

ACENTDFB Sexual Harassment Policy

(Abridged Version)

Preamble

Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria has a zero tolerance for sexual harassment with the Gender Policy Unit of the University assigned the responsibility for monitoring and addressing the issue whenever it arises. All component units of the University, ACENTDFB inclusive are enjoined to comply with policy and regulations governing sexual policy.

Policy Statement

ACENNTDFB is committed to providing a safe and conducive learning environment for all its students and staff free of discrimination irrespective of gender, race, cultural background, social status and religion. ACENTDFB operate a zero tolerance policy for any form of sexual harassment in the Centre, treat all incidents seriously and promptly investigate all allegations of sexual harassment. Persons that are found to have sexually harassed another are required by the University laws to face disciplinary action. Complaints of sexual harassment are taken seriously and treated with dispatch and accorded due confidentiality where necessary.

Definition

Sexual harassment is unwanted sexual attention expressed by a person either in words or by physical gesture or the like that causes discomfort, unpleasantness, or distastefulness to another person in a public setting such as school, work or social settings. It includes among others verbal slurs or abuse; suggestive, offensive, or derogatory comments; sexist remarks about someone's body, clothing, or sexual activity; insults of a sexual nature; requests or demands for sexual favors; catcalls or other suggestive or insulting sounds or gestures; unnecessary and unwanted physical contact; and physical assault.

Channels of Complaints

Any person who believes he or she has been the victim of sexual harassment by an administrator, faculty member, student or an employee of the Centre is encouraged to report and discuss the alleged acts immediately and confidentially with the designated Officer of the Centre. Complaints of alleged sexual harassment made to the designated officer are first handled in confidence with

the complainant. If initially assessment points to a probable or likelihood occurrence of such act, a preliminary report with the consent of the complainant is forwarded to the Centre Leader, who shall cause the Sexual Harassment Committee to commence investigation. The Sexual Harassment Committee of the Centre is tentatively composed of four members, three faculty (2 females and one male) and a student representative. Outcomes of such investigation will be discussed by the Centre Management Committee. Where tentative findings attest that sexual harassment did occur, the culprit will be referred to the University Staff Disciplinary Committee for necessary punitive action. Where the culprit is a student, the matter shall be referred to the Student Disciplinary Committee. Punitive actions are of different magnitude and may range from warning to termination of appointment in case of a faculty or warning to expulsion in case of students. More serious cases like sexual assault are considered as grievous and are referable to the Nigerian Police for diligent prosecution in Courts.

Investigation

In the investigation of sexual harassment complaints, two critical elements are of consideration- the nature of the sexual advances and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred. To assist in the investigation, the University Security Services will be involved in intelligence gathering, documentation and evaluation of evidences..

Disciplinary Measures

The results of the investigation of each complaint filed under this Policy will be reported to the complaining party by the Centre Leader. The report will document any disciplinary action taken by the Centre as a result of the complaint, and will become part of the personnel file or record of the disciplined individual.

Reprisal

The Centre is setting up machinery to monitor incidences of reprisal for cases reported to it during the investigation period thereafter and for which disciplinary action had been meted out. Retaliation against any individual who complains of sexual harassment is strictly forbidden by the Centre, and anyone who practices such retaliation will be subject to immediate discipline, up to and including discharge or expulsion.

Non-Harassment

The Centre recognizes that not every advance or comment of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment and the Centre therefore, is putting in place measures to guard against frivolous and mischievous allegations. Whether a particular action or incident constitutes sexual harassment or not requires an objective determination based upon all of the facts and surrounding circumstances. Punitive measures being put in place against false accusations of sexual harassment ranges from warning to suspension.

Sexual Behavior and Public Display of Affection

Students are expected to treat one another with dignity and respect. The Centre as part of its mentoring policy, encourages students to be responsible adults in their behavior and actions, including sexual behavior and complying with the Centre and University rules and regulations. They are advised to understand the cultural dos and don'ts of the environment in which the Centre and the University is located, and therefore guide against open display of sexual affection that may lead to unpleasant experience. This should not be construed however, as supporting sexual harassment or assault.

Helping Victims

Aside investigating and punishing perpetrators, the Center shall refer victims of harassment to the Guidance and Counseling Directorate of the University where several forms of assistance such as psychological counselling and support are readily available.

Policy Enforcement and Documentation

The ACENTDFB and ACENPEE Management have started encouraging the University to review and update its sexual harassment policy in line with new understanding and in accordance with accepted international guidelines and policy. The Management of the University is already considering the creation of a Sexual Harassment Section within the Gender Policy Directorate of the University. Furthermore, the Student Handbook of the Centre is being reviewed to include sexual policy of the Centre besides uploading same in the Centre's website. The Centre in addition, intends to Register and create a platform for victims and witnesses of sexual harassment to anonymously report incidents of sexual harassment.