

4.035 Discrimination-Related Harassment (Revised 4/22/25)

Harassment of any kind is prohibited at Highland Community College whether it is sexual harassment or harassment based on age, color, disability, ethnic or national origin, sex, pregnancy, race, or religion or sexual orientation, or any other legally protected classification under federal or state law. Sexual and bias-related harassment are prohibited by Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended in 1991, Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972, and the Illinois Human Rights Act. Highland Community College is committed to respecting all individuals. Highland Community College is also committed to the free and dynamic discussion of ideas and issues.

This policy applies to all members of the College community including students, employees, volunteers, and other representatives of the College. In certain circumstances, this harassment policy also applies to third parties, such as subcontractors, sales representatives, repairpersons, or vendors doing business with the College.

A. Definition of Harassment:

1. This policy prohibits discrimination or harassment on the basis of actual or perceived membership in a protected class (as mentioned above), by any member or group of the campus community, which unreasonably interferes with an individual's work or academic environment. A hostile or intimidating environment may be created by verbal, written, electronic, visual, virtual, and/or physical conduct, that is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive so as to interfere with, limit, or deny the ability of an individual to participate in or benefit from educational programs or activities or employment access, benefits, or opportunities. The College will not wait until conduct is unlawful before prohibiting or responding to reports of harassment. The College will provide prompt and equitable resolution.
2. This policy against harassment shall be applied in a manner that protects the academic freedom and freedom of expression of all parties to a complaint. Academic freedom and freedom of expression include but are not limited to the expression of ideas in the classroom. Instructional freedom will include appropriate latitude for pedagogical decisions concerning the topics discussed and methods used to draw students into discussion and full participation. Classroom discussion of alternative ideas or controversial points of view on related topics shall not be considered harassment.

B. Responsibilities:

1. The College encourages prompt reporting of harassment. It is the express policy of the College to encourage targets of harassment to come forward with such claims.
2. Management and supervisory personnel, at all levels, are responsible for taking reasonable and necessary action to prevent discrimination or harassment. Supervisors shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy by:

- a. Monitoring the workplace environment for signs of harassment;
 - b. Promptly notifying law enforcement where there is reasonable belief that the observed or complained of conduct violates the criminal laws of the State of Illinois. In addition, all such incidents should immediately be reported to the Title IX Coordinator at (815) 599-3531, the Director of Human Resources at (815) 599-3402, the HR Manager at (815) 599-3602, or the Coordinator Career Services at (815) 599-3597.
 - c. Promptly stopping any observed acts of discrimination or harassment and taking appropriate steps to intervene.
 - d. Promptly reporting any complaint of harassment or discrimination to one of the College investigators.
3. Each employee is responsible for assisting in the prevention of discrimination and harassment by:
 - a. Refraining from participation in, or encouragement of, actions that could be perceived as discrimination or harassment.
 - b. Intervening if they find themselves as a bystander to any inappropriate behaviors on campus and feel it is safe to do so.
 - c. Immediately reporting harassment or discrimination or suspected harassment or discrimination to management and supervisors before it becomes severe, persistent or pervasive.
4. If you are advised by another person that your behavior is offensive, you must immediately stop the behavior, regardless of whether you agree with the person's perceptions of your intentions.
5. The College does not consider conduct in violation of the discrimination-related harassment policy to be within the course and scope of employment or education and does not sanction such conduct on the part of any employee, including supervisory and management employees or any employee with authority over another person covered under the discrimination-related harassment policy.

C. Dissemination of Policy/Procedures:

1. Information on this policy will be distributed in the College's Policy Manual, College Catalog, the College website, College's General drive under HR-Payroll Resources, and via posters and brochures placed around campus. Periodic notices sent to students and employees about the College's sexual harassment policy will include information about the complaint procedure and will refer individuals to designated offices/officials for additional information.
2. Students registered at Highland Community College will receive information annually related to this policy. Informational brochures are distributed throughout campus and posters related to sexual harassment and reporting harassment are posted throughout campus.

3. New employees will be required to read the policy, sign an acknowledgement form that they have read the policy, and complete on-line harassment training. Employees are to complete annual on-line training and are encouraged to report any evidence of discrimination-related harassment in the workplace whether they are victims or if they witness such harassment. Supervisors and managers are required to report any known or reported harassment and will be trained to recognize and take action against harassment of any kind.
4. The sexual misconduct and violence policy 3.27, prohibition of sexual misconduct policy 3.28, non-discrimination policy 4.031, and/or the non-violence policy 4.39 may also apply in some incidents that are reportable under policy 4.034. Refer to those policies for additional guidance related to reporting responsibilities and protocol.

D. Reporting Discrimination-Related Harassment:

1. The process to file a complaint of actual or suspected discrimination-related harassment can be found in the Policy 4.036, Sexual Harassment and Discrimination-Related Harassment Reporting Process.