



Psychosocial Hazard Quick Guide HARASSMENT

When **unwanted, unsolicited or offensive actions are directed toward individuals or groups about their personal characteristics**, such as gender or age, this can be considered harassment. Harassment can create a hostile working environment for those both directly and indirectly exposed to it, and it is considered a psychosocial hazard whether it is a **one-off incident or repeated and continuous**.

A quick guide to managing the risk of harassment is summarised below, to help you understand how to spot and address this in your teams.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

Look out for these warning signs or behaviours that may indicate issues with, or risk of, harassment:

INCREASED POPULATIONS AT RISK

- Vulnerable cohorts (e.g. *younger people*)
- Workplaces with limited diversity (e.g. *dominated by one gender*)
- Strongly hierarchical structures where power is unbalanced
- Cultural tolerance or acceptance of offensive and/or derogatory behaviour
- Fear or avoidance of reporting concerns

SIGNS OF HARASSMENT

- Derogatory comments or jokes about someone's attributes (e.g. *racial group*)
- Sharing inappropriate material (e.g. *images*) about individual or group characteristics
- Intolerance for team members unique needs (e.g. *religious holidays*)



POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF HARASSMENT

If instances of harassment occur, as either a one-off incident or repeated incidents, they can increase the risk of:



Physical, emotional and/or psychological injury (e.g. *Post-traumatic stress disorder*)



Damage to professional relationships and loss of trust

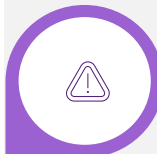


Career setbacks and missed opportunities for those experiencing harassment



Trouble retaining talent if the workplace develops a reputation for being hostile

When considering the level of risk for this hazard in your team or workplace, remember to ask yourself:



1. How **LONG** have issues been occurring?
2. How **OFTEN** are they occurring?
3. How much do these issues **IMPACT** your team members?

WHAT YOU CAN DO

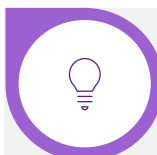
Some actions you could take as a leader to help prevent the risk of harassment:

- ▶ **Communicate a clear 'zero tolerance' policy** toward harassment within your team
- ▶ **Make sure your whole team understands what standards of behaviour are expected**, and what the consequences are if these are not followed
- ▶ **Take action to make the working environment as safe as possible** (e.g. *secure office spaces from unauthorised entry*)
- ▶ **Make sure your team have the means to seek help** if/when they need it (e.g., *work phones with emergency contacts, access to UQ Safe Zone*)
- ▶ **Empower team members to stand up to poor behaviour** by restricting or suspending interactions when it occurs
- ▶ **Always take reported incidents or concerns seriously**



GOOD PRACTICE

Managing this risk effectively is a continuous process and you should review your knowledge and the effectiveness of your actions regularly.



Keep these tips in mind:



Be the expert: Review relevant UQ policies and procedures, and know what personal characteristics are protected by law



Plan ahead to consider safety measures for team members travelling or working offsite (e.g. *avoid sending team members away alone*)



Avoid making assumptions and seek advice from workplace supports, such as HR or the Manager Assist service through the EAP if you see or hear about instances of potential harassment.



Encourage team members to speak up about instances of concern by taking reports seriously and protecting confidentiality of those involved