

Students

"If an education provider becomes aware that a child, pupil or student participating in or applying for the provider's activities considers that he or she has been subjected in connection with these activities to harassment or sexual harassment, the education provider is obliged to investigate the circumstances surrounding the alleged harassment and where appropriate take the measures that can reasonably be demanded to prevent harassment in the future."

(extract from the Discrimination Act, Chapter 2, Section 7).

What risks does a person subjecting another to harassment face?

If the University becomes aware of any occurrence of harassment, measures should be taken to prevent the harassment from continuing. The person accused of harassment shall be summoned to a meeting to discuss the claims.

If a student subjects another student or a University employee to harassment, it should be reported to the Vice Chancellor, who determines if it should result in disciplinary hearing.

If the harassment continues, the University may take stronger action. Employees who harass/subject any person to victimisation risk the case being taken up with the staff disciplinary board where they risk losing their position at the University.

Law

Discrimination Act (2008:567)



Harassment & Sexual harassment

Management instructions for
Students
at the University of Gävle



All individuals are equal and have equal rights.

Discrimination on the grounds of gender, ethnic background, religion or other beliefs, age, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation or disability is illegal. Discrimination and harassment violate our basic human rights.

One of the University's long term goals is to be an attractive workplace with a good work environment, where respect for students is a given.

What is harassment?

Harassment results in a person feeling insulted, threatened, violated or mistreated.

Harassment is unwelcome behaviour. It is the person who is exposed to harassment who determines what is violating.

As a victim, you often feel at a disadvantage and it can be difficult to manage the situation. You may feel as though you are imagining things, that you are to blame, doubt whether the matter will be taken seriously or be scared of reprisals. Therefore it is important that these matters are taken very seriously.

If you are subjected to harassment

► **Make it clear that such behaviour is unwelcome**

Explain to the person harassing that you feel violated and you want their behaviour to stop.

► **Tell someone about the harassment**

As a student you have the right to a study environment free from disparagement and victimisation. If you tell a university employee about your experience, this person is, in accordance with the Discrimination Act, obligated to inform their immediate manager, so the University can instigate an investigation. However, you have the right to remain anonymous when reporting harassment.

Contact the course coordinator/programme director, Head of Department or another member of staff you trust at the department. If you do not wish to speak to anyone in the department, you can turn to the University equality coordinator, the Student Health Centre, student union/representative, coordinator for students with disabilities or one of the study counsellors.

You can also turn to the Equality Ombudsman for help and advice. If you wish to seek help and advice without initiating an investigation, you can contact the Student Union.

► **Document**

Keep a diary of the harassment/victimisation and save all correspondence. Your notes can provide the basis for an investigation or police report. The same applies to all letters, e-mails, text messages or other correspondence you have had with the person accused of harassment.

Report harassment as soon as possible – it is important to solve the situation quickly.

If you are contacted regarding harassment

Each manager has an overall responsibility for colleagues who are exposed to/feel victim of harassment and victimisation.

► **Take everything you hear seriously**

Do not undermine or try to explain away what the student has experienced. Reporting harassment places the student in a very vulnerable position and is important that they are met with respect.

► **Harassment is not tolerated at the University of Gävle**

Make it clear to the student that the University does not tolerate harassment and that reports of harassment are viewed very seriously.

► **Act directly and discretely**

If the person responsible for the harassment is a student, the responsible Head of Department shall be contacted. If the person responsible for the harassment is an employee of the University of Gävle, the personnel department should be contacted (personnel manager or personnel secretary).

Encourage the student to keep a diary of any experiences of harassment and encourage them to save emails, text messages and other documentation. The situation should be handled discretely.

► **Support**

Recommend that the student contacts the Student Health Centre for counselling.

► **Create an action plan**

The Head of Department must ensure that an action plan is created. Remember to be as concrete as possible. Specify the planned actions and who is responsible for their execution. Also make a note of when a follow up will be carried out.

The University's responsibility

As an employer, the University is obligated to prevent harassment. This is regulated by the Discrimination Act (2008:567).

Obligation to investigate

Employers and education providers have an obligation to ensure that harassment does not occur within the workplace, or within the educational framework.