

Sexual Harassment Policy

The Australasian Chapter of the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry - Asia Pacific (SETAC-AU) is committed to ensuring that our working environment is free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment will not be tolerated under any circumstances and disciplinary action (including legal action, if appropriate) will be taken against any member or their representative who breaches this policy.

SETAC-AU aims to:

- create a working environment which is free from sexual harassment and where all members are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect;
- provide an effective procedure for complaints, based on the principles of natural justice;
- treat all complaints in a sensitive, fair, timely and confidential manner;
- guarantee protection from any victimisation or reprisals;
- encourage the reporting of behaviour which breaches the sexual harassment policy; and
- promote appropriate standards of conduct at all times.

Defining sexual harassment:

Sexual harassment is any unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour of a sexual nature, which makes a person feel humiliated, intimidated or offended. Sexual harassment can take many different forms and may include physical contact, verbal comments, jokes, propositions, the display of intimate body parts or offensive material, or other behaviour, which creates a sexually hostile working environment.

Sexual harassment is not behaviour that is based on mutual attraction, friendship and respect. If the interaction is consensual, welcome and reciprocated it is not sexual harassment. A person may be sexually harassed by a supervisor or manager, co-worker, contractor, service provider, director, event delegate, program participant, or member representative. Sexual harassment is not just unlawful during working hours or in the workplace itself and not only between co-workers. The behaviour is unlawful in any work-related context, including conferences, events, work functions, SETAC-AU-led social and networking events, and business trips and includes interactions with delegates, program participants, and members.

Breaches of this policy:

Breaching this policy will result in consequences, which may include an apology, counselling, dismissal, demotion or other forms of disciplinary action. Immediate disciplinary action will be taken against anyone who victimises or retaliates against a person who has complained of sexual harassment.

SETAC-AU's responsibilities:

- monitor the working environment to ensure that acceptable standards of conduct are observed at all times;
- model appropriate behaviour themselves;
- promote the organisation's sexual harassment policy;
- treat all complaints seriously and take immediate action to investigate and resolve the matter;
- refer a complaint to another officer if they do not feel that they are the best person to deal with the case (for example, if there is a conflict of interest or if the complaint is particularly complex or serious).

All SETAC-AU members have a responsibility to:

- comply with the organisation's sexual harassment policy
- offer support to anyone who is being harassed and let them know where they can get help and advice (they should not, however, approach the harasser themselves)
- maintain complete confidentiality if they provide information during the investigation of a complaint.

Members should be warned that spreading gossip or rumours may expose them to a defamation action.

Where to get help, or make a complaint:

To get help or advice, or to make a complaint, employees should approach their manager or supervisor in the first instance. If they feel unable to approach their manager, they should approach the SETAC-AU Executive Committee directly.

Employees can also approach the Australian Human Rights Commission or the relevant state or territory anti-discrimination agency for information and confidential advice.

Acknowledgement

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