



Harassment Counseling Office Newsletter

With the end of a record breaking scorching summer, the comfortable autumn is here. How did you spend your summer? We would like to present to you, the 7th issue of the Harassment Counseling Office Newsletter.

Feature: Unethical behavior and Harassment

This past April, a certain announced that “there had been fraud in the fuel economy test.” According to a later newspaper report, an investigative report submitted by the company to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport explained that management of the subsidiary entrusted with the fuel economy tests had committed fraud after enduring continued pressure from the headquarters officials. Similar situations can occur even in the university. This past July, Dr. Mieko Yokoyama from the Hiroshima University Harassment Counseling office spoke on “Research Fraud and Harassment,” presenting a fictional case where a student may feel pressured to falsify their research data because of daily criticism and pressure from their supervisor to work harder to produce good laboratory results. In other words, behind every case of fraud, there is the possibility that harassment was involved. Whenever social and organizational rules are broken, harassment may exist in the background. In a political corruption case, for example, if a politician’s secretary is arrested for misconduct, although it is possible they acted on their own judgment and volition, it is impossible to say that the secretary was not instructed and coerced into cooperation by the politician. In the latter case, if the secretary is unable to refuse the politician due to a background of intimidation through authority, then the secretary is a victim of harassment. While harassment problem can be addressed widely from the point of view of human rights, in the university prevention is pursued because harassment can inhibit the education, research, and work environment of members of the university. However, we must recognize and remember that places where harassment is rampant are a breeding ground for unethical behavior and fraud. Among other things, the strengthening of harassment prevention measures in “closed” places where third-party intervention is discouraged is especially useful in preventing unethical behaviors. I want to deeply impress upon you that harassment not only infringes upon one’s human rights, but an act that may infringe on one’s ethics as well.

Osaka University Harassment Counseling Office

Toyonaka campus 06—6850—5029 (sexual harassment)
06—6850—6006 (academic and power harassment)
Suita campus 06—6879—7169 (sexual, academic and power harassment)
Minoh campus 072—730—5112 (sexual, Academic and power harassment)
Website http://www.osaka-u.ac.jp/ja/for-student/ja/guide/student/prevention_sh



Column Message from a counselor



Suggestions on how to prevent power harassment

Professors and supervisors, do phrases like “This is a part of your instruction,” “This is nothing, my professor was much worse when I was a student,” “I am being strict for your own good – when you enter into society, things will be worse,” “This is necessary in order for you to graduate,” sound familiar?

It is difficult for teachers or bosses confident from many years of experience in their instruction methods to escape from their past experiences of success. Although there may not have been any problems in the past with previous student, graduate students, research students or subordinates, it is important to recognize that you must change your methods of instruction depending on other person. Just as each person’s living environment and personality differ, you must realize that there are methods of instruction suitable for different people. Teachers, bosses, and colleagues, what necessary considerations and perspectives am I trying to stress? The most important is to consider from the other person’s standpoint, how would I feel if I were told this? Imagine someone consults you when you are busy, and you want them to come back another time. “I am busy now, so please ask another teacher or a senior.” How is this response? The other person wanted to ask your opinion, and was waiting for the right time. If you replied with, “I’m sorry. The truth is I am very busy now and I’m in the middle of something, so could you come again after two hours? If you’re in a rush, perhaps you could ask another teacher or one of your seniors?” then you would be considerate of the other person, and there wouldn’t be any problem. If everyone adopted this way of thinking, half of the cases brought to the counseling office would be solved. This is how big an influence your words have, as a teacher or boss. On the other hand, for the person consulting, one way to deal with verbal abuse is to simply ignore it. As the proverb goes, “You can’t win against someone who doesn’t listen to reason.” Of course, verbal abuse should be ended, and they are in the wrong. However, those who deal with these situations habitually often have defenses against such words and actions. For example, thinking to yourself, “that’s not what they really meant when they said that.” In cases like this, rather than having a verbal argument, it is important to protect your own position and try not to take on any emotional strain. One method is to turn over the problem to the counseling office. Do not bicker, and think to yourself, “Is that so? This method is impossible?” If you do this, I think your emotional strain will decrease.

