

## What counts as sexual discrimination, harassment and violence?

- ◆ suggestive comments about your appearance or private life
- ◆ lingering or inappropriate glances
- ◆ sexist jokes or comments
- ◆ showing, hanging or displaying pornographic material
- ◆ unwanted demands that are made with promise of reward or with threats
- ◆ unwanted touching and violating personal space
- ◆ repeated unwanted invitations
- ◆ physical contact that is uninvited and unwanted

And in the worst case

- ◆ assault, including sexual and physical, and rape

What is defined as sexual discrimination, harassment, and violence depends on the subjective perception of those affected in each situation.

Every person decides when their boundaries have been violated. In any case, the responsibility lies squarely on the perpetrator.

## Advice and support

Gender Equality Officer of Freie Universität Berlin  
beratung@frauenbeauftragte.fu-berlin.de  
030 838-54259  
www.fu-berlin.de/frauenbeauftragte

Local Women's Representatives and Gender Equality Officers  
www.fu-berlin.de/frauenbeauftragte/organisation/dezentrale

Center for Academic Advising and Psychological Counseling  
psychologische-beratung@fu-berlin.de 030 838-52247  
www.fu-berlin.de/studienberatung

Personalrat Dahlem  
prd@zedat.fu-berlin.de  
030 838-52754/53654  
www.fu-berlin.de/prd

Police: 110

## Taking action

Against sexual harassment, discrimination, and violence





# TAKING ACTION

## What are sexual discrimination, harassment, and violence?

Sexual discrimination is any sexist or sexual behavior that violates the personal rights and dignity of the individuals involved. Any unwanted degrading or offensive comments that are, for example, felt to be humiliating or hurtful, are to be understood as sexualized discrimination and violence. This should be distinguished from reciprocal and mutually respectful flirting, as well as making compliments.

Sexual discrimination, harassment, and violence are taboo social phenomena that affect all areas of society, including universities. Within universities, there is often a dependence on hierarchical structures and thus significant power imbalances. The internal organizational structures, such as individual offices and one-on-one consultation hours, offer opportunities to take advantage of these imbalances. Studies have shown that women are almost always the victims of sexual discrimination, harassment, and violence, but men can also be targets of such unwanted behavior.

Often, these situations begin with small gestures and insinuations and escalate slowly until the situation becomes unbearable for the person affected and requires intervention.

## What can I do?

### As the target of harassment, discrimination or violence

The particular circumstances for people who have experienced harassment, discrimination or violence often make it difficult to find a way out, because they fear professional reprisals or negative consequences. Ignoring the situation, however, does not set clear boundaries and does not change the situation. It is not the responsibility of the affected person to maintain harmony in the office or place of study, nor to restrict their own behavior in a way that affects their quality of life. Therefore, we ask that you reach out to someone you trust and discuss the incident and, where appropriate, a potential course of action.

### As a witness

Be compassionate when approaching the person about your observations and offer your support. You can help the person classify their experience as a violation of their personal rights and, if desired, to approach the available points of contact at the university. Do not take any steps without the explicit agreement of the person affected and respect their right to choose how they handle the situation. Speak out against colleagues if you see them being inappropriate or making others uncomfortable.

## Sexual harassment, discrimination and violence are not tolerated at the Free University Berlin.

The Free University is dedicated to providing a respectful and positive environment for all affiliates and is committed to protecting personal rights and boundaries.

Victims have the right, and are encouraged, to report sexual harassment, discrimination, or violence.

There are a number of contacts at the university that can offer advice and support. Please contact any of them if you have questions, concerns or complaints. There you will find advice and support. Your situation will be handled with care and in the strictest confidence.

