



Introduction

Ecumenical Commission for Human Development Policy on Harassment recognizes that harassment is an unacceptable behavior. The policy seeks to enhance access, participation and positive outcomes for its members consistent with equal opportunity and affirmative action principles. The policy accepts its legal obligations to ensure that staff is not subjected to harassment, which may include vicarious liability for harassment of others by its employees.

1. What is Harassment?

Harassment is verbal or physical conduct, which because of its severity and/or persistence, is likely to create a hostile or intimidating environment and detrimentally affect an individual's employment. Harassment is defined by reference to the nature and consequences of the behavior, not the intent of the initiator.

Harassing conduct specifically includes the following;

- Communication of spoken, written, graphic and computer mediated material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion to individuals or groups on the grounds of actual or perceived race, nationality, gender, transgender status, marital status, disability, homosexuality, age, family responsibilities, political conviction or religious belief;
- Threatening, intimidating or demeaning behavior directed at individuals or groups outlined above;
- Acts of vilification, i.e. public acts which may have the effect of inciting others to hate, have serious contempt for, or seriously ridicule a person or group of people, on the grounds of actual or perceived race, AIDS or HIV-positive status, homosexuality, or transgender status;
- Sexual harassment, which is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual contact and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, when submission to or rejection of such advances, requests or conduct is explicitly or implicitly a term or condition affecting employment decisions; and/or when such advances, requests or conducts have a detrimental effects on an individual's work environment.

Ecumenical Commission for Human Development has already established Grievance Procedure for dealing with complaints of harassment from staff. Where it is determined that harassment has occurred, Ecumenical Commission for Human Development will act promptly to eliminate the harassing conduct, and will deal with the matter in accordance with Grievance Procedure for Staff as follows.



2. Procedure for Handling Harassment

An employee filing harassment complaint shall have at every “step” the right to present witnesses and evidence to support his/her harassment. Employees are not to be penalized in any way for proper use of the Harassment Procedure. Time spent in harassment discussions with the administration would be considered time worked with pay.

Step 1

- Any employee who wishes to file harassment shall first discuss this with his/her immediate supervisor. After the aforementioned discussion with the employee, the supervisor shall have five (5) working days in which to reply to the employee’s grievance. If the supervisor fails to reply to the harassment or if his/her answer is not satisfactory to the employee, the employee may present his/her harassment at Step 2.

Step 2

- If the disposition of the harassment in Step 1 is not acceptable, the employee shall, within five (5) working days, prepare a written statement stating the basis for the harassment and a requested settlement. He/she shall then discuss his/her problem with the Section Head or Finance & Administration Head (in cases where the section head is the direct supervisor), who shall have five working days in which to present a written reply to the employee’s complaint. If a mutually acceptable settlement cannot be reached, the employee will have five working days in which to present his/her harassment in Step 3. The grievant should process his/her harassment to Step 3 through the office of Head of Department.

Step 3

- If the disposition of the harassment in Step 2 is not acceptable and the employee wishes to have it considered further, he/she shall notify a representative appointed by the Head of Department. The incumbent representative will investigate the allegations and make arrangements to hear the employee’s complaint and the departmental charges if any. He/she shall provide a written response to the employee within five working days of the receipt of the harassment. If the response is not acceptable to the employee the harassment may be processed to Step 4 through the head of the organization.



Step 4

- If the disposition of the harassment in Step 3 is not acceptable to the employee and he/she wishes to have the harassment given further consideration, he/she shall notify the Head of Department in writing to that effect. It is up to the discretion of the Head of Department, to either investigate the allegation on his/her own or constitute a panel to hear out the grievant. Harassment processed to Step 4 shall be reviewed and a response shall be provided to the grievant within thirty days.

3. Exceptional Cases

In exceptional cases where the Head of Section or Senior Level Officials reporting directly to the Head of the Organization, wishes to file harassment shall first discuss his/her harassment with the Organisational Head. If Department Head fails to reply to the harassment or if his/her answer is not satisfactory to the employee, the officer may present his/her harassment to the Board member nominated by the Chairperson of the Board. Harassments processed under such circumstances shall be reviewed and a response shall be provided within thirty (30) days.