



Harassment Counseling Office Newsletter



It's June now! Maybe even those of you who just joined us in the spring have already adjusted to daily life here at Osaka University.

We are very happy to present you with another informative issue of the Harassment Counseling Office Newsletter.

Series

Is this harassment?(2)

Osaka University defines “harassment” in three ways. Let’s examine each. In this issue, we will briefly explain “academic harassment.”

In the “Anti-Harassment Policy of Osaka University,” academic harassment is defined as “any inappropriate and unfair comment or behavior about research, education, or study by faculty or staff, students or any relevant persons unfairly taking advantage of their official position, authority, or various kinds of relationships with other faculty members, staff, students, or relevant persons.” Unlike sexual harassment, which emphasizes the recipient’s “feeling of discomfort,” academic harassment is determined by the specific abuse of position, authority, or relationship via inappropriate comments or actions. When determining whether academic harassment has occurred, there is always the danger of subjectivity or bias. For this reason, as members of this university and as human beings, each of us must raise our awareness and carefully consider inappropriate behaviors and words.

Clear examples of academic harassment include using a position of power for violence, psychological abuse, slander, vicious harassment, or interference with another person’s education and research.

Although there are also many cases which cannot be clearly recognized as academic harassment, we should consider as harassment any comment or action which leaves room for improvement. In other words, our stance should be to strictly avoid any behaviors or words that might be considered “inappropriate”, regardless of whether or not they are liable to punishment by the university.

When communicating with those around us, let us all be more careful, and consider whether our words or behaviors are lacking in kindness or consideration.

Column

Message from a counselor



How can harassment be resolved? These questions are often raised in training seminars, by those in positions of authority. Victims may suffer both physically and psychologically as the result of harassment, and the effects may last long into the future. Although the offenders are to blame, those in positions of authority are accountable as well. For this reason, preventing harassment before it occurs is the best solution. To this end, it is important for all of us to learn about what harassment is, when and why it occurs, and how it can be prevented.

However, it is difficult to completely eliminate harassment. Perhaps it is the interaction with those of different positions and experiences, or the tendency, especially at universities, to become attached to the roles of “teacher” and “student.” Even though harassment seminars are held, new people join us each year. Many places where harassment occurs are hidden from view. Even though we fight harassment, it continues to happen. What can we do?

We must firmly acknowledge that harassment has occurred. While emphasizing confidentiality and preventing further negative consequences, we must not merely cover it up. Institutions which proudly deny any instances of harassment are at the highest risk. “Zero harassment” only means “no reported harassment,” or “no one is able to report harassment.” This kind of situation may be increasingly common. Harassment can occur anywhere. Based on this understanding, let us work to create an environment with open and friendly atmosphere, where any member can communicate their difficulties with those around them and be accepted.

Feature

What will happen if I have a consultation?

Some of you may want to come to the Harassment Counseling Office, but hesitate because you do not want to make your situation worse. In this issue, we will explain what happens during and after a consultation.

1. During the consultation

The counselor will carefully listen to what you say. Remember that anything you share with a counselor is strictly confidential. The counselor is there to listen to and support you – whether if it is just to share your concerns, or whether you would like help resolving a particular situation.

2. When you would like to take specific action

If you've come to some decision after consulting with the counselor, we will work together with you according to your wishes. For example, if you decide you would like to change a particular situation (i.e., using various methods to change your study or work environment, having someone speak to the offender on your behalf, or accompanying you to speak with the offender – of course, if possible this will be done while protecting your identity), the counselor will confirm each time with you before taking any kind of action. Nothing will proceed without your knowledge.

3. If you are worried about negative consequences

“What if the person finds out that I've had a consultation?” Although you may be worried about further harmful consequences from taking action to address harassment, our experienced counselors will be very careful when taking any action. We may even think of another solution together in order to avoid negative consequences. Rest assured that our counselors will not take any action that results in your harm.

4. When you want to take the next step

In the case that any adjustments made or the efforts of the Harassment Counseling Office were unable to resolve the problem, with your permission we will make an official request to the Anti-Harassment Council. If a decision is made to investigate the case, the Harassment Counseling Office will no longer be directly involved, but can continue to provide emotional or psychological support through the counselor.

Did you know? Alcohol harassment is a form of violence.

Minors under the age of 20 are prohibited from drinking alcohol by law. Moreover, there are people who are physically unable to ingest alcohol. Pressuring or forcing such people to drink alcohol is called “alcohol harassment,” and this can also be considered an act of violence. Forcing an individual to drink even one cup of alcohol may be life-threatening.

Enjoy your time together, but please always respect each person's decision whether to drink or not to drink.

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 harassment)

Website http://www.osaka-u.ac.jp/ja/guide/student/prevention_sh/

Edited and published by the Administrative Office for Harassment Countermeasures,
Department of General Affairs and Planning, Osaka University

1-1 Yamadaoka, Suita, Osaka 565-0871

E-mail soumu-harassment@office.osaka-u.ac.jp

