

# Statement Policy on Harassment at the University of Balamand

## Introduction

The University of Balamand (UOB) is an academic institution with a distinguished intellectual background, as stated in the Mission Statement of the University. This background is rooted in an environment of dependence and trust, in which students, faculty and staff from different social groups and from various regions in Lebanon, the Arab world and foreign countries, are able to meet. The University is committed to the values of human dignity and equality, offering a climate that supports its academic mission and moral approach.

The University issues on a continuous basis, policies, regulations and declarations that define ethical standards and the disciplinary principles that members of the UOB community are expected to follow in their personal and work relationships. With its commitment to morality, the University is particularly concerned about the issue of Harassment and is keen to interpret it in the context of our Eastern culture that is open to global influence.

## Definition

There is no one definition of Harassment but all agree that such behavior creates an atmosphere of tension among students, faculty and staff members, violating human rights and the fundamental freedom of the individual. Harassment can be identified as an abusive act of a moral or physical nature, intended to:

- obtain a service that does not fall within usual functional responsibilities (such as personal administrative services).
- initiate unacceptable behavior (such as sexual Harassment).
- make a statement or adopt a position that is not related to job responsibilities.

Discrimination on the basis of sex, national origin, citizenship, age, personal status, religion, health or social status is also considered to be a form of Harassment.

Acts of Harassment may take one of the following forms:

**Verbal abuse:** abusing an administrative or educational official by issuing threats, repetition of undesirable and unjustified requests, swearing, yelling, vulgar insinuations, comments, jokes of a sexual nature and unwanted requests for a meeting.

**Non-verbal abuse:** suggestive sounds like whistling, offensive gestures, physical gestures of a violent or sexual nature.

**Physical abuse:** bullying, undesired physical contact, assault or other forms of physical aggression.

**Social Media abuse:** emails or postings on the Internet or social networking sites containing a clear threat of a sexual nature, in the form of writing, pictures or videos.

**Note:** These comments do not apply to those participating in courses requiring physical contact or unusual department such as the theater, physical education or medical treatment.

## **Concerned Groups**

When the relationship between a student and a staff member or faculty member, or between a staff member and a faculty member, or between faculty members, is characterized by any one of the above forms of behavior, it will be considered Harassment. The University strictly forbids any such form of Harassment in daily relationships, and in particular:

- when accepting new students at the University, or during registration, or in classrooms, or during a particular activity.
- in grading and evaluating students' academic performance.
- in the recruitment process (student workers, faculty members, staff members and workers).
- in the promotion process in Faculties and Administrative Offices.

## **Filing a Complaint**

In all cases of Harassment, the harassed person should discuss the matter with his direct supervisor. If the harassed person is a student, the direct supervisor is the Dean of Student Affairs; if the harassed person is a staff member, the direct supervisor is the Director of Human Resources; if the harassed person is a faculty member, the direct supervisor is the Dean of the Faculty.

Depending on the particular case, the direct supervisor of the harassed person, after consultation with the direct supervisor of the harassing person, will decide if the case has to be referred to the University Administrative Committee or if the direct supervisor can take the appropriate cautionary or punitive measures. If the case is referred to the Administrative Committee of the University, sanctions that can be imposed range from a verbal warning, to suspension for a period of time from the University, to expulsion from the University, depending on the severity of the case and the extent of its recurrence. In all cases, a detailed report describing the matter and sanctions imposed should be sent to the President of the University by the direct supervisor of the harassed person or the Chairman of the Administrative Committee.

In the case of a student, a staff member or a faculty member being harassed by a person visiting the University, the direct supervisor of the person who was harassed should consult with the person hosting the visitor to decide on the action to be taken. If deemed necessary, the direct supervisor may file a complaint under the applicable laws.