Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual attention that is a form of illegal sex discrimination under federal and state law. It is usually repeated behavior, but could be a single incident. Sexual harassment may be blatant, as in:

- deliberate touching, pinching, caressing,
- attempts to fondle or kiss,
- pressure for dates or sex,
- requests for sex in exchange for grades or promotions.

Sexual harassment may be more subtle – like staring, sexual jokes, or teasing, sexually demeaning remarks. Although such forms of harassment may be unin- tentional, persistent or severe sexual behavior and words are harassing if a reasonable person would find them intimidating, hostile, or offensive, or if they unreasonably interfere with a person’s academic or work performance. Sexual harassment may be a violation of University policy. When a professional harasser responsible for the harassment or who is involved in a complaint process may learn and work in an environment free of sexual harassment. The Board of Trustees has adopted this policy which is not regarded as sexual harassment. However, classroom language which is hostile and derogatory and which is directed at an individual because of his or her sex may constitute sexual harassment and may violate University policy. Academic freedom requires an environment in which no person is exploited or coerced. Sexual harassment hampers academic freedom. The University’s policies and procedures for dealing with sexual harassment and other forms of harassment include steps to protect the rights of all members of the University community.

Even though the University’s policy is not regarded as sexual harassment, it is often the case that the harassment or who is involved in a complaint process may learn and work in an environment free of sexual harassment. The Board of Trustees has adopted this policy which is not regarded as sexual harassment. However, classroom language which is hostile and derogatory and which is directed at an individual because of his or her sex may constitute sexual harassment and may violate University policy. Academic freedom requires an environment in which no person is exploited or coerced. Sexual harassment hampers academic freedom. The University’s policies and procedures for dealing with sexual harassment and other forms of harassment include steps to protect the rights of all members of the University community.

Non-Discrimination Notice

In complying with the letter and spirit of applicable laws and in pursuing its own goals of diversity, the University of Maine System shall not discriminate on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation including transgender status or gender expression, national origin or citizenship status, age, disability, or veteran status in employment, education, admission, student services or any other area of the University. The University provides reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities upon request. Questions and complaints about discrimination in any area of the University should be directed to the campus Equal Opportunity Director.

OHR, 2006

This brochure is available in alternate format upon request.
Sexual relationships that may result in complaints of sexual harassment or sexual formalism and that create a conflict of interest include, for example, those between:
- A faculty member and student who is enrolled in the faculty member’s course, who is enrolled in a program for which a course taught by the faculty member is a prerequisite, who is supervised by the faculty member, or who is the child of the faculty member, or whose academic work is supervised by the faculty member;
- A faculty or staff member and student if the faculty or staff member is in a position to evaluate or otherwise influence the student’s academic performance, housing, or participation in athletics or any other University activity (staff members include, for example, graduate assistants, graduate teaching assistants, advisors, program directors, counselors, health center staff, and residential life staff);
- An employee and that person’s supervisor; a department chair and a faculty member in the same department; a supervisor and a student, in a position to evaluate or otherwise influence the student;
- An untenured faculty member and a tenured faculty member who participates in peer recommendations for tenure or promotion of the untenured faculty member.

If a faculty or staff member becomes sexually or romantically involved with a student or other employee, the faculty or staff member must remove himself or herself from any decisions affecting the other person as soon as practicable. This is necessary to avoid a conflict of interest or the appearance of sexual harassment or sexual favoritism. The faculty or staff member should speak with his or her supervisor about appropriate ways to transfer such responsibilities.

The University has an Equal Opportunity Complaint Procedure to deal promptly and fairly with concerns and complaints about discrimination or harassment. Any student or employee who feels that he or she has experienced sexual harassment, and anyone with knowledge of an incident, should contact the Equal Opportunity Officer (if the alleged harasser is an employee), or Student Judicial Officer (if the alleged harasser is a student) as soon as possible after the incident. Any supervisor who becomes aware of a problem should promptly contact the Equal Opportunity Officer. If the Equal Opportunity Officer has a substantial conflict of interest regarding either the complainant or the person accused, he or she will refer the matter to the Student Conduct Code.

Complaints are handled as confidentially as possible to protect the rights of both the complainant and the person accused. Retaliation against anyone who makes a complaint or participates in a complaint process is not tolerated. The complainant and the person accused have certain rights to representation during the complaint process. The Equal Opportunity Officer discusses informal and formal options for resolving the problem. The goal of the informal process is to seek a resolution acceptable to every one involved. Many concerns can be addressed through the informal process, which provides the maximum privacy and an opportunity for the earliest possible resolution.

If the complaint chooses or if a problem cannot be resolved informally, the complainant may request a formal investigation. When the person accused of sexual harassment is a student and a formal complaint is filed, the Student Judicial Officer conducts the investigation according to the procedure in the Student Conduct Code. When the person accused is an employee or a person from outside the University, the Investigations Coordinator conducts the investigation. An appropriate administrator then decides whether the investigator’s report has been substantiated and what corrective action will be taken. When charges of sexual harassment are substantiated, severe discipline may result, up to and including termination for an employee or dismissal for a student.

Under certain circumstances, the campus findings and decisions about a complaint can be appealed to the Equal Opportunity Director in the University System. Copies of the Equal Opportunity Complaint Procedure are available at your campus library (on reserve), in the Equal Opportunity Office in the Office of Human Resources/EOO, and on the web at www.main.edu/eocp.html. All members of the University community are encouraged to use this procedure. Sexual harassment complaints may also be filed with the Maine Human Rights Commission, State House Station 51, Augusta ME 04333, (207) 624-6050. Employees may choose instead or in addition to file a grievance.

Remember, the University’s goal is to prevent or, when necessary, to respond to sexual harassment on campus. There are many resources directed toward these goals. The first step is yours –

**Speak Up!**

**What Can You Do About Sexual Harassment?**

**Set your own boundaries.** Say ‘NO’ emphatically and clearly when you are asked to go places, do things, respond to questions, or engage in situations that make you uncomfortable. Do not worry about offending the other person or hurting his or her ego. Take care of yourself first.

**Be aware of situations and people who may harm you.** Don’t ignore others’ warnings about particular people or social settings. Acknowledge their concern for you and for themselves. Trust your own instincts about possible danger.

**In an uncomfortable situation, be direct and honest, and remove yourself from the situation immediately.**

**Set your own boundaries.** Don’t ignore others’ warnings about particular people or social settings. Acknowledge their concern for you and for themselves. Trust your own instincts about possible danger.

If you think that you are being sexually harassed, or if you have information about sexual harassment, seek help – the sooner the better. Report sexual harassment to your supervisor or Equal Opportunity Officer, or to the Student Conduct Officer if the alleged harasser is a student. In addition to the individuals listed here, you may talk with any faculty member, administrator, staff person with whom you feel most comfortable, including your supervisor, the harasser’s supervisor, or your resident assistant. If you are seeking personal help in dealing with the effects of sexual harassment, contact the campus counseling center (students) or employee assistance program (employees).

If you have questions or concerns about sexual harassment contact:

**The University of Maine**
Directors of Equal Opportunity
North Stevens Hall
581-1226

**University of Maine at Augusta**
Sheri R. Stevens
Executive Director for Administrative Services
621-3110

**University of Maine at Farmington**
Valerie Huebler
EEO/AA Director
Merrill Hall
778-7258

**University of Maine at Fort Kent**
Tamura Mitchell
Executive Director of Human Resources/EOO Coordinator
Cyr Hall
834-7533

**University of Maine at Machias**
Blue Brady
Equal Opportunity Officer
11 A Reynolds Cr.
255-1290

**University of Maine at Presque Isle**
Barbara DeVaezy
EEO/AA Director
South Hall
677-9790

**University of Southern Maine**
Kathleen Roberts
Director, Office of Diversity and Equity
249 High St., Gulfport Ave.
Law Bldg.
780-5095
TTY: 866-783-6461

**University of Southern Maine System**
Sally Dobres
Equal Opportunity Director
621-3199

**UNET Augusta and University College Centers**
Judy Jewell Farmhouse
621-3409

**How Can I Avoid Behavior That May Be Seen as Harassing?**

- Treat all co-workers and students with respect.
- Be careful about how you talk or joke.
- Avoid jokes, words, and gestures that have sexual connotations or demean or trivialize any person.
- Keep compliments casual and impersonal.
- Leave sexually provocative pictures and language at home.

**Ask yourself if:**

- Others seem uncomfortable with your comments or behavior?
- Is it behavior you would want to appear on the evening news?
- Would you want a member of your family to be treated in the same way?

**When in doubt don’t do or say it!**

**Where Can You Go For Help?**

If you are. If you are.