



# National Open University of Nigeria

Policy Title	Policy on Sexual Harassment
Policy No:	NQSA/POL/IGM/002
Owner:	National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN)
Approved By:	The University Senate
Manager/Driver:	Registrar
Date of Approval:	7 <sup>th</sup> October, 2024
Date of Next Review:	October, 2027

## 1.0 Introduction

This Sexual Harassment Policy of the National Open University Nigeria (NOUN) prohibits sexual harassment in the workplace. It shall ensure safeguarding staff and students of all gender from unwanted sexual advances and provide guidelines for reporting incidents. It shall also state how to handle complaints, take actions against offenders, and help survivors/victims to recover. This policy shall apply to all staff and students of NOUN.

## 2.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy shall be to ensure that:

- 2.1 Staff and students are always security conscious, and avoid situations that can compromise their safety, especially in remote places and lonely paths.
- 2.2 Staff and students should endeavour to avoid provocative dressing and postures.

## 3.0 Scope

The scope shall cover the behaviour/actions that constitute sexual harassment:

- 3.1 Sexual pranks, teasing, vulgar jokes
- 3.2 Verbal abuse of a sexual nature
- 3.3 Physical touching of a sexual nature
- 3.4 Giving sexually suggestive gifts
- 3.5 Making sexually suggestive gestures
- 3.6 Posting sexually suggestive pictures
- 3.7 Unwanted hugging
- 3.8 Groping without permission.

### 3.9 Forceful sexual intercourse (Rape)

## 4.0 Definitions

### 4.1 Harassment:

This refers to a form of discrimination which may include physical or verbal that offends or humiliates an individual.

### 4.2 Compromising:

This means giving up to something that is wrong or degrading.

### 4.3 Safety:

This refers to a state of being safe. A condition of being protected from danger or harm.

## 5.0 Principles

### Affirmations:

This policy shall be based on the following affirmations:

- 5.1 NOUN shall be at the forefront of promoting gender equality in the university community.
- 5.2 NOUN shall encourage the formation of an enabling work and study environment for both staff and students.
- 5.3 NOUN shall operate zero-tolerance for any form of sexual harassment.
- 5.4 NOUN shall treat all reported incidents seriously and investigate promptly all allegations of sexual harassment.
- 5.5 NOUN shall acknowledge that sexual harassment is not limited to women, and it affects all gender.
- 5.6 NOUN shall continue to raise the level of moral suasion/standards among staff and students.

- 5.7 NOUN shall be dedicated to ensuring periodic enlightening of staff and stakeholders on the evils of sexual harassment and other associated anti-social conducts.
- 5.8 NOUN acknowledges that sexual harassment has very grave effects on the overall productivity of staff and students and thus considers it a very serious infraction and shall ensure punitive actions as deterrent.

## **6.0 Policy Statements**

- 6.1 All staff and students shall be informed on the impacts and ills associated with sexual harassment and thereby create a sense of social responsibility among one another.
- 6.2 The university shall ensure an environment free of sexual harassment for all and achieve gender equity and equality.
- 6.3 The university shall ensure that all staff and students report incidences of sexual harassment and vices to the Vice-Chancellor through the Registrar for appropriate action, and the university shall make the privacy of all complainants protected.
- 6.4 The university shall regularly monitor and evaluate the process of this policy to determine the level of implementation and progress in attaining its aims.

## **7.0 Policy Implementation**

- 7.1 The university shall disseminate this Sexual Harassment Policy on the university's website at the beginning of every academic session.
- 7.2 The university shall incorporate the Sexual Harassment Policy into the Staff Conditions of Service and the Students' Handbook.
- 7.3 All staff and students shall pledge to abide by the university's Sexual Harassment Policy.
- 7.4 The university shall ensure fair hearing for all parties involved in a sexual harassment case.
- 7.5 The university shall institutionalise support, by designated counsellors for victims of sexual harassment.
- 7.6 The following procedures shall be followed in all cases of sexual harassment.

7.7 Procedures to be followed by Complainants:

- 7.7.1 All complaints of sexual harassment shall be in writing and formally addressed to the Vice-Chancellor through the Registrar.
- 7.7.2 The Vice-Chancellor shall thereafter constitute a committee to investigate the case. (The Committee might be a Standing Committee that will look into all cases, or an Adhoc Committee specifically for that purpose.)
- 7.7.3 Complainants and respondents shall have face-to face interaction with members of the committee.
- 7.7.4 Complainants are encouraged to provide substantial or circumstantial evidence.
- 7.7.5 At the end of its deliberations, the committee shall present its findings to the Vice-Chancellor through the Registrar.
- 7.7.6 The Vice-Chancellor shall consider the report of the Committee and convey the University's decision to the complainants and respondents through the Registrar.

7.8 Review Mechanisms:

- 7.8.1 Where the complainant is a student and is not satisfied with the outcome of management's decision, he/she can appeal to University Senate which shall have the final say on the matter.
- 7.8.2 Where the complainant is a staff and is not satisfied with the outcome of management's decision, he/she can appeal to the University Council which shall have the final say on the matter.

7.9 Advice to Prevent Sexual Harassment:

- 7.9.1 Staff and students should be security conscious always, and should avoid situations that can compromise their safety, especially remote places, and lonely paths.
- 7.9.2 Staff and students should endeavour to avoid provocative dressing and postures.

## **8.0 Sanctions on Violating this Policy**

- 8.1 The investigations and findings of an investigation panel will make recommendations in tandem with the Rules and Regulations Guiding Staff Conditions of Service.
- 8.2 Where the matter is reported to the Police or other Security Agencies directly, the university will not take any action, in order not to interfere with the police investigation and findings. However, on completion of such police investigations, the university can take appropriate actions according to its policies, codes of conduct and bye-laws.
- 8.3 The university frowns at false accusations of sexual harassment; it shall therefore take appropriate disciplinary measures against accusers if claims of sexual harassment are discovered to be false.
- 8.4 The university shall create and implement a disciplinary action process to ensure equity and consistency across all cases of sexual harassment in the university as contained in the Staff Conditions of Service and Students' Handbook.

## **9.0 Policy Alignment**

The policy aligns with the Rules and Regulations Guiding Staff Conditions of Service 2016 and the Penal code and the Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended)

## **Team of Developers**

1. Prof. Eserinune McCarty Mojaye
2. Arc. Sadiq Otu Shuaib
3. Dr. Muyiwa Stephen Akintola
4. Mr. Petu Bola Keji