

**AFRICA CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE ON NEW PEDAGOGIES IN ENGINEERING EDUCATION
(ACENPEE)**

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

Preamble

The Africa Centre of Excellence on New Pedagogies in Engineering Education (ACENPEE), Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria has a zero tolerance for sexual harassment. The Centre's Sexual Harassment Coordinator is **Professor Binta Abdulkarim** who is also the university's Director, Gender Policy Unit.

Policy Statement

ACENPEE is committed to providing a safe and conducive learning environment for all its staff and students free from discrimination on any ground including sexual harassment. ACENPEE will 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. Any person found to have sexually harassed another will face disciplinary action. All complaints of sexual harassment will be taken seriously and treated with respect and in confidence. No one will be victimized for making such a complaint.

Definition

Sexual harassment is unwanted sexual attention that makes a person uncomfortable or causes problems in school, work, or in social settings. Some examples are 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.

Sexual harassment can include, but is not limited to, the following:

- a. An unwanted physical advance or verbal approach of a sexual nature;
- b. Subtle or overt pressure for sexual involvement;
- c. Unwanted reference to one's physical appearance, sexuality or to sexual activities;
- d. Unwanted physical contact;
- e. The demand for sexual favors accompanied by implicit or explicit threats against one's job security or success;
- f. Any comments or actions which denigrate a person based upon gender; or
- g. Unsolicited sexual gestures or comments or the display of offensive, sexually graphic materials.

Complaints Mechanism

Any person who believes he or she has been the victim of sexual harassment by a board member, a parent, a volunteer, an administrator, faculty member, student or employee of the Centre is encouraged to report and discuss the alleged acts immediately and confidentially with the Sexual Harassment Coordinator. Any complaints of alleged sexual harassment made to the Sexual Harassment Coordinator will be discussed fully and confidentially with the person raising the complaint or concern and will require approval of the reporter prior to disclosure or direct investigation of the matter.

If, after discussion by the reporting person with the Sexual Harassment Coordinator, it is agreed between the reporting party and the Sexual Harassment Coordinator that a more detailed investigation is appropriate, the following investigative procedure will be utilized.

Investigation

Following discussion with the Sexual Harassment Coordinator, and the agreement of the reporting party that an investigation should be undertaken, the complaint will be made fully known to the Centre Leader. Once so advised, immediate follow-up in the form of a full investigation by the Centre Leader will be performed.

In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes sexual harassment, the totality of circumstances, such as the nature of the sexual advances and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred, will be considered. To assist in the investigation, incidents will be documented, including specifics such as dates, times, witnesses, if any, and a full and clear statement of what transpired. A determination of the appropriateness (or lack thereof) of the particular action will then be made from the facts by the Centre Leader (with the assistance and advice of the University lawyers), and appropriate action will be pursued expeditiously in each case.

Disciplinary Measures

Any administrator, faculty member, employee, or student of the school who engages in sexual harassment is subject to immediate and appropriate discipline, up to and including discharge or expulsion. 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

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 harassment. Whether a particular action or incident constitutes sexual harassment or not requires an objective determination based upon all of the facts and surrounding circumstances. False accusations of sexual harassment can have a serious detrimental effect on innocent parties, are prohibited by the Centre, and can be cause for disciplinary action up to and including discharge or expulsion.

Code of Conduct for Staff and Students

Staff and Students are expected to treat one another with dignity and respect. We encourage staff and students to make responsible decisions regarding sexuality and to consider the consequences of their decisions in terms of their health, their relationships with others, moral considerations, and the law. The Centre forbids pre-marital sexual intercourse and other forms of sexual intimacy among staff and students. Staff and Students should understand that pre-marital sexual behavior may result in corrective action. From our concern for their emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being, we also will respond to sexually active staff and students by initiating and fostering open communication that may be helpful to them.

Staff and Student couples are encouraged to make responsible choices regarding sexuality. When they are together in public, however, they have a responsibility to others as well as to themselves to conduct themselves appropriately. Public displays of affection are unacceptable when they embarrass or make others uncomfortable. Examples of such behaviors include, but are not limited to, extended kissing or hugging, lying or sitting together inappropriately, and placing hands on each other in inappropriate ways.

Helping Victims

Aside investigating and punishing perpetrators, the Centre shall refer victims of harassment to the Guidance and Counseling Directorate of the University for the Cure of trauma and related stress experiences. The Directorate has senior resource managers that facilitate and investigate formal and informal complaints. While victims have these options, they can also extend complaints outside of the University where necessary.

Implementation

The Centre shall implement its Sexual Harassment Policy in line with existing university rules and regulations and in conformity with the laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The Centre shall develop a Sex Offence Service Provider (data base) and Sex Offenders' Register (SOR) to be shared with institutions and relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) within and outside Nigeria. This policy shall be included in the Centre's Staff and students' handbooks.

Education on Sexual Harassment

The Centre shall educate the University community on the consequences of sexual harassment on the perpetrators, the victims and the society. It shall organize in conjunction with the university Gender Policy Unit various activities to sensitize, enlighten and educate staff and students on Sexual harassment issues. These will include advocacy, handbills and posters, seminars, lectures and workshops. These activities will be carried out on a continuous basis to ensure that staff and students are always well informed and guided on their sexual rights and responsibilities.

Monitoring and evaluation strategies will be drawn from data in the Sex Offender Registers and review consultations from Faculties, Departments and Centre's.

Terms of Reference (TOR) for Coordinator

The Sexual Harassment Coordinator shall;

- a. Develop a Sexual Harassment Policy for the Centre.
- b. Formulate Staff and Student's sexual code of conduct.
- c. Investigate reports of sexual harassment and make appropriate recommendations to Centre leadership for action.
- d. Organize activities to educate staff and students on sexual harassment issues (such as advocacy visits, handbills, posters, seminars and workshops).
- e. Advise on gender balance and inclusiveness.
- f. Assist students with gender related issues.
- g. Scouting for female students for admission into Centre programmes.

Contact of Coordinator

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