

Dealing with sexual harassment at University



1. What is sexual violence/harassment
2. How not to become a harassment perpetrator
3. How to react
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Foreword

Higher Education is not immune to sexual harassment. As a Higher Education Institution, the University of Crete has committed to putting an end to any form of harassment and provides the academic community with information regarding sexual harassment. Importantly, it offers attention and support to those who have experienced or witnessed harassment or unfavourable discrimination due to gender identity or gender characteristics, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin, religious or other beliefs, disability or chronic illness, age, marital or social status.

The Gender Equality Committee (GEC) plays a decisive role in facilitating the combating of such behaviour.

The guide in your hands attempts to be a brief and informative manual for the handling of sexual violence and harassment incidents. It is addressed to the entire student body and faculty members, researchers, teaching and administrative personnel, as any member of the university community may experience or witness sexual or gender-based harassment or even display such misconduct.

The legislation differentiates among various acts of verbal and/or physical violence which insult one's sexual dignity, as well as one's sexual or gender identity, as it intersects with other aspects of identity, often in the context of imbalanced relationships.

1. What is sexual violence/harassment?

Basic definitions

according to the pertinent legislation

Sexual harassment is the demonstration of any unwelcome verbal, non-verbal or physical behaviour of a sexual nature aiming to or resulting into a person's insult of dignity, especially while creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating, degrading or aggressive environment.



Discriminatory treatment is any act or disregard which violates the fundamental principle of equal and fair access to opportunities available in society. It may concern one's ethnic or racial origin, religious or other beliefs, disability or chronic illness, age, marital or social status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender characteristics.

Gender discrimination is the physical, psychological, or verbal behaviour which causes one to be degraded because of their gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

Power-based violence/abuse is that which is committed in imbalanced relationships when the more powerful person, taking advantage of their special position, exerts power on the weaker person in an abusive manner. Such behaviours include elements of intimidation, gaslighting, humiliation, dependence, imposition and suppression towards the person who is being coerced.

Rape is the coercion into or the tolerance of a sexual act carried out without a person's consent, or by physical violence or threat of severe and immediate danger against one's life or physical integrity.



Legislation

Law 3896/2010 Application of the Principle of Equal Opportunity and Treatment of Men and Women in terms of Employment.

Law 4531/2018 (I) Ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence and Adaptation of the Greek Legislation (Istanbul Convention).

Law 4604/2019 On Substantive Gender Equality and Preventing and Combating Gender-Based Violence.

New Greek Criminal Code (Law 4619/2019)*

Article 312: Physical harm against weak persons.

Article 336: Rape.

Article 337: Violation of sexual dignity.

Article 338: Abuse against people unable to resist a non-consensual sexual act.

Article 343: Coercion into a sexual act.

Article 353: Violation of sexual decency.

*Unofficial translation of the Articles

2. How not to become a harassment perpetrator

Always ask for the other person's explicit consent

- “No” or “I don’t know” and silence are not consent.
- Consent must be given without pressure. One must not coerce, deceive, or threaten someone to say “yes”.
- Consent can be revoked at any time. No one is obliged to complete an act simply because they started it. Also, if a person consents once, this does not mean that they consent every time.
- A person cannot give consent if they are asleep, unconscious or in an altered mental state such as being under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- No one has the right to abuse another person's body and/or insult their dignity. No one has the right to display dominating or possessive behaviour towards another person, whatever form of relationship they may have.
- Every person has the right to self-determination and free will.

3. How to react



Say “No”

It is important to express your refusal clearly and firmly, if possible, at the first signs of sexual harassment and to underscore the reprehensible and unlawful nature of such acts.

Note! Even if you were not able to explicitly say “No” or did not manage to react at the time, it does not mean that you are responsible for the abusive/violating behaviour you were subjected to.

Protect yourself

Avoid the person who exerts such acts on you as much as possible. Try not to hold in what you have experienced. Talk to the people you are closest to and to those you trust; friends, fellow students, faculty members. Ask for their assistance. Report the incident.

If you witness such an incident

- Show in practice your solidarity to the person who was harassed. Stress that they are not to blame for having experienced harassment or abuse.
- Inform them about the possibility to report the incident to the Gender Equality Committee or to another pertinent body of the University. Encourage them to do so and to ask for psychological support. You could report the incident to the GEC yourself.

If confided with a harassment experience

- Listen carefully and empathically. Keep confidential what has been disclosed to you.
- Show trust; do not dispute their statement; do not ask for proof.



4. Where to report

Fill in the report form on the GEC's website

In accordance with Law 4589/2019, article 33, the Gender Equality Committee has the responsibility to “mediate cases of gender-based violence, discrimination and harassment” and to “support victims who report gender discrimination and gender-based violation”.

The complaint is submitted online, by completing the pertinent form found on the GEC's website, under the menu 'Discrimination Management' > 'Report form'.

Complaints of unfavourable discrimination, sexual harassment, gender violence and power-based violence/abuse can be submitted to the GEC by any member of the University community who has either been subjected to any of the afore-mentioned behaviours, or has witnessed such incidents.

All complaints must be signed and are subject to the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The committee members are bound by confidentiality duty regarding the data disclosed in the submitted reports.

The reporting procedure and the intervention to the pertinent academic bodies can be activated on the GEC's initiative in the event that a case of misconduct comes to its members' notice.

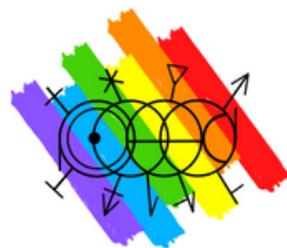


The procedure

- Complaints submitted to the website are received and treated by a complaints handling team comprised of GEC's members.
- One member of the team contacts the person who submitted the complaint and invites them to a hearing immediately. The person may suggest specific members of the team to whom they would like to talk to about the incident.
- The hearing procedure may take place in person at the University and/or through teleconference.
- After the hearing, the person concerned is informed about the existing legal possibilities of how to deal with the incident, as well as about the services/agencies where they could get further advice and support.
- The complaints handling team informs the GEC members about the incident. A report concerning the incident is written and forwarded to the appropriate academic bodies, with the agreement of the person concerned.

Complaints of harassment and discrimination issues can also be filed to other bodies and committees of the University of Crete: School Deans, Heads of Departments, the Student Ombudsman, the Student Counselling Centre and the Ethics Committee.

More information on the above can be found on the Gender Equality Committee's website.



Texts: GEC Discrimination Issues Study Group

Translated in English by: Kyriaki Divini, UoC School of Medicine

Edited and designed by: I. Ampoumogli, GEC associate member

Sources: UN Women, www.sciencepo.fr, UoC Gender Equality Committee



Useful links

Gender Equality Committee

University of Crete

www.eif.uoc.gr

email: eif@uoc.gr

+30 28310 77978

Student Counselling Centre

www.skf.uoc.gr/index.php/en/

Rethymno: rskf@admin.uoc.gr

+30 28310 77982/77979

Heraklio: hskf@edu.uoc.gr

+30 2810 394885/393653

Student Ombudsman

email: sinigoros.foititi@uoc.gr

Counselling and Support Centre for Women Victims of Violence Municipality of Rethymno

www.rethymno.gr/citizen/to-kentro/to-kentro-symboleytikhs-gynaikwn.html

e-mail: isotitavia.reth@gmail.com

+30 28310 56607

Heraklio Counselling Centre Research Centre for Gender Equality

3 Stenimachou str., 713 05 Heraklio, Crete

email: irakleio@isotita.gr

+30 2810 341387

SOS-Violence against women Helpline 15900