Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Sexual Harassment Policy

Purpose:
To emphasize Rensselaer’s commitment to creating a workplace that is free from unlawful sexual harassment.

Policy:
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute is committed to providing a work environment free of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment violates an individual’s fundamental rights and personal dignity. Rensselaer considers sexual harassment in all its forms to be a serious offense. This policy applies to all employees, including faculty, student employees, and members of the President’s Cabinet.

Procedure:
Sexual harassment can involve males or females being harassed by members of either sex. Although sexual harassment typically involves a person in a greater position of authority as the harasser, individuals in positions of lesser or equal authority also can be found responsible for engaging in prohibited harassment.

Employees are prohibited from harassing other employees whether or not the incidents of harassment occur on Rensselaer premises and whether or not the incidents occur during working hours. In a supervisor/subordinate relationship, consensual sexual or romantic relationships between employees are prohibited.

Any person who violates this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

Reporting Procedures.
Any applicant or employee who believes that there has been a violation of Rensselaer’s policy or any applicable law relating to sexual harassment should immediately contact the Vice President for Human Resources, or his designee. All complaints are promptly investigated. All individuals are expected to cooperate with an investigation. The information obtained in the course of an investigation is held in confidence and is only disclosed to individuals who have a need for the information.

Employees are also required to comply with the Reporting Procedure for Complaints of Discrimination or Harassment.

Sexual harassment is unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or visual, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

(1) submission to such conduct is made a term or condition of employment;
(2) submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting the individual; or
(3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.
While sexual harassment encompasses a wide range of conduct, some examples of specifically prohibited conduct include:

- Promising, directly or indirectly, an employee a reward, if the employee complies with a sexually oriented request.
- Threatening, directly or indirectly, to retaliate against an employee, if the employee refuses to comply with a sexually oriented request.
- Denying, directly or indirectly, an employee an employment-related opportunity, if the employee refuses to comply with a sexually oriented request.
- Engaging in sexually suggestive conversation that is unwelcome or physical contact or touching another employee in a way that is unwelcome.
- Displaying, storing, or transmitting pornographic or sexually oriented materials.
- Engaging in indecent exposure.
- Making sexual or romantic advances toward an employee and persisting despite the employee’s rejection of the advances.
- Physical conduct such as assault, touching, or blocking normal movement.
- Retaliation for making harassment reports or threatening to report harassment.

Sexual harassment can be physical and/or psychological in nature. An aggregation of a series of incidents can constitute sexual harassment even if one of the incidents considered on its own would not be considered harassing conduct.