



Policy Directory

Responsible Division: Finance and Administrative Services

Responsible Office: Human Resources

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Harassment and Discrimination

Alcorn State University is committed to creating and sustaining a productive, collaborative, and safe work environment. If an employee has knowledge of an action taken by an employee of the University that conflicts with or is in violation of policies, he/she should act on that knowledge and contact the proper University official.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) defines harassment and discrimination as follows:

Harassment – Unwelcome conduct based on one or more protected classes wherein enduring the offensive conduct becomes a condition of continued employment, or the conduct is severe or pervasive enough to create a work environment that a reasonable person would consider intimidating, hostile, or abusive. This includes, but is not limited to, sexual harassment.

Discrimination – Occurs when an applicant or employee is treated differently regarding any aspect of employment, including hiring, firing, pay, job duties, promotions, layoff, training, fringe benefits, and any other term, benefit, or condition of employment.

Federally protected classes and characteristics include race, color, religion, sex, disability, national origin, age, veteran status, and genetic information. It is important to note that many states have defined **additional protected classes, statuses, or characteristics** that must be considered concurrently with federal protections.

Important Facts:

- **Harassment is not limited to direct conversation.** Harassment can also be present in jokes, images, nicknames, gestures, etc.

- **An individual does not have to be the intended target of harassment in order to be a victim.** Anyone who is affected by the offensive behavior can be a victim of harassment, ex: bystanders, individuals in a different department, visitors, etc.
- **Anyone can be guilty of harassment, regardless of their position within the organization.** A supervisor can harass a direct report. A co-worker can harass a fellow employee. An intern can harass a CEO.
- **A member of a protected class can be guilty of harassing another member of the same protected class.** A male employee can be guilty of sexually harassing another male employee, regardless of either's sexual orientation. Practitioners of one religion can harass employees who practice similar or identical beliefs.
- **Harassment can happen outside of the workplace.** Illegal harassment can take place at events connected to the workplace, such as holiday celebrations, conferences, employee picnics, etc. Additionally, behavior from social media has the potential to qualify as harassment if the work environment is influenced by the behavior.

Complaints of Discrimination and/or Harassment

Formal complaints of discrimination or harassment that are not of a sexual nature should be reported using EEO/AA intake form which is in this section under **"FORMS"**.

The report must be made within ten **(10) days** of the date the employee first knew (or with reasonable diligence should have known) of the decision or action giving rise to the complaint or grievance.

Before filing a formal complaint, the employee should discuss his/her concern(s) with the lowest administrator who has the authority to address the complaint.

Employees and students who wish to make a complaint that involves sexual misconduct/sexual discrimination/harassment, please contact the University's Title IX Office. All sexual harassment and sexual misconduct complaints are handled by ASU Title IX Office.