

LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY HARASSMENT POLICY

Adopted by the Board of Trustees on June 6 & 7, 2003
Amended by the Board of Trustees on March 9 & 10, 2006
Amended by the Board of Trustees on March 15 & 16, 2013

Preamble:

The Lebanese American University, LAU, in its commitment to pursue excellence in its academic and professional endeavors, believes in the intrinsic value of all human beings. Accordingly, LAU fosters an atmosphere of mutual respect among all members of its community, where each individual is judged solely on criteria related to academic or job performance. In this respect, LAU is committed to the elimination of all forms of harassment and discrimination that may be found on its campuses or on any other University controlled area or event.

Fundamental to LAU's mission is the preservation and encouragement of academic freedom. Promulgating this Policy should by no means be construed as inhibiting free speech, freedom of association, or the free communication of ideas.

Policy Statement:

LAU is an equal opportunity employer regardless of race, color, religion, creed, sex, marital status, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, political affiliation or belief.

LAU is committed to a working and learning environment where people can achieve their full potential. LAU's policy and procedure on harassment is designed to provide:

- An environment where it is clear that harassment is unacceptable, thereby reducing the chance that harassment will occur in the first instance; and
- A mechanism to resolve complaints where it is felt that harassment has occurred.

Disciplinary action may be taken to deal with actions or behavior, intentional or unintentional, which results in a breach of this policy. Disciplinary action may

also be taken if allegations of harassment are proven to be malicious or vexatious.

Scope of Policy:

This policy applies to all students, faculty, and staff at LAU and relates to harassment perpetrated by:

- A student against a student
- A student against a member of staff or faculty
- A member of staff or faculty against a student
- A member of staff/faculty against another member of staff/faculty

Harassment is not necessarily confined to the behavior of senior staff towards more junior staff; it can take place between colleagues at the same level or involve staff behaving inappropriately towards more senior staff.

Definitions:

1. Unwelcome Behavior that Demeans, Humiliates, or Embarrasses

Harassment is any behavior that demeans, humiliates, or embarrasses a person, and that a reasonable person should have known would be unwelcome. It includes actions such as touching and pushing, comments such as jokes and name-calling, or displays such as posters and cartoons. Harassment is not only related to race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, age, sex, marital status, family status, disability, pardoned conviction, or sexual orientation, but it is also related to disrespectful behavior commonly known as 'personal' harassment, such as making fun of personal circumstances or appearance, bullying (includes unmerited criticism, isolation, gossip, physical violence or violent gestures, public humiliation, or behavior that is intimidating or demeaning), and stalking.

2. Unwanted Sexual Behavior

Sexual harassment includes offensive or humiliating behavior that is related to a person's sex, as well as behavior of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, unwelcome, hostile, or offensive work environment, or that could reasonably be thought to put sexual conditions on a person's job or employment opportunities.

The University considers all forms of sexual harassment and discrimination as serious offenses when:

- a. It is insinuating implicitly or explicitly that submission or acceptance of such a conduct is a term or a condition for employment, for advancement in a professional track or in the educational process.
- b. Such conduct is creating an intimidating hostile or offensive environment and by that, interfering with the proper performance of the job or the academic process.

Responsibilities:

1. All staff and faculty and students can help to:
 - Prevent harassment by being sensitive to the reactions and needs of others, and ensure that their conduct does not cause offence;
 - Discourage harassment by others through making it clear that such conduct is unacceptable and supporting colleagues and peers who are taking steps to stop the harassment.
2. LAU is responsible for:
 - Providing an environment where it is clear that harassment is not acceptable;
 - Taking action when it is aware that harassment may be or is taking place;
 - Ensuring that deans and chairpersons, vice presidents and directors are aware of their responsibility for trying to prevent and, in the first instance, resolve problems in the immediate workplace.

Reporting and Filing Complaints:

Any LAU staff, faculty or student who believes that he/she is subject to any form of harassment, should submit a complaint (verbal or written) in this regard to the General Counsel who is charged with initiating the investigation and processing the complaint as per the attached procedure.

The right to confidentiality shall be strictly adhered to at all stages, in so far as it does not interfere with LAU's legal obligation to investigate the allegations presented and to take the proper corrective action.

Resolution of a Complaint:

LAU will promptly respond to all harassment complaints. If the claim is substantiated and proven, LAU will institute disciplinary proceedings against the offending party, which may result in a range of sanctions up to, and including termination of, University affiliation. If the complaint was found to be unsubstantiated, the University shall take no further action.

The formal University decision shall be communicated to the involved parties as approved by the President. Appeals by either party may be initiated as per the applicable LAU policies.

LAU prohibits any form of retaliation against a person reporting a harassment case. The University will treat retaliation as a separate incident, subject to appropriate disciplinary and/or corrective action that might entail warning or even dismissal.

Any deliberate or malicious accusation of harassment violates this policy and may subject the instigator of such a claim to the same sanctions noted above.

It is crucial to note here that failure to prove a claim of harassment does not constitute proof of false and/or malicious accusation.

Online Workshop:

All LAU faculty and staff members are expected to sign off on the online workshop on harassment, which can be accessed via the LAU website, as an expression of their commitment to abide by it.

Procedure for Processing a Harassment Complaint:

The following steps should be taken when filing a harassment complaint:

- When a student, a staff member, or a faculty member faces any form of harassment, s/he should file a complaint with the General Counsel.
- When a harassment complaint is submitted to the General Counsel (verbal or written), the General Counsel shall prepare a statement in writing signed by the complainant.
- The General Counsel will then submit the statement to the President who will assess the situation and resolve whether or not a committee to investigate the claim(s) is warranted or not.
- Said committee will be charged with deciding whether to reject the complaint as unsubstantiated or to go on with further investigation.
- The Committee reports and makes final recommendations to the President.