Sexual harassment/abuse – one-sided and unwelcome behavior

"Sexual harassment/abuse is defined as every verbal or non-verbal behavior that is sexually biased and unwanted, one-sided and degrading. It may include: gestures, comments or other forms of behavior."

"The essential feature of sexual harassment/abuse is that it is unwanted and one-sided."

What to do if you are being harassed?

• Tell the harasser you want the behavior to stop, i.e. answer with a clear-cut NO! (if possible, also in written form).
• Try to write down the incident. Time, place and other descriptions of the incident should be as precise as possible.
• Talk to a person you trust. This will help you and give you the confidence and support you need. Our contact persons are there for you. They will advise and attend to you when further steps are necessary. Your statements will be handled absolutely confidentiality. Further steps will be initiated only with your permission.
• You have the right to file a complaint against the person who harassed you. Neither you nor the person helping you will suffer any disadvantage or discrimination because you have made a complaint.

What to do if you are being harassed?

• The University of Mannheim investigates each individual case and will take the action needed: The possible measures may include labour law (warning letter, transfer of the offender, dismissal), order to stay away from the university, or the offender’s removal from the register of students. Victims of sexual harassment have the right (given particular conditions) to work stoppage/ refuse performance or to resign from the job. The employment center will accept your situation as legitimate reason regarding blocking time, i.e. you have the right to receive unemployment benefits. However, we advise to contact one of our contact persons to avoid possible/ resulting troubles.
• It’s very important that you report the incident to one of our responsible bodies/offices/institutions and the police and/or press charges against the offender - even if you’re convinced that you’re the only one, who has been harmed/abused by that particular person. Your report/ charges will facilitate arresting the suspect - in particular, if further victims decide to press charges against the offender.

The responsible bodies/offices/institutions (regarding sexual harassment/abuse) are (in compliance with the directive issued by the Senate of the University of Mannheim on the matter): superiors, the rector, the chancellor, the Head of the Human Resources Department, the staff council, the university’s contact persons for disabled students and employees, the Equal Opportunity Commissioner, the Equal opportunity Administrator and the University of Mannheim’s Committee against sexual abuse.

What are the common effects of sexual harassment/abuse?

The effects of sexual harassment can vary and may include:
• Sleep disorders
• Lack of concentration
• Headaches
• Psychosomatic disorders/illnesses
• Fear, loss of trust, feeling less and less safe
• Loss of confidence and self esteem
• Decreased work or university performance as a result of stress conditions
• Isolation

Harassed employees often fear retaliation if they report sexual harassment at work. Additionally, current studies reveal that students’ academic plans or biographies are often affected by sexual harassment. Students suffer from decreased performance at university, they drop courses or try to replace their thesis supervisor in order to avoid further harassment/abuse. Some victims might even drop university.

Victims of sexual harassment may contact the Department’s of Gender Equality and Social Diversity Counseling Center (Tel. +49 (0)621 181 2529), or one of the following psychological help and information centers in order to prevent mental and/or physical impairment caused by sexual harassment/abuse: Women’s and girl’s helpline (Tel. +49 (0)621 100 33), the Student Service’s (Studentenwerk) Counselling Center (Tel. +49 (0)621 49072 555) or the Psychological Clinic of the Otto-Seltz-Institute – if you need psychotherapeutic support (Tel. +49 (0)621 181 3480; web: www.osi.uni-mannheim.de).
The university's modus operandi based on 

The "Beschäftigungsschutzgesetz" (1994):
• Protects against sexual harassment at workplace and thus protects women's and men's dignity
• Includes the employer's and superior's duty to protect employees against sexual harassment

[www.linkshrink.de/40204]

The directive on fair play/behaviour issued by the Senate (2003):
• Encourages fair play at the university at all levels
• Includes that the university's members (e.g. students, employees, superiors) commit themselves to fighting sexual harassment/abuse, bullying and other forms of discrimination

Please contact the university's contact persons in this regard. [www.linkshrink/40260]

The university's committee against sexual abuse
This committee mainly operates in preventive, informative and consultative ways against sexual harassment/abuse. The committee members are there for you, they advise and attend to you when further steps are necessary.

Your statements will be handled absolutely confidentially. Further steps will be initiated only with your permission. [www.linkshrink/40480]

Contact Persons in Mannheim

Department of Gender Equality and social Diversity
L 13, 9 (room 309)
Tel: +49 (0)621 181 1999 (Counseling Hotline)
Mail: beratung.stabsstelle@uni-mannheim.de
www.uni-mannheim.de/sgsv

Equal Opportunity Administrator
Prof. Dr. Simone Göttlich
Tel: +49 (0)621 181 2438
Mail: goettlich@uni-mannheim.de

Equal Opportunity Commissioner
Andrea Horn
Tel: +49 (0)621 181 3311
Mail: andrea.horn@uni-mannheim.de

Staff Council
Elke Berg
Tel: +49 (0)621 181 1151

Human Resources Department
Dr. Isabel Stassen-Rapp
Tel: +49 (0)621 181 1100

AStA's Department for Gender Equality
Tel: +49 (0)621 181 3373
Mail: gleichst@rumms.uni-mannheim.de

Emergency contact and counselling for sexually harassed women and girls
0 6, 9, 68161 Mannheim
Tel: +49 (0)621 100 33 Fax: +49 (0)621 229 44
www.maedchennotruf.de
Mail: team@maedchennotruf.de

PLUS Gay and Lesbian Counselling
Alphornstraße 2a, 68169 Mannheim
Tel: +49 (0)621 33 621 85 +49 (0)621 33 621 10
www.plus-mannheim.de/
Mail: team@plus-mannheim.de

Your statements will be handled confidentially! January 2014