

Prevention of Harassment

Kobe University is committed to creating and maintaining a working and learning environment in which all faculty, staff and students can work and study safely and comfortably, free from any type of harassment, intimidation or exploitation physically and mentally. To this end, we will not tolerate, condone or ignore any acts that threaten our safe, comfortable working and learning environment.

It is imperative that all faculty, staff and students recognize and maintain ethical standards that each of us has the right to be respected equally in the relationships that develop in the departments, classrooms, labs, clubs, circles of friends, offices, and any other spaces in our university community.

Kobe University strives to bring the issue to the forefront of campus activism so that each of us can have a fruitful time at work and study on campus.

What is harassment?

Harassment is an unwanted, unsolicited or unwelcome behavior or language that is offensive or intimidating to the recipient. In universities, harassment can happen between faculty and students, students and students, staff and staff etc, typically in the manner of unwelcome sexual advances, bullying, peer pressure, or creating a hostile environment that interferes with employment or education by use of power differentials. Faculty members have authority to evaluate academic performance. Students, too, have hierarchical relations among themselves in their club activities, seminars, etc. Thus, closed spaces such as labs, classrooms and club rooms as well as offices in the campus community can create an environment leading to harassment. This can also happen in the workplace.

Harassment can be categorized into the following types:

Sexual harassment

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature misusing one's position in a work or academic situation, and such conduct with the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work or educational performance creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

Academic Harassment

Offensive or malicious treatment that misuses a position of authority in an educational or a research setting and damages learning or research environments or lowers individual's motivation for learning or working on campus.

Others

Abuse of human rights in the form of libel, defamation, slander, forcing someone to drink, etc.

Action to be taken to prevent harassment

Human relationships are vital to social life. In order to maintain good human relationships, we must look at things from each other's viewpoint. Each of us should reflect on our verbal and physical conduct. Someone might feel harassed or uncomfortable because of your words and attitude.

It is important to think of others who are not able to say "No". We must not tolerate or forgive harassment that misuses authority or power.

If a particular act is proved by the Investigation Committee to be harassment, disciplinary action will be taken.

Mutual respect is the key to preventing harassment.

If you feel you are being harassed:

If you feel you are being harassed, tell the harasser clearly that the behavior is unwelcome and you want it to stop immediately. Showing your discomfort is very important.

If you feel you cannot speak up, or his/her behavior does not stop even after you speak up, seek advice from the Consultation Desk rather than suffer alone.

It is advisable to keep records of details, such as dates, places, times, witnesses and the nature of the harassment as they can be helpful in the course of solving the problem.

Whether or not a particular behavior holds true of harassment depends not on how others perceive it, but on how you feel it. Do not condone what has happened. Tolerating the situation will allow the harassment to continue.

For consultation:

When you are being subjected to harassment, talk with one of the resource persons in the “Harassment Counselors List” on the University’s web page (accessible only through the intra-university network). Regardless of the faculty you belong to, consultation about harassment is available from any counselors in the Harassment Counselors List, including the resources from Mental Health Consultation Desk at the Medical Center for Student Health.

For any problem involving harassment, do not suffer alone nor hesitate to contact a counselor. We promise to keep all matters confidential. You will not be adversely affected from a consultation.

“Take courage and speak up” is the first step in resolving the problem.
Many cases have been solved through consultation.

Kobe University Harassment Committee