

# COMPLIANCE NOTES:

## Title VII Sexual Harassment

### WHAT EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW

#### WHAT IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT?

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other behavior of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is made implicitly or explicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or participation in an educational program;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for personnel decisions or for academic evaluation or advancement;
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creates an intimidating/hostile or offensive working or educational environment.

Sexually discriminatory conduct as described above will not be tolerated by the University of Tennessee Health Science Center. Any student, faculty, or staff member found in violation of University policy addressing sexual harassment/sexual misconduct shall be subject to appropriate discipline. The university shall investigate each situation alleging sexual harassment individually before reaching a conclusion on the merits of the claim.

#### RECOGNIZING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is not about intentions; it deals with impact.

To avoid being misinterpreted, it is important to become conscious of conduct and behavior that may constitute a violation of the policies enforced by UT Health Science Center under the authority of the law, Title IX, and Title VII. These policies are designed to protect students, faculty, and staff members from harassment and discrimination.

Behavior that may constitute sexual harassment includes intentional and undesired physical contact, sexually explicit language or writings, and lewd pictures or notes. The conduct may be initiated by individuals in positions of power or by fellow co-workers/students.

#### EXAMPLES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

##### Verbal harassment

- Sexually explicit jokes or stories
- Sexually explicit, interactive software programs/computer games used at work
- Sexual/obscene innuendos, comments, remarks or sounds
- Repeatedly asking for a date after a person has expressed disinterest
- Inquiring about a person's sexual fantasies or sexual activities
- Sexual propositions/pressure for sex

##### Non-verbal harassment

- Reviewing a person's body by staring them up and down
- Making facial expressions such as winking or licking the lips or other sexual gestures with hands or through body movements
- Following a person/hanging around before, during or after work hours
- Offering unwanted gifts or letters
- Displaying sexually explicit pictures or signs

##### Physical harassment

- Patting, pinching or brushing up against someone in a sexual manner or other unwelcome forms of touching a person's body, hair or clothing
- Attempted or actual kissing or fondling
- Attempted or actual coerced sexual acts

##### What if I am not sure?

The Office of Access and Compliance provides guidance and resources to the university community. If you are experiencing a problem, but are not sure if it is sexual harassment, we encourage you to make an appointment to discuss your concerns.

Call 901.448.2112.

## APPLICABLE UT POLICIES

- HR Policy 0580-Code of Conduct  
<https://policy.tennessee.edu/policy/hr0580-code-of-conduct/>
- HR Policy 0280-Sexual Harassment  
<https://policy.tennessee.edu/policy/hr0280-sexual-harassment-other-discriminatory-harassment/>
- HR Policy 0220-Equal Employment Opportunity, Affirmative Action and Diversity  
<https://policy.tennessee.edu/policy/hr0220-equal-employment-opportunity/>

## SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

### On Campus:

**Office of Access and Compliance**  
901.448.2112

**Title IX Coordinator**  
901.448.2112

**Licensed Counselors**  
901.448.5056  
[uthsc.edu/sassi/resources/counseling](http://uthsc.edu/sassi/resources/counseling)

**Student Conduct and Community Standards**  
901.448.7125

**University Health Services**  
901.448.5630

**Human Resources/Employee Relations**  
901.448.5600

**Police Department**  
901.448.4444

### Off Campus:

**Student Assistance Program (SAP)**  
800.327.2255

**Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**  
855.437.3486

## HOW TO FILE A TITLE VII COMPLAINT

Faculty, staff, students, post docs, medical residents, applicants for admission or employment, patients, or other participants in UT Health Science Center programs or activities may report complaints of harassment or discrimination due to a protected status or retaliation for engaging in a protected activity to the Office of Access and Compliance. Complaints (other than those involving sexual assault) received directly by Access and Compliance will be reported to the Associate Vice Chancellor (or designee) who will attempt to resolve the matter working in conjunction with Access and Compliance. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible.

An Access and Compliance staff member will determine if the complaint falls within the scope of responsibility of the Office of Access and Compliance and explain the **UT Health Science Center Complaint Procedure**. In the event the complaint is outside the purview of Access and Compliance, the complaining party will be referred to the appropriate office.

Complaints must be put in writing and filed within 300 calendar days of the alleged discriminatory action. In certain circumstances, at the discretion of Access and Compliance, complaints filed outside of this time limit or that are not put in writing may be investigated.

The complaining party may choose to pursue an **Informal or Formal complaint**. These are two official University complaints of discrimination and/or harassment, that are not mutually exclusive and have key distinctions.

The objective of the Informal Complaint process is to reach a mutually acceptable resolution, facilitated by the Office of Access and Compliance. There is no official determination as to whether the respondent has violated University policy. If the parties are unable to reach a mutually acceptable resolution during the Informal process, the complainant may then file a Formal complaint.

The objective of the Formal Complaint process is to reach an official determination as to whether the respondent has violated University policies. The Formal Complaint Process involves an investigation into the complainant's allegations and report of findings.

*Periodically, you will receive information from the Office of Access and Compliance regarding various policies, procedures and resources applicable to UT Health Science Center students and employees. The heading of the email will be "COMPLIANCE NOTES."*

The University of Tennessee is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA institution in the provision of its education and employment programs and services.



### For more information, please contact:

**Office Access and Compliance**  
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Memphis, TN 38163  
[oac-hsc@uthsc.edu](mailto:oac-hsc@uthsc.edu)  
t 901.448.2112 | f 901.448.1120

**Telecommunications Device for the Deaf**  
t 901.448.7382

[uthsc.edu/oac](http://uthsc.edu/oac)



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ACCESS AND COMPLIANCE