

Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center Harassment Policy

Effective: November 2011

Revised: September 2012

POLICY

Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center (WFBMC) is committed to maintaining a work and educational environment in which all are treated fairly and respectfully. The Medical Center will not tolerate discrimination or harassment of any kind. Harassment by staff/faculty members may result in performance improvement action, up to and including termination of employment.

WFBMC takes all complaints of harassment very seriously and will not tolerate any retaliation against a staff/faculty member who raises a complaint of harassment against a co-worker, supervisor or non-employee.

SCOPE

Applies to Staff, Faculty

DEFINITIONS

Harassment: Unwelcome verbal or physical conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment or interferes with an individual's work or education

Sexual Harassment: Any unwelcome sexual advance, including requests for sexual favors and any verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when such conduct:

- Is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or education
- Is used as a basis for evaluation in making employment or academic decisions
- Unreasonably interferes with an individual's performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment

GUIDELINES

Conduct described in this policy is prohibited whether in person, over the phone (including voice mail), through email or the Internet, or any other form of electronic communication.

Discrimination

The Medical Center prohibits harassment based on race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender or disability. This includes:

- Discrimination in the provision of employment opportunities
- Adversely impacting a staff/faculty member's terms and conditions of employment

Harassment

Examples of inappropriate behaviors include:

- Unwelcome comments regarding an individual's race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender or disability
- Name-calling or the use of slurs, demeaning comments or other offensive language
- Repeated, unwelcome requests for dates
- Distribution or displays of written or graphic material containing negative content, including electronic materials

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment (whether opposite sex or same sex) is strictly prohibited. There are two types of sexual harassment:

- **Quid pro quo harassment**, in which submission to harassment is used as the basis for employment decisions. Examples include:
 - Promises of favorable treatment or threats of unfavorable treatment based on an individual's response to sexual advances
 - Adversely impacting a staff/faculty member's terms and conditions of employment based on the individual's response to sexual advances
- **Hostile work environment**, in which the harassment creates an intimidating, offensive and unpleasant work environment. A hostile work environment can be created by anyone in the workplace, including supervisors, co-workers or non-employees. Examples include:
 - Comments, jokes, or gestures of a sexual nature
 - Objectionable physical proximity or contact
 - Unwelcome flirtation, sexual advances or propositions
 - Unwelcome discussion of an individual's physical characteristics or dress
 - Distribution or display of sexually explicit pictures or other materials, including electronic materials

Sexual harassment does not refer to behavior or occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature. Courteous, mutually respectful interactions between individuals, including men and women, that are acceptable to both parties are not considered to be harassment.

Consensual Relationships

Sexual or romantic relationships between a leader and his/her staff (an individual who reports directly or indirectly to that person) are not permitted. Such relationships that exist or develop must be disclosed to the Director, Chair or Executive responsible for the work area and to Human Resources. Action will be taken to reduce the risk of concerns about harassment, favoritism or bias. Actions may include, but are not limited to: a transfer to another work group, a change in shift, a change in reporting structure or discharge. Leadership must consult with Human Resources before action is taken.

Reporting Harassment

When evaluating whether a certain behavior should be considered harassment, these points should be considered:

- The behavior need not be perceived as harassment at the time but may be perceived as harassment later (for example, a participant who is initially willing may later object to the behavior).
- The behavior is unwelcome if an individual states that it is unwelcome.
- The behavior need not be directed at a specific individual.

Complaint Procedure

Harassment should be reported when a staff/faculty member believes that he/she has personally been harassed or has observed someone else being harassed. This applies whether the alleged harasser is a staff/faculty member, leader, visitor, patient, volunteer or vendor with whom the Medical Center does business.

The following options are available for addressing harassment:

- An individual who is being harassed may talk to the offender and make it clear that he/she considers the behavior inappropriate and wants it to stop. In many cases, this puts an end to the behavior. ***It is not necessary for a staff/faculty member to take this action before reporting a complaint to Human Resources or leadership.***
- A staff/faculty member may report the situation to his/her supervisor or [Human Resources](#).
- A staff/faculty member may report the situation to any higher level member of leadership. A staff/faculty member may report the situation through the [Compliance Hotline](#).

Anonymous complaints are permitted but are not encouraged, since they do not allow for a full investigation and may not result in resolution of the situation. Reasonable effort will be made to protect the privacy of the reporting individual(s).

Response to Complaints

All complaints of harassment or discrimination are taken seriously. Upon receiving the harassment complaint, Human Resources will:

- Conduct a prompt and thorough investigation
- Discuss results with the complaining staff/faculty member (where appropriate actions taken)
- Keep investigation and results as confidential as possible
- Take any necessary performance improvement action, if the complaint is verified

A staff/faculty member who believes the Medical Center has not met its obligations to correct a harassment incident or is not satisfied with the way in which his/her report of harassment was handled should contact the Associate Vice President, HR Strategy and Operations, or the Vice President/Chief Human Resources Officer.

No Retaliation

The law and Medical Center values protect any person who, in good faith, reports what he or she thinks is discrimination or harassment. No intimidation or retaliation may be directed toward a staff/faculty member who:

- Makes or assists with a complaint of discrimination or harassment
- Is a witness in the investigation of a complaint
- Serves as an investigator

Questions

Questions regarding this policy should be directed to Human Resources.

Related Links

[Code of Conduct](#)

Responsible Department:

Human Resources

Review Cycle:

3 years

Approved By:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cheryl E. H. Locke". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C'.

Cheryl E. H. Locke, Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer