

4.14 Sexual Discrimination/Harassment handling

1. The College is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment for all students. Sexual harassment violates your dignity and is unacceptable.
2. What is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment is any unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature that makes you feel offended, humiliated, or intimidated.

This includes:

- Unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favours.
- Unwelcome verbal comments, jokes, or gestures of a sexual nature.
- Unwanted physical contact.
- Displaying sexually explicit or offensive material.
- Any other conduct of a sexual nature that creates a hostile or intimidating environment for you.

This behaviour is unacceptable whether it happens in person, online, or through any other form of communication.

References are available on the EOC's website, COMPASS - the EOC's ASH Resource Platform: <https://www.eoc.org.hk/COMPASS/en/faq-for-schools-and-educators/>

3. What Should You Do?
 - a. Seek Informal Resolution (If you feel comfortable)
You can often stop the behaviour early by:
 - i. Telling the person directly that their behaviour is unwelcome and you want it to stop.
 - ii. Seeking advice and support from a trusted staff member, such as your Programme Leader, a Student Counsellor, or the Student Development Manager. They can provide confidential advice and may help you communicate with the other person.
 - b. Make a Formal Complaint
If the behaviour continues, if informal steps are not appropriate, or if the situation is serious, you can make a formal complaint.
 - i. Who to contact: Report the incident to the Student Development Manager.
 - ii. What happens: They will explain the process, support you, and help you prepare a written complaint. All complaints are treated with the strictest confidentiality.
4. Investigation Process
 - a. An investigation will be conducted fairly and impartially.

- b. You and the person you are complaining about (the respondent) will be kept separate during the process to prevent victimization.
- c. The investigation may involve speaking to you, the respondent, and any witnesses.
- d. We aim to resolve matters as quickly as possible. The full process, from complaint to outcome, typically takes around five months.

5. Important Principles

- a. Protection from Victimization: The College will not tolerate any form of punishment or mistreatment against anyone who makes a good-faith complaint or acts as a witness. This is a serious offence.
- b. Confidentiality: Your privacy and the privacy of all involved will be respected throughout the process. Details will only be shared with those who need to know to handle the complaint.
- c. False Accusations: Making a complaint that is knowingly untrue is a serious matter and may lead to disciplinary action.

6. Possible Outcomes

If a complaint is proven, outcomes can include:

- a. A formal apology or agreement for the behaviour to stop.
- b. Changes to class or accommodation arrangements to ensure your safety.
- c. Mandatory counselling or training for the respondent.
- d. Formal disciplinary action against the respondent, which could result in suspension or expulsion from the College.
- e. The case will be reported to the Hong Kong Police in case of violation of the Sex Discrimination Ordinance.

7. Getting Help and Support

Your well-being is our priority. You are encouraged to seek support from our Student Counsellors at any time, whether you are making a formal complaint or just need someone to talk to.

8. External Options

You always have the right to report the incident to the Hong Kong Police or the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) outside of the College's procedures.

9. For advice, support, or to make a complaint, please contact:

- a. The Student Development Office (sdo@gratia.edu.hk)
- b. The Registry (registry@gratia.edu.hk)
- c. The President Office (presidentoffice@gratia.edu.hk)