

Safe Work Environment Case 8

Overview of this session

In this session, learners will learn about safe work environment issues and methods for reporting this misconduct at the University. Learners will review a brief case study and respond to questions related to the presented scenario.

Learning objectives

Through this case, learners will:

- 1) learn about safe work environment issues (such as harassment)
- 2) consider how to respond to issues presented in the case study scenario
- 3) learn how to report safe work environment issues at the University

Lesson description

Instructional Event	Action		Time	Technology
	Instructor	Learner		
1. Introduce learning objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Give an overview of this session– State learning objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Listen and react to instructions– Recognize the necessity of this session	5 min	
2. Observe the case study	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Present the case study and review discussion questions with audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Watch the presentation and review discussion questions	2 min 44 sec	Internet capability
3. Talk about discussion questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Ask learners for feedback and discuss questions/topic– Facilitate discussion and provide answers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Ask questions related to the case study– Share ideas or experiences related to discussion questions/ topic	~10 min	
4. Explain essential concepts that learners should know	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Summarize discussion points– Reiterate core concepts of session	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Listen	5 min	
5. Provide feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Ask for feedback and address any remaining questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Ask anything related to this session	5 min	
6. Enhancing retention and transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Provide additional materials including links to other resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Review additional materials as needed	2 min	

Case study overview

A group of female students work under their faculty advisor of the same gender. They get a new male student in the lab and notice a stark difference in their PI's behavior. The female graduate students notice the new male researcher has considerably less training than they do (they are in their 4th year of training while the male student has just begun their graduate career). They notice the student has fewer lab responsibilities and has been granted additional opportunities the other students have not been afforded such as an invitation to collaborate on a project that will likely result in a high-impact publication, invitations to meetings with the PI, aid with applying for special grants to fund their research and travel to various conferences. The students think at times the PI seems to be flirting with the new student at work. The female students confide in the lab manager who has been in the lab for some time. The lab manager tips off the students that this change in behavior is normal for the PI towards individuals of the opposite gender and advises them to not say anything if they don't want to deal with the repercussions because the PI is well respected within the University and their field of study. The female students are upset because they feel they are being treated unfairly.

Discussion questions

1. What issues can you identify in this case?

- Mentoring issues
- Possible safe working environment issues (i.e., harassment, inappropriate conduct with a subordinate)

Ask the audience what other issues they identified.

2. Do you think this is a safe working environment issue?

If Dr. Belding's behavior is making the students feel uncomfortable and is persistent, it may be considered a safe working environment issue.

3. Is it okay to treat graduate students differently?

It is unethical to treat students differently based on their gender or other aspects of their identity, etc. While the students' observations may make them feel the male student may be benefiting in some ways from the relationship with their PI, the male student may deem this an unwanted behavior which may qualify as harassment. Since the students are observing what they believe to be concerning behavior, the students should document their observations, interactions, and correspondence with the PI especially if they believe it involves retaliation once the issue is raised. The students do not need to decide whether this behavior qualifies as harassment if they are unsure. Their best approach may be to reach out to someone at the university, such as the Office of Institutional Equity and Equal Opportunity who is authorized to make the determination and provide advice and resources.

4. What can the graduate students do to improve their current situation? Is there anyone they can contact for help or advice?

If the graduate students believe they have been experiencing any form of discrimination or harassment, they may seek information and advice by contacting the Office of Institutional Equity and Equal Opportunity. The university encourages any individuals experiencing discrimination to file a complaint with the Office of Institutional Equity and Equal Opportunity. They could also approach the Ombud or the Graduate School for resources or guidance.

5. How can Dr. Belding adjust their behavior to create a more inclusive working environment?

Dr. Belding should adjust her behavior and mentoring strategy towards the students. She should give each student sufficient guidance, opportunities, and training to guide them through graduate school. Dr. Belding should abstain from showing preferential treatment and incentives to students and should not engage in any romantic relationships/advances with subordinates.

6. What are ways you can help promote a safe working environment?

Ask audience for feedback on this.

Additional resources

- UK ORI resources:
 - Webpage: <https://www.research.uky.edu/office-research-integrity>
 - UK Responsible Conduct of Research & Scholarly Activity webpage: <https://www.research.uky.edu/responsible-conduct-research>
 - Research misconduct webpage and reporting tool: <https://www.research.uky.edu/research-misconduct>
 - Links to policies: <https://www.research.uky.edu/research-misconduct/policies>
- UK Faculty mentoring resources (Provides links to mentorship books, articles, podcasts and examples of mentorship programs and policies): <https://www.uky.edu/ofa/faculty-mentoring-resources>
- UK Ombud (Addresses Student Academic Rights and problems concerning the commission of academic offenses): <https://ombud.uky.edu/>
- UK Graduate School (Provides information on student funding, faculty and staff resources and graduate student information): <https://gradschool.uky.edu/>
- UK Graduate School Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (Includes postdoc events and educational resources): <https://www.uky.edu/postdoc/>
- UK Office of Institutional Equity and Equal Opportunity (OIEEO handles complaints of discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct for the University of Kentucky):
 - Address: 13 Main Building, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40506-0032;
 - Phone: (859) 257-8927; fax: (859) 323-3739
 - Webpage: <https://www.uky.edu/eeo/>
 - Discrimination, harassment, or sexual misconduct reporting form: https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofKentucky&layout_id=30
- UK Human Resources (Provides employee information including the staff handbook, employee relations information and employee training): <https://www.uky.edu/hr/home>
- UK Center for Support and Intervention webpage (Provides a central point of entry for concerns regarding students and employees and connecting individuals to resources.): <https://www.uky.edu/concern/>
- UK Center for Support and Intervention (Provides a central point of entry for concerns regarding students and employees and connecting individuals to resources.): <https://www.uky.edu/concern/>
- UK Healthcare Corporate Compliance Office (Provides a centralized location for reporting illegal, unethical or abusive conduct): <https://ukhealthcare.uky.edu/staff/corporate-compliance>
- UK's Administrative Regulations (AR): policies adopted by the President to implement the Governing Regulations and provide for the general administration and oversight of the University.

- Link to all ARs: <https://www.uky.edu/regs/administrative-regulations-ar>
- NSF Resource on harassment: <https://www.nsf.gov/od/oecr/harassment.jsp>
- NIH Anti-Sexual Harassment resource: <https://www.nih.gov/anti-sexual-harassment>