of a sexual or gender-related nature.
- Sexually explicit pin-ups and graffiti.
- Unwanted physical attention: touching, patting, pinching, and grabbing.
- Demands for sexual advances.
- Reprisal or threat of reprisal for rejection of sexual advances.

When harassment occurs...immediately...

STEP ONE:

- Acknowledge the problem- ignoring the situation will not make it go away.
- If you are feeling uncomfortable, discuss your feelings with your co-op teacher and your parent/ guardian.
- The co-op teacher informal observation within 3 co-op days and complete a monitoring visit report.

STEP TWO:

- Document the incidents. Include dates, times, locations, witnesses and details of the harassment.
- Don't blame yourself – you cannot control the actions of others.
- The co-op teacher informs the co-op contact.

STEP THREE:

- If you are comfortable in doing so, speak directly to the harasser. Make it clear that his/ her actions are unwelcome, that the actions must stop and that if the actions don't stop the supervisor will be informed. You may want to have someone else present when this occurs. Document the date and time of this notification.
- If the harassing behaviour does not stop, tell your co-op work supervisor and ask for a copy of the employer's policy and procedures on harassment.

STEP FOUR:

- The co-op teacher arranges an alternate co-op placement for the student if:
 - the student wishes
 - the harassment does not stop
 - the harassment is not dealt with appropriately by the work supervisor
- If the harassment is not dealt with appropriately by the work supervisor, the co-op teacher and the co-op contact should terminate the placement for all future assignments, the employer should be notified in writing and the co-op office at the education centre is to be notified.

NOTES : Co-op teachers should document dates, topics of discussion, decisions and actions taken.

WORKPLACE ISSUES

Cooperative Education

HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE



What is workplace harassment?

Workplace harassment may include unsolicited conduct by a person in a position of responsibility or one co-worker toward another, which is intimidating, hurtful, malicious or otherwise offensive, and which creates an uncomfortable working environment for the recipient.

It is conduct by a person who knows, or ought to know, that such action is unwelcome.

Sexual harassment includes touching, comments, sexual jokes or unwanted sexual suggestions. Sexual harassment is wrong because it hurts people, it makes working together very difficult, and it is against the law.

Ontario Ministry of Labour

Examples of sexual harassment:

- unwanted, unwelcome physical contact like touching, grabbing, or patting
- rude jokes or suggestive remarks of a sexual nature
- demeaning nicknames like “hot stuff,” “sexy,” “stud,” or “babe”
- catcalls, rating, or embarrassing whistles
- insulting remarks about sexual orientation
- sexually insulting remarks about race, gender, ability, or class
- bragging about sexual prowess for others to hear
- intimidating behaviour
- names written on the walls or posters — “for a good time call ...”
- a person in a position of power offering favours for a date

Sexual harassment is not:

- a hug between friends
- mutual flirtation
- sincere and personal comments

Mutual Respect...we work better when we work with people we respect and who respect us. Our workplace is a healthier and safer place to be when we can concentrate on the task at hand and not have to worry about harassment.

workplace bullying and violence:

- Physical Assault: pushing, hitting, grabbing, stalking, and using a weapon
- Verbal Abuse: humiliating and demeaning comments, jokes or threats, intimidating or threatening e-mails.
- Bullying: an act of aggression. Any behaviour that intimidates, threatens and humiliates another should not be tolerated

Bullying or violence is a weapon of power.

Sexual Harassment questions for you the student

How would you handle the following situations? (use a separate sheet of paper if necessary)

1. Inappropriate jokes.

A person you work with loves to tell jokes. Some of them are very crude and some are racist. You disagree with the message that they convey and do not appreciate hearing them. What should you say to the jokester?

2. Unwanted touches.

Your supervisor often touches you inappropriately. He/she also makes comments regarding possible advancement in the job. How would you handle the situation?

3. E-mail harassment.

Someone has been sending you very rude and sexually suggestive e-mail.

4. Your boss wants a date.

Your boss has asked you to socialize outside of the workplace. You do not care for him/her. What do you say?

5. Describe a case of discrimination and/or harassment that you have witnessed or experienced at school or work or in a movie or tv show. How was the situation handled? What was your reaction? Would you have done anything differently at that time or now?
