

Harassment Counseling Office Newsletter

Issue 36
September 2022

Here is the 36th newsletter
from the Harassment
Counseling Office.

A word from our counselors

The role of the counseling office

It is almost 20 years since the establishment of the Osaka University Harassment Counseling Office. The office was originally set up as a place for sexual harassment counselling but later, advice for power harassment and academic harassment was added to the schedule.

Even after 20 years, there are still people who come to our office requesting that "the harassment is recognized" and that "the perpetrator is punished". These incidents make us realize that we are not doing enough to explain our role.

The role of the office and the counselors is not to determine whether harassment has occurred or to decide if someone should be disciplined. The main purpose of the counseling office is to listen carefully to those who come to us and assist them to create the environment they wish to be in.

For example, if a student is having a difficult time because of a strained relationship with a faculty member, we will present the student with the following options and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each option: (1) give the faculty member a warning, (2) ask the appropriate person in the student's department to prevent contact between the student and the faculty member, (3) consider ways to avoid what the student feels are "attacks" in daily life, and so forth. Each person who comes to see us has a unique situation. Are they undergraduate students, graduate students, thinking about finding a job, or wanting to continue their research? We try to take the time to listen to them carefully.

We are also receiving an increasing number of consultations from faculty and staff. In these consultations, after listening to their concerns, we check to see what the labor contract says. The university has a variety of work contracts and some may not permit transfers. If the person who comes to us does not wish to work with the person making them uncomfortable and their contract makes it difficult to transfer then other options such as increasing the amount of work done remotely may have to be considered.

If, after several visits the person consulting the office decides not to make any changes, the office will also not take any steps. The counseling office will not make any moves without authorization from the person themselves. As you can see from the above, it is not the responsibility of the counseling office to blame or punish the other person; the primary goal of the counseling office is to adjust the academic research work environment of the person consulting us in a more positive direction.

However, if the situation is not resolved by the adjustments suggested by the consultation office or the person consulting us is not satisfied, they can make a "request for action" through the consultation office. This is a formal complaint to the university, which is approved by the counseling office committee and is then brought to the Anti-harassment Council. The Anti-harassment Council will then make a decision on what the next steps will be including the formation of an investigative committee. Once the case progresses to this point, it is out of the

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hands of the counseling office. In my experience, only one or two cases a year progress to the level of a request for action.

In short, the consultation office is a place where we work with the people who come to us to find solutions to their problems. We also accept consultations in serious cases particularly if a person wants to know if their feelings towards something are correct. In these cases, rather than focusing on whether or not the consultation constitutes harassment, the counselors work to alleviate or resolve the current difficult situation. That said, there is nothing we can do if someone comes to us with a story that does not have a single element of harassment, and it is not possible for the counseling office to get involved in issues related to performance evaluation, labor issues, and personnel matters. Of course, if there is an element of harassment in the problem, such as verbal abuse, we can get involved, but even if we can resolve the verbal abuse situation, it is not possible for us to get involved in the underlying performance evaluation and labor issues.

In any case, please contact us first and we will work with you to resolve the problem.

Harassment Counseling Offices

Campus	Room	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	
Toyonaka	Harassment Counseling Office 1 Room #704, 7F, Interdisciplinary Research Building 06-6850-5029		10:00-13:00	12:00-15:00	11:00-14:00	10:00-13:00	
	Harassment Counseling Office 2 2F, Data Station, Cybermedia Center 06-6850-6006			12:30-18:30			
	Harassment Counseling Office 3 2F, East Staircase, Health and Counseling Center 06-6850-6505	10:00-13:00					
Suita	Harassment Counseling Office 1 Room #1311, 3F, Division of Nursing Building 1 06-6879-6981			9:30-12:30		11:00-14:00	
				15:30-18:30	15:30-18:30	15:00-18:00	
	Harassment Counseling Office 2 Room #1312, 3F, Division of Nursing Building 1 06-6879-6982 Male counselor (power harassment, academic harassment)		9:30-13:00		9:30-12:30		
		13:30-16:30	14:00-16:15	**Open for counseling on the dates listed below.			
Minoh	General Harassment Counseling Office 1F, Research and Education Hub 072-730-5112			14:15-17:15			

** Open from 13:30~16:30 on April 27, May 25, June 29, July 20, August 31, and September 28 for counseling regarding all types of harassment.

- Consultations with a professional counselor may be in person or by telephone (appointment required)
- Confidentiality is guaranteed. Anonymous consultations by telephone are welcome.
- Consultations for all types of harassment are available at Toyonaka and Minoh campus counseling offices as well as Suita Campus Harassment Counseling Office 1 (female counselor)
- See the Osaka University website for details on the locations, opening hours, and availability of consultations in English.



https://www.osaka-u.ac.jp/en/campus/life/prevention_sh/prevention_sh

