

# MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY POLICY

Policy #:		Effective:	July 2012	Category:	All University Employee Policies
Name:	<b>ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY</b>				

## 1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of the policy is to provide guidance to University employees regarding the policy below in order to comply with the standards set forth by the University. This policy is necessary in order to maintain an effective and compliant workforce that meets the University mission.

## 2.0 SCOPE

University Employee Policy

## 3.0 POLICY

Missouri Southern State University is committed to fostering a working and learning environment where all individuals are treated fairly with respect and dignity. It is, and continues to be, University policy that harassment of employees, students, applicants for employment or admission, or guests and visitors is unacceptable conduct. It is further the policy of MSSU to provide a working and learning environment for faculty, staff and students that is free from all forms of harassment, intimidation or exploitation. Prohibited harassment includes, but is not limited to threats, bullying, cyber bullying, and offensive verbal, written or physical conduct. Employees of MSSU that feel that they have been harassed should contact the MSSU Human Resources Department. Complaints against students should be reported to the MSSU Dean of Students office.

Under this policy, harassment is written, verbal or physical conduct that degrades or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his/her race, color, ancestry, religion, gender, age, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation and that (i) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or learning environment; (ii) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's working or learning performance; or (iii) otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment or learning opportunities.

Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to: labels, slurs or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating or hostile acts; jokes and display or circulation in the workplace of written or graphic material (including electronic media) that is degrading or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group.

Harassment can also be sexual in nature. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when any one of the following occurs: (i) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment; or (ii) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or (iii) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work, studies, or participation in University activities by creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

Sexual harassment may include a range of subtle and not so subtle behaviors and may involve individuals of the same or different gender. Depending on the circumstances, these behaviors may include, but are not limited to: unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favors; sexual jokes and

innuendoes; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; commentary about an individual's body; leering, catcalls or touching; insulting or obscene comments or gestures; display or circulation in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures (including electronic media); and other physical, verbal or visual conduct of a sexual nature.

Early reporting and intervention have proven to be the most effective method of resolving actual or perceived incidents of harassment. Therefore, the University requires any member of the campus community or applicant who believes that he or she has experienced or observed any form of unlawful harassment; to document the incident and immediately report it to his or her supervisor or to the Director of Human Resources without fear of retaliation. Individuals are also encouraged to promptly advise the offender(s) that the behavior is unwelcome and request that it be discontinued. The University policy prohibits retaliation against an individual who reports harassment or who participates in an investigation of such reports.

The University will promptly investigate all allegations of harassment in as confidential a manner as possible. The investigation may include individual interviews with the parties involved and, where necessary, with individuals who may have observed the alleged conduct or may have other relevant knowledge.

Misconduct constituting retaliation or harassment as defined in this policy will be dealt with appropriately. The University will determine the appropriate disciplinary action to be taken under the circumstances. (Refer to the Progressive Disciplinary Action policy.)

Individuals who have questions or concerns about this policy should talk with the Director of Human Resources.

#### **4.0 HISTORY**

This policy may be revised, edited, changed or removed at any time with or without notice to applicable individuals.

#### **5.0 RELATED DOCUMENTS**