Policy Prohibiting Sexual Harassment

I. Purpose and Scope

Northeastern University is committed to providing equal opportunity to its students and employees in an environment free of sexual harassment. This Policy applies to all members of the University community, including students, faculty, staff, affiliates, and volunteers when acting on behalf of the University, whether on or off campus, as well as to contractors, parents, and visitors when they are on University property.

Reports of Title IX Prohibited Offenses involving students, including for example Sexual Assault, Sexual Harassment and Domestic or Intimate Partner Violence, are not covered under this policy but instead addressed by the University’s Policy on Rights and Responsibilities Under Title IX and its accompanying procedures.

II. Definitions

Sexual Harassment:

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature is sexual harassment when:

Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment, education, benefits, housing, or participation in a University activity.

Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is considered or used as the basis in decisions affecting that individual’s employment, education, benefits, housing, or participation in a University activity.
Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s employment or educational performance by creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for that individual’s employment, education, benefits, housing, or participation in a University activity.

The legal definition of sexual harassment is broad and in addition to the above examples other sexually oriented conduct, whether it is intended or not, that is unwelcome and has the effect of creating a workplace environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating, or humiliating to male or female workers may also constitute sexual harassment. While it is not possible to list all those additional circumstances that may constitute sexual harassment, the following are some examples of conduct which, if unwelcome, may constitute sexual harassment depending on the totality of the circumstances. This list is not intended to be exhaustive:

Unwelcome sexual advances – whether they involve physical touching or not;

Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one’s sex life;

Comment on an individual’s body, sexual activity, deficiencies or prowess;

Communicating by any electronic means or displaying sexually suggestive objects, statements, pictures, cartoons;

Unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing against the body, sexual gestures, suggestive or insulting comments.

II. Policy

Northeastern University strictly prohibits all forms of sexual harassment by any member of the Northeastern community, including visitors to Northeastern campuses.

All faculty and staff, have the right to bring a complaint of sexual harassment to the Office for University Equity and Compliance (“OUEC”), and the obligation to complete mandatory anti-harassment training.

It is expected that all faculty and staff will report any potential violation of this policy. Faculty and staff have the obligation to cooperate fully in the investigation of such complaints, the duty to provide truthful information in any report or proceeding under this policy, and the responsibility to keep information related to such report or proceeding confidential.
The University reserves the right to address any behavior which it considers inappropriate or inconsistent with University expectations, standards or values, even though such behavior may not rise to the level of discrimination pursuant to this policy or under state or federal law. Nothing in this policy is intended to limit the authority of Northeastern University to take appropriate action against any individual who violates University rules or policies, whether or not the conduct constitutes a violation of this policy or the University’s Equal Opportunity Policy. The University may assume the role of a Complainant and pursue a report or complaint of discrimination or harassment either informally or formally.

A determination of whether conduct is considered discriminatory or harassing in violation of the University’s policies is dependent upon the totality of the circumstances, including the pervasiveness and severity of the conduct.

Any student found responsible for sexual harassment is subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University. An employee found to have committed sexual harassment in violation of this policy is subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Retaliation:

It is unlawful to take adverse actions against any member of the Northeastern community for filing a complaint of harassment or discrimination, or for cooperating in an investigation of such a complaint. Retaliation against a member of the Northeastern community who, in good faith, reports alleged harassment or who participates in an investigation is a violation of our policy and is subject to appropriate discipline. Retaliation may have an adverse impact in the following areas: hiring, firing, promotions, demotions, compensation, benefits, grading, pressure to withdraw from class, ignoring, refusing requests for assistance. This list is not exhaustive.

Filing a Report:

You may report allegations of sexual harassment to the Office for University Equity and Compliance:

360 Huntington Avenue, 125 Richards Hall
Boston, MA 02115
Phone: (617) 373-4644
ouec@northeastern.edu
IV. Additional Information

In addition to the above, if you believe you have been subjected to sexual harassment, you may file a formal complaint with any of the government agencies set forth below. Using our internal complaint process does not prohibit you from filing a complaint with these agencies. Each of the agencies has a short time period for filing a claim (EEOC – 300 days; MCAD – 300 days).

The Regional Director, Office for Civil Rights, United States Department of Education, 5 Post Office Square, 8th Floor, Boston, MA 02109; (617) 289-0111 www.ed.gov/ocr

Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD), One Ashburton Place, Suite 601, Boston, Massachusetts 02108-1518; (617) 994-6000, www.mass.gov/mcad


V. Contact Information

Inquiries regarding the University’s nondiscrimination and harassment policies may be directed to:

Office for University Equity and Compliance
360 Huntington Avenue, 125 Richards Hall
Boston, MA 02115
Phone: (617) 373-4644
ouec@northeastern.edu