



Sexual Harassment Policy

Title: Policy against sexual harassment

Document Type: Public

Policy Owner: Office of the President, Office of the Provost, University Conduct Code Committee

Applies to: Students, faculty, staff, postdoctoral fellows and institutional leadership

Effective date: Immediately

For More Information, Contact: The Office of the Provost

Contact Information: Provoffice@balamand.edu.lb 06-930-250 Extension: 1433 or 1511

Official Website: <https://www.balamand.edu.lb/AboutUOB/Pages/University-Policies.aspx>

Background:

In line with its mission, vision and core values, the University of Balamand is committed to safeguarding a teaching, learning, and working environment free of sexual harassment and misconduct, upholding the values of human dignity and equity, and fostering a climate that promotes professionalism, trust among all stakeholders, and personal wellbeing.

Purpose Statement:

The purpose of this policy is to establish a safe, meaningful and productive academic and working environment by:

1. Prohibiting behavior that creates a hostile environment by subjecting a student, faculty member, or staff to any act of sexual harassment or misconduct;

2. Swiftly and appropriately responding to any behavior of sexual harassment or misconduct that intimidates and inflicts physical or psychological harm upon a student, faculty member or staff in any position;
3. Safeguarding the right of a student, faculty member, or staff to file a complaint alleging a sexual harassment or misconduct perpetrated by an academic member, an administrator, a member of the staff in any employment category or by a student;
4. Preventing retaliation against a student, faculty member, or staff in any employment category who has filed a complaint.

Applies to:

This policy applies to all students, faculty, staff, visiting professors, researchers and postdoctoral fellows, as well as institutional leadership across all University of Balamand campuses. The policy also applies to any individual who has been retained by the University of Balamand for any type of temporary work on any of the university campuses. The policy further applies to conduct during work-related activities off university campuses.

Definitions:

Harassment: a wide range of unwelcome conduct that is conveyed verbally, physically or in writing, which humiliates, belittles or patronizes an individual to the point of causing emotional distress. Harassment also refers to any unwanted attention or behavior that intimidates or makes an individual feel uncomfortable. Sexual harassment may include unwelcome sexual advances, unsolicited requests for sexual favors, or any other conduct of a sexual nature that offends, intimidates, or humiliates another individual.

Verbal conduct of sexual harassment: Repetition of undesirable and unjustified requests, insinuations, comments, and jokes of a sexual nature and unwanted and persistent requests for a meeting on and off campus.

Physical conduct of sexual harassment: Undesired physical contact, assault or other forms of physical aggression, including exhibitionism.

Electronic conduct of sexual harassment: Sending emails to professional or personal e-addresses or chats on messaging platforms (e.g., WhatsApp messages or voice notes), web or social media

sites; posting of material impacting the personal and professional reputation of an individual, posting material of a sexual nature in the form of writing, pictures, or videos, including obscene phone calls; using fake profiles for the purpose of intimidation, harassment of any kind, or damaging someone's reputation; or sending any material containing a threat against any individual who has refused sexual advances or filed a complaint of sexual harassment or misconduct.

Retaliation: Any act committed against an individual as a result of filing a complaint. Retaliatory behavior includes either obvious or subtle vindictive behavior of a discriminatory nature towards the complainant.

Human Dignity: Having the right to be safe, valued, respected, and treated ethically and with equity in the workplace.

Policy Statement:

This policy exemplifies the commitment of the University of Balamand as an institution of higher education and as an employer to provide a learning, teaching, and working environment that instills trust and professionalism and supports the University of Balamand core values. Specifically, the University:

1. Guarantees the values of human dignity and respectful learning and work culture to which all students, faculty and staff in all employment categories are entitled.
2. Safeguards students, faculty and staff in all employment categories from any misuse of position or power exerted by anyone who has real or perceived authority over the complainant.
3. Prohibits the subjection of students, faculty or staff members in a subordinate position to offensive, intimidating, humiliating, and threatening verbal, physical, or electronic behavior of sexual nature.
4. Protects students, faculty and staff against unwanted sexual contact, unwelcomed sexual advances, and unsolicited requests for sexual favors on and off campuses.
5. Holds accountable any institutional stakeholder proven to have exerted sexual harassment or misconduct on students, faculty, or staff by swiftly taking the appropriate corrective measure in line with the University of Balamand bylaws.

6. Guarantees the right of students, faculty and staff in all employment categories to file a complaint alleging sexual harassment or misconduct against any university stakeholder.
7. Safeguards the identities of the complainant alleging sexual harassment or misconduct as well as the alleged offender except to the University policy owners, including the University Code of Conduct Committee.
8. Assists students, faculty, and staff members in seeking counseling in case of psychological harm inflicted by a validated act of sexual harassment or misconduct.
9. Approves the requests of students, faculty, and staff members who have undergone alleged or corroborated sexual harassment or misconduct to explore other courses or program options as well as career placements within the institution.
10. Protects students, faculty and staff against retaliatory actions, even in the cases of alleged sexual harassment or misconduct.

The present policy acknowledges the unintentional as well as purposeful occurrence of touch within the delivery context of curricula in specific educational programs including teaching the physical exam in Medicine and teaching sports and coaching in Physical Education, or touch in the Performing Arts courses, for example. Yet, the University of Balamand prohibits coercive or unsolicited touch in any discipline and advocates for a safe teaching and learning climate in all its programs of study.

Enforcement:

Sexual harassment or misconduct against students, faculty members, or staff is strictly prohibited at the University of Balamand. University stakeholders are expected to implement and uphold the policy against sexual harassment or misconduct within the context of their job description, influence and authority. Violations of this policy result in swift and appropriate disciplinary measures in accordance with the University of Balamand by-laws.

Procedures/Form:

The University of Balamand ensures that students, faculty or staff complaints of any violations of this policy are addressed fairly and promptly. Violations should be reported to the Provost via filing a complaint through completing the “Sexual Harassment Complaint Form” posted on

<https://www.balamand.edu.lb/AboutUOB/Pages/University-Policies.aspx>. All alleged sexual harassment complaints are treated with confidentiality.

In case of a written filed complaint by a declared student, faculty or staff, the Provost promptly addresses the sexual harassment or misconduct allegation as follows:

1. Immediately requesting that the complainant meet the university counselor. This will give the complainant the opportunity to recount the alleged harassment encounter in a professional and safe manner.
2. The university counselor will write an assessment report and submit it to the provost. The provost will then forward the complainant file, which contains the written complaint and the counselor assessment report, to the Code of Conduct Committee. If there is a written complaint and the counselor has been seen, then the provost will request that the University Code of Conduct Committee meet to investigate the case.

In the case of a complainant that does not want to be interviewed by the Code of Conduct Committee, the provost will still request that the committee meet and investigate the claim and interview the alleged offender.

3. The University Code of Conduct Committee can call upon the complainant for a hearing of the alleged account of the sexual harassment or misconduct. At that hearing, the complainant should produce any supporting evidence. Separately, the University Code of Conduct Committee shall also meet to hear from the alleged offender.
4. At the end of the investigation, the University Code of Conduct Committee will produce a report in which it determines whether there is a case of sexual harassment or not. The report will be submitted to the Offices of the president and provost. The report will also include an overall evaluation of the investigated case.
5. Upon receipt of the report, the president and the provost will determine the necessary sanctions in compliance with the University of Balamand bylaws and will inform the complainant first and then the alleged offender of the outcome of the complaint.

While the University of Balamand discourages anonymous claims, in case of a complaint filed anonymously, the Office of the Provost promptly asks the University Code of Conduct Committee to meet and investigate the case. The university Code of Conduct Committee may take a decision to summon the alleged offender. The outcome of the investigation of the University Code of

Conduct Committee shall be communicated to the Offices of the President and Provost for execution in compliance with the University of Balamand bylaws.

All records pertaining to a sexual harassment or misconduct case, from the filing of the complaint to the reported outcome submitted by the university Code of Conduct Committee will remain in the Office of the Provost for a period of 10 years.