

WHAT IS SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED HARASSMENT?

[GW's Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based Harassment and Interpersonal Violence Policy](#) is informed by federal laws like Title IX, the Clery Act, and the Violence Against Women Act and university values and resources.

WHAT KIND OF BEHAVIOR COULD CONSTITUTE SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED HARASSMENT?

Examples of sexual and gender-based harassment include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Another intern, supervisor, co-worker, or client touches you inappropriately e.g. plays with your hair, rubs your back, or touches any private zones on your body.
- A supervisor persistently asks you on dates, even if you have turned them down before.
- Another intern, supervisor, co-worker, or client of your employer makes suggestive comments to you about how your body looks in certain clothing.
- Coworkers insinuate that giving sexual favors would help advance your career or that sexual behavior on your part is expected.
- Other interns rate the “hotness” of your intern class or give awards for “sexiness”.
- A supervisor asks you about your significant other and your sexual behavior with that person.
- A client makes offensive remarks about you because of your sex or gender.
- A coworker shows you pictures of themselves and they are naked or minimally clothed.

HOW DO I AVOID SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED HARASSMENT?

- **Remember that the workplace is a professional setting**, no matter how collegial or jovial your colleagues seem. Also, apply work rules to any event related to work e.g., dinner with colleagues, car-rides with coworkers, and recreational sports where you play on a team with other employees.
- **Do not introduce sexualized content into the workplace.** Your intent does not matter to a determination of sexual harassment, so avoid jokes or playful behavior that is sexual in nature.
- **Be mindful of your behavior on social media.** Employers generally do not tolerate online activity that has a negative impact on their brand e.g., you write a post using sexist language and your bio identifies you as working for a specific company.
- **Be very cautious about engaging in workplace romance.** Any such behavior should be clearly consensual and should not cross supervisory lines. However, keep in mind that an internship is a long interview and many employers consider workplace romances to be unprofessional. If you choose to engage in this behavior, ensure that there is never any sexual contact in the workplace.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I AM BEING SEXUALLY HARASSED?

- If you feel comfortable doing so, inform the offending party that their actions are inappropriate and that they should stop.
- Immediately tell your supervisor or your employer's Human Resources office.
- Contact the Title IX Coordinator if the offending party is connected to GW e.g., an employee or student. You may also contact the Title IX Coordinator if you have questions, or if you would like some assistance addressing the issue. <https://haven.gwu.edu/report-incident>
- Check the policy or procedures of your workplace that pertain to reporting misconduct. Report the incident according to the procedures given. If there are no written procedures, report to the Human Resources department and your supervisor.

WHAT ABOUT OTHER FORMS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT?

Sexual assault, sexual exploitation, domestic or dating violence, and stalking are all prohibited by law, and are not acceptable in the work environment. If you are in a situation where these offenses have been perpetrated against you, please seek assistance immediately by first contacting local law enforcement to ensure your safety, and informing your employer's Human Resources office. You may also contact GW's Title IX Coordinator if you require assistance or are unsure of the best steps to take.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [GW Haven](#)
- [GW Office of Ethics, Compliance, and Policy](#)
- [Know Your IX](#)
- [The U. S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Youth@Work](#)
- [EEOC Advice for what to do if you believe you have been harassed at work](#)
- [10 Tips for Dealing with Workplace Harassment | Daskal, Lolly, Inc. Magazine](#)
- [Harassment in the Workplace: What Employers, Employees, and Interns Need to Know | NACE](#)