GUIDELINES FOR THE PREVENTION OF HARASSMENT
SHORT VERSION

TASK FORCE

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The phenomenon of harassment

Harassment comprises a set of (active or omissive) behaviours which harm or might endanger the physical and psychological integrity of another person or group of persons, their freedom of determination, sexual freedom, honour, privacy, cultural identity, as well as personal or economic integrity.

Behaviour that may be considered harassment does not require repetition and may or may not qualify as an administrative offence or as a crime.

Within the University of Minho, aggressors and victims of harassment can be teaching, academic, research, technical, administrative and management staff, regardless of their employment status, as well as students.

Types of harassing behaviour:

Sexual Harassment

Sexual innuendo

- – Remarks, jokes, or comments about physical appearance;
- – Offensive comments or jokes of a sexual nature.

Unwanted sexual attention

- – Repeated unwanted and unrequited dating invitations;
- – Explicit and unwanted proposals of a sexual nature;
- – Unwanted sexual advances via email, text messages or via websites and social networks;
- – Offensive phone calls, letters, text messages, emails, or images of a sexual nature;
- – Insinuating sexual glances;
- – Intrusive and offensive questions about private life;
- – Unwanted sexual gestures, touches, and looks;

– Pressure for sexual encounters or conversations about sex life.

Physical contact and sexual assault

– Unwanted physical contact (touching, handling, grabbing, groping, kissing, or attempting to kiss);

– Sexual assault or attempted sexual assault.

Sexual grooming

– Requests for sexual favours associated with promises of opportunities, employment, higher grades/classifications, professional advancement, or improved working conditions.

Gender-based harassment

– Insults, hostile and demeaning attitudes related to gender identity and expression, as well as sexual orientation.

Workplace and Academic Harassment

Abuse of power

– Setting goals and objectives that are impossible to achieve or setting unfeasible deadlines;

– Withholding information that is relevant to professional practice and/or learning;

– Assigning duties that are not in line with the professional category or demanding performance that is not in line with the student's learning level;

– Systematically asking for urgent work without necessity;

– Systematically appropriating ideas, proposals, projects, and work of colleagues or subordinates without identifying the respective author.

Isolation

– Cultivating isolation or lack of contact with co-workers and/or lack of contact with superiors.

Debasing

– Systematically debasing one's work in order to humiliate and deride;

– Criticising one's work and/or academic performance without offering alternatives for improvement.

Moral Harassment

– Verbal attacks with offensive or humiliating content aimed at diminishing the victim's self-esteem;

– Deriding, with offensive content, characteristics referring to sex, race, sexual or religious choice, physical disabilities, health problems, etc;

– Spreading rumours and commenting on the personal life of others;

– Systematically creating objective situations of stress, so that the target of the conduct may lose control.

Guidelines for the prevention of harassment

The prevention of harassment is achieved through measures at different levels. Accordingly, it is suggested that action be taken on the basis of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention measures.

Primary prevention aims to protect against harassment, i.e., it involves eliminating the causes, reducing risk factors, and increasing protective factors, thereby promoting well-being and reducing the likelihood of the phenomenon occurring.

Secondary prevention is the action taken to detect the occurrence of the problem, at the individual or community level, enabling diagnosis, analysis, and resolution, and further preventing its propagation and long-term effects.

Finally, when harassment is evident, tertiary prevention aims to limit the damage it may cause to the victim, the aggressor, the academic community, and the institution itself, empowering them with the necessary tools to prevent repetition of the phenomenon, as well as reducing or guarding against its effects.

The guidelines suggested by the Task Force are presented below, according to the three levels of prevention.

Primary Prevention
1. Governing bodies and their representatives should ensure institutional action
1.1. Set up a Committee to define the Strategy for the Prevention of Harassment at UMinho
1.2. Set up Working Groups to contribute towards the Strategy for the Prevention of Harassment
2. Policies, standards, and procedures should be comprehensive, clear, and focused on the well-being and safety of the entire academic community
2.1. Prepare the institutional Code of Conduct for the Prevention of Harassment at UMinho

2.2. Review the UMinho Student Disciplinary Regulation

2.3. Involve body representatives or working groups in reviewing and updating policies and procedures

3. The entire community should be involved in the prevention of harassment, particularly through information, awareness-raising, and training in order to better recognise, prevent, and respond to the phenomenon

   3.1. Develop a communication and dissemination strategy

   3.2. Promote training, talks, and workshops

   3.3. Address harassment in policies for recruitment, selection, and institutional reception of teaching, academic, research, technical, administrative and management staff

4. Security on and around the campuses must be reinforced

   4.1. Care for the facilities and space

   4.2. Increase human resources for security

   4.3. Promote digital security

Secondary Prevention

5. Instruments to measure and report harassment situations and their responses should be clear, easily understood, institutional, prompt, and effective

   5.1. Establish reporting mechanisms for identified harassment situations, as well as response procedures

   5.2. Develop studies to characterise, monitor, and measure the phenomenon

Tertiary Prevention

6. Support and intervention measures should be accessible, timely, and fair to all parties

involved

6.1 Support the victim

6.2 Support the aggressor

6.3 Support the academic community