



Psychosocial Risk Quick Guide

SEXUAL HARASSMENT & SEX OR GENDER-BASED HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment refers to **any unwelcome or uninvited conduct of a sexual nature**, which may offend, humiliate or intimidate another person. Sex or gender based harassment is **any unwelcome conduct of an offensive or demeaning nature** related to a person's gender, sex or sexuality. Harassment behaviours are considered a psychosocial hazard whether they occur as a **one-off incident or are repeated and continuous**, and can be committed by co-workers, supervisors, clients or visitors.

A quick guide to managing the risk of sexual harassment is summarised below, to help you understand how to spot and address this in your teams. In this guide 'sexual harassment' refers to sexual harassment and sex or gender-based harassment.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

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

WHERE THERE IS INCREASED 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 sexual harassment behaviour
- Fear or avoidance of reporting concerns

EXAMPLES

- Intrusive questions about a person's body
- Staring or leering at others
- Unwelcome touching or propositions
- Sexual or suggestive comments
- Sharing inappropriate materials



POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

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



Mental and/or physical health conditions due to emotional distress



Creation of a hostile work environment, impairing productivity and engagement



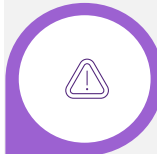
Career setbacks and missed opportunities for those experiencing harassment



Damage to organisational reputation

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

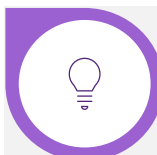
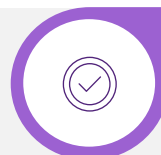
1. How **LONG** have these issues been occurring?
2. How **OFTEN** are they occurring?
3. How much do these issues **IMPACT** your team members?



WHAT YOU CAN DO

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

- ▶ **Communicate a clear 'zero tolerance' policy** toward bullying, harassment, violence and aggression within your team
- ▶ **Educate yourself** regarding UQ's policies and procedures about sexual misconduct and support services
- ▶ **Register for any available training workshops and learning modules** to learn how to spot, prevent and manage sexual harassment in the workplace
- ▶ **Employ job design principles** procedures, considering what how, when and where tasks are undertaken work to eliminate or reduce the risk of sexual harassment
- ▶ **Identify ways that you can adjust work conditions** to protect your team's safety and privacy (e.g. *using work phones / emails, avoiding travel at night, communication plans in place if working away from usual workplace*)
- ▶ **Review systems of work** to ensure controls align with best practice.



GOOD PRACTICE

Managing the risk of sexual harassment effectively is an ongoing process and you should review your knowledge and the effectiveness of your actions regularly.

Keep these tips in mind:



If you see it, say something. Set the standard for respect by directly addressing potential instances of sexual harassment in your team



Break down structural barriers. Encourage honest and open communication between all work levels and roles



If you don't know, ask. Support from HR or HSW representative(s) or the SMSU is available



Conduct a risk assessment or include this hazard in relevant risk assessments.



Be trauma informed. Take reports seriously, deal with promptly and protect confidentiality of those involved