The T.A.’S guide to Equity and Human Rights Services

Western Says...
Every member of the University has the right to study, work and conduct his or her activities in an environment free of discrimination and harassment. (Non-Discrimination/Harassment Policy, MAPP 1.35)

The Ontario Human Right’s Code Says...
The Ontario Human Rights Code prohibits discrimination on the basis of the following grounds: race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, record of offences, marital status, same-sex partnership status, family status or handicap. Harassment is considered to be a form of discrimination under the Code.

**Discrimination:** unequal or differential treatment of a person or persons that is not based on individual or group performance, but is, instead, based on inappropriate considerations such as those listed above.

**Harassment:** a course of vexatious comment or conduct based on a prohibited ground of discrimination, or that has the effect of creating an intimidating demeaning or hostile work or study enjoyment.

Under the Western’s Non-Discrimination/Harassment Policy, harassment may be based on any of the grounds above or be general in nature. General harassment is often described as bullying-type behavior.

**Important!!!**
A person’s intent does not matter when determining harassment. Rather, it is the IMPACT of the words, action, or conduct on the other individual(s) that matters.

**Examples of harassment/discrimination:**

- A student with a disability is refused extra time to complete an examination despite a request for accommodation.
- A student receives email from an unknown campus address which contains homophobic language.
- A Research Assistant/TA is repeatedly told by a professor that he is stupid and cannot work to the caliber expected of a researcher.
STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH HARASSMENT & DISCRIMINATION

The following are just a few suggestions about how to deal with a situation of harassment or discrimination:

1. **Approach the Individual Directly**
   - Only if you feel comfortable and safe doing so.
   - Be honest and polite about how his/her behavior is making you feel and ask him/her to stop the behavior.

2. **Drop off a Highlighted Policy**
   - Obtain a copy of Western’s Non-Discrimination/Harassment Policy, highlight the appropriate section and leave the copy somewhere the person will find it (on their desk, under their door, etc.).

3. **Write a letter**
   - Set out an objective statement of the facts (dates, times, places and descriptions of the incidents) as you perceive them. Express how you feel about the incidents. State clearly what you want to happen next.
   - Keep a copy of the letter for your records and deliver it to the other person yourself, by registered mail, or ask a friend to deliver it.

4. **Come to Equity and Human Rights Services**
   - If you do not feel these other options are appropriate, or if you have tried some of them with no result, or if you just want to talk to someone who understands, contact Equity and Human Rights Services.

EQUITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS SERVICES

Equity and Human Rights Services is here to support the University in its goal to provide an environment free of harassment or discrimination for all of its students, staff and faculty. For individuals who feel they have experienced harassment or discrimination, we can provide confidential advice and assistance in resolving complaints. We are also available to provide training or presentations on a variety of equity related issues.

**Hours:** 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday
Evenings and Weekends by appointment

**Location:** Arthur & Sonia Labatt Health Sciences Building, Rooms 330-335
The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario
N6A 5B9

**Contact:** Tel: (519) 661-3334 or Ext. 83334 Fax: (519) 661-2133
E-mail: equity@uwo.ca
Website: www.uwo.ca/equity