

**NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR  
ARLINGTON, VA 22230**

**STAFF MEMORANDUM**

**OD 15-03  
March 16, 2015**

**ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT**

**SUBJECT: Policy Statement on the Prevention of Harassment**

It is the policy of the National Science Foundation (NSF) that all employees should be able to work in an environment that is free from harassment. As Director and Chief Operating Officer, we want to ensure a work environment that is respectful of human dignity and conducive to maximum productivity. NSF will not tolerate harassment in the workplace.

Harassment is prohibited by Federal law, and is defined as any unwelcome verbal or physical conduct based on race, color, religion, sex (includes sexual harassment and discrimination based on pregnancy), disability, age, national origin, sexual orientation, and protected genetic information that is so objectively offensive as to alter the conditions of the individual's employment. Harassment unreasonably interferes with an employee's performance, and can create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. Furthermore, any retaliation against an individual who has brought forth a complaint alleging harassment is similarly unlawful.

Sexual harassment is a concern that deserves special mention. Federal guidelines and case law define sexual harassment as including "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature" not only when the conduct is made as a condition of employment ("quid pro quo" harassment), but when the conduct creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

NSF employees who feel they are being harassed by supervisors, co-workers, or customers should make it clear to the individual(s) that such behavior is offensive and unwelcome. They should immediately report this behavior to an appropriate management official in the organization in which the incident occurred or to the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI). Also, management officials who receive any allegations of harassment should consult with ODI for guidance.

The confidentiality of employees bringing forth complaints of harassment will be protected to the extent possible. In accordance with the equal employment opportunity (EEO) complaint process, all allegations of harassment will be promptly and thoroughly investigated. NSF will take actions necessary to ensure that these matters are addressed swiftly, fairly, and effectively.

We know that you will support NSF's continuing commitment to exhibit the highest level of professional behavior and courtesy that each of us deserves.

France A. Córdova  
Director

Richard O. Buckius  
Chief Operating Officer

Distribution: All employees  
Originating Unit: Office of Diversity and Inclusion  
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