

Understanding Sexual Harassment

Examples of sexual harassment:

- Unwelcome Sexual Advances
- Suggestive or Lewd Remarks/Jokes/Stories
- Unwanted Hugs, Touches, Kisses
- Requests for Sexual Favors
- Derogatory or Pornographic Posters, Cartoons, Drawings or Emails
- Sex Stereotyping
- Physical/Verbal aggression, hostility, or intimidation

Keep in mind that as a Graduate Teaching Assistant:

- You hold a position of authority over your students
- You are considered Junior Colleagues
- Are held to professional expectations of behavior & conduct
- You may be close in age to your students, live in the same areas, or participate in the same clubs/organizations.

- It's important to know that many incidences are not strictly between two people, in office or classroom conversations anything being overheard, even if directed at someone else, can still be offensive and contribute to an unsafe environment. For instance if a sexual/crude joke is said aloud and the people joking about it find it funny, that does not exclude that fact that anyone else listening might become uncomfortable or feel intimidated.
- What you say, how you respond, how you behave can either support a positive sense of authority, based in trust and mutual respect, or contribute to a distorted view of your authority by your students. Respectful language, addressing inappropriate behavior in your classes or on campus, strengthens the connection and trust students have in you. Can anyone think of a time a professor positively demonstrated their authority, even if the situation seem to be conflicted?
- Please consider that for many students they may not realize what a GA/TA is and how you're role is important and professional. It is up to you to set this tone and evaluate the boundaries you decide are appropriate for your class & office hours. Can anyone think of a boundary that would be important for you to address in your class?
- Being a TA can be difficult at times, you're juggling two roles- one of which requires you to continually evaluate how you are perceived and regarded on campus; oftentimes, this can impact you being a student. Take the time to reflect on our discussion today and if you need additional suggestions or advice, let us know. It is important that you ask for

support in any situation that you are unsure about- whether it includes you or not.

Situations to Consider & Reflect

- You are at a house party where two of your students have arrived. You're having a great time and dancing with friends. You shout out to your students to join you and they do.
- You have always had a crush on a peer and now that you're a GTA, they are in your class. At a basketball game you bump into each other and they ask you for your cell number and suggest going on a date.

What are some things that should pop into your mind?

What are some of your initial reactions to respond?

Situations to Consider & Reflect

- You're close friends with another GTA and while hanging out at Einstein's Bagels your friend tells you "The girls in that class are so trashy, I don't know how you can teach them when they dress like that!" As he says this, you see a few of your students are in line, you don't know if they heard this or not.
- You have a very vibrant class that jokes a lot, has fun and all seem to get along. They often prank each other. As you're walking behind a few of them on your way into class one of the students snaps the bra strap of another student. You can't hear a response but the student reacts by elbowing her way through the door.

What are some key elements in this situation?

Should you say anything? What are some responses?

Use your definitions chart below "Sexual Harassment vs. Flirting" to "measure" feelings, perceptions, and results.

Sexual Harassment vs. Flirting: A Helpful Guide

Sexual Harassment	Flirting
<u>Feel:</u> Bad, angry, sad demeaned, powerless, objectified, insulted <u>Results in:</u> Negative self-esteem	<u>Feel:</u> Good, happy, flattered, in control, appreciated, respected <u>Results in:</u> Positive self-esteem
<u>Perceived as:</u> Invading one-sided, unsafe, intimidating, or hostile <u>It is:</u> Unwanted, power motivated, illegal, crossing boundaries	<u>Perceived as:</u> Reciprocal, flattering, safe <u>It is:</u> Wanted, equal/mutual, legal

As a GTA what must be considered for this guide to be valid for flirting?

Adapted from: Wylie3solutions.org