

Policy No. 3: Sexual Harassment

1. Introduction

U3A Frankston recognises that it is the right of every member to attend classes, activities or functions, and/or to perform their duties as a volunteer, within a U3A environment, without being subject to any form of sexual harassment.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set down U3A Frankston's policy on sexual harassment and the process that will be followed should any complaint of sexual harassment be received.

3. Policy

3.1 Sexual harassment can be experienced by both men and women. Sexual harassment refers to any unwelcome sexual advance or request for sexual favours, or other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature which makes a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated, and where that reaction is reasonable in the circumstances. Lack of intent is no defence in sexual harassment cases.

Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Intrusive enquires into a person's private life
- Reference to their physical appearance or sexuality
- Unwanted brushing against another person's body, body touching or physically molesting a person or standing too close
- Obscene, suggestive or offensive communications, including electronic mail
- Pornographic or offensive posters, handouts or screensavers
- Sexual jokes or anecdotes
- Leering or staring, unwanted sexual compliments or excessive flirting

3.2 U3A Frankston will not tolerate sexual harassment. No member or volunteer should be subject to any form of sexual harassment, and the responsibility lies with every member and volunteer to ensure that this does not occur.

3.3 No member or volunteer will be treated unfairly as a result of lodging a complaint. Disciplinary action may be taken against anyone who victimizes or retaliates against a person who has complained of sexual harassment or against any volunteer who has been alleged to be a harasser.

3.4 All employees and volunteers have the right to seek assistance from the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission in the resolution of a sexual harassment incident.

3.5 The principles set out in this policy are intended to apply to any U3A related context, including classes, auspiced social functions, meetings, conferences, holiday trips and U3A workplaces.

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- 3.6 A breach of this policy will result in disciplinary action.
- 3.7 Some forms of sexual harassment (for example, sexual assault, stalking and indecent exposure) may constitute criminal conduct. While U3A Frankston is committed to handling most sexual harassment complaints at the local level, more extreme forms of sexual harassment are not suited to internal resolution and should be handled by the criminal justice system. It is not the duty of U3A Frankston to report such matters to the police on behalf of the complainant.

4. Procedures

- 4.1 U3A Frankston strongly encourages any member or volunteer who feels sexually harassed to take immediate action. Where circumstances permit, the aggrieved person should make it clear that such behaviour is unwelcome and offensive. Alternatively, or in addition, they may follow the procedures for reporting the behaviour.
- 4.2 A complaint of sexual harassment may be made to any member of the Committee of Management of U3A Frankston. The Committee Member will inform the President immediately.
- 4.3 The complaint of sexual harassment will be handled promptly, seriously and sensitively. There will be no presumption of guilt and no finding will be made until an investigation has been completed.
- 4.4 A Case Manager will be appointed by the Committee of Management. The Case Manager will contact the complainant to:
- provide support;
 - explain his/her rights and responsibilities under this policy;
 - ascertain the details of the complaint and the complainant's expectations of the complainant process.
- 4.5 The complainant has the right to:
- influence how the complaint is handled;
 - have support or representation throughout the process;
 - discontinue a complaint at any stage of the process.
- 4.6 The alleged harasser has the right to:
- be made aware of the allegations;
 - have support or representation throughout the process;
 - respond fully to any formal allegation made
- 4.7 Where agreed with the complainant, informal intervention will be initiated by the Case Manager, using conciliation and/or mediation techniques. The informal intervention will be complete when the parties agree on action/s or outcome/s to be implemented. When agreement is not reached, a formal intervention will be initiated and the Committee of Management will appoint a person ('the Investigator') to conduct an investigation into the complaint.

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- 4.8 The Investigator will:
- interview the complainant to ascertain the facts and what they expect as a result of the complaint
 - interview the respondent to ascertain their response/defence
 - identify and interview other persons who may be able to assist
 - examine any relevant documents
 - determine relevant previous behaviour or issues.
- 4.9 The Investigator will reach a finding, assemble all of the evidence gathered and provide these to the Case Manager. The assembled evidence may include but is not limited to:
- records of interviews conducted
 - supporting evidence provided by a doctor, counsellor, family member, etc.
 - relevant reports
 - complaints/information provided by persons about the respondent's behaviour
 - records kept by the complainant
 - information on whether the evidence appears credible and consistent
- 4.10 The Case Manager will submit the Investigator's findings and evidence to the Committee of Management and recommend a course of action to follow. Recommended actions will be influenced by:
- the wishes of the complainant
 - the severity and frequency of the harassment
 - the weight of the evidence
 - the level of contrition
 - whether there have been any prior incidents or warnings.
- 4.11 Possible disciplinary actions may include but are not limited to:
- formal apology and undertaking that the behaviour will cease
 - counselling
 - official warnings
 - removal from a volunteer or leadership role
 - cancellation of membership
- 4.12 Where there is insufficient evidence to determine whether or not the harassment occurred, the Committee of Management will remind those involved of expected standards of conduct and monitor the situation.
- 4.13. Any questions about this Sexual Harassment Policy should be referred to the Secretary.

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5. Responsibilities

- 5.1 U3A Frankston's Committee of Management is responsible for:
- developing, adopting, implementing and publishing this policy
 - ensuring that all members and volunteers are aware of this policy and of their obligations in relation to contributing to a U3A environment that discourages harassment and victimisation, and sets an example by their own behaviour
 - treating all complaints seriously and confidentially
 - taking immediate and appropriate corrective action if they become aware of any offensive action
 - investigating complaints about sexual harassment
 - monitoring and revising this policy as and when the need arises.
- 5.2 A Committee Member who receives a complaint of sexual harassment is responsible for referring the matter to the President immediately.
- 5.3 The Secretary is responsible for receiving enquiries about this policy.

6. Authorisation

- 6.1 This Sexual Harassment Policy was adopted by the Committee of Management of U3A Frankston and minuted as such, on 19 February 2016.
- 6.2 This policy will be published by the Committee of Management of U3A Frankston on its website within four weeks of the date of this authorisation.

Related Policies

- Policy No. 1: Privacy
- Policy No. 2: Code of Conduct
- Policy No. 4: Bullying
- Policy No. 5: Risk Management
- Policy No. 6: Anti-Discrimination
- Policy No. 7: Health & Safety (Serious Injury & Incident Report)
- Policy No. 8: Conflict of Interest

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