

All forms of harassment relating to sex, ethnic origin and identity, sexual orientation, and disability are defined as assault.

Harassment of a person can lead to consequences and has legal sanctions. The following texts contain the laws that govern harassment:

Lag om likabehandling av studenter i högskolan

Högskolelagen 1 kap, 5 och 5 a §§

Högskoleförordningen 1 kap, 8-9 §§, 10 kap.

1 § punkt 4 a

Brottsbalken 4-6 kapitlet

Arbetsmiljölagen 2-4 kap.

### To inform and prevent

- Continuing education is available to all personnel.
- Information on the harassment policy is available at orientation meetings for new employees.
- Information on the harassment policy is available to students through cooperation with the Student Union.
- The policy statement on harassment is distributed to all students and personnel.

### What to do in cases of harassment:

- Students can seek advice and support from the Anti-Harassment Support Group.
- The university has a legal obligation to investigate cases and suspected instances of harassment if a student alleges that he or she has been the target of harassment.
- Notification in suspected cases of harassment should be made to the vice-chancellor of the university.
- The vice-chancellor determines which cases will be sent to the Student Disciplinary Board and the Personnel Disciplinary Board.
- The Student Disciplinary Board and the Personnel Disciplinary Board make rulings on sanctions.

[www.hig.se/organisation/jamst](http://www.hig.se/organisation/jamst)

*This policy document aims to inform, prevent, and respond to harassment relating to sex, ethnic origin and identity, sexual orientation, and disability.*

*This document has been prepared by The Office on Equal Opportunity and approved by the vice-chancellor of the University of Gävle on June 30, 2004.*

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## **Policy document on harassment**

*relating to sex, ethnic origin and identity, sexual orientation, and disability concerning students at the University of Gävle.*



## The University of Gävle says no

to all forms of harassment relating to sex, ethnic origin and identity, sexual orientation, and disability.

The university must maintain an academic environment where respect for the individual is self-evident. Students with different backgrounds shall be able to meet each other with respect, aiming to create a learning environment which promotes scholarly exchange, wellbeing, stewardship, and fosters the conditions for personal growth and achievement.

## What is harassment?

Lag (2001:1286) om likabehandling av studenter i högskolan (ändring införd 2003:311).

### What does the law say?

**4§** Every university must take steps to provide against and prevent harassment of current and prospective students. Harassment is defined as behavior which violates a student's or a prospective student's dignity in university studies; such behavior relates to

- ethnic origin and identity (harassment on the grounds of ethnicity)

- religion or another belief system (harassment on the grounds of religion or other belief system)
  - sexual orientation (harassment on the grounds of sexual orientation)
  - disability (harassment on the grounds of disability)
- or
- sex or gender (harassment on the grounds of sex or gender identification). Swedish law (2003:311).

## Rights and obligations

All students at the University of Gävle have the right to a learning environment that is free from harassment relating to sex, ethnic origin and identity, sexual orientation, or disability. This means that the entire university community has the obligation to cooperate to make sure that no one is the victim of such harassment.

### What does the law say?

**6§** Any university which receives information that a student considers her- or himself the target of such forms of harassment as mentioned in **4§** must investigate the circumstances surrounding the alleged harassment and take such action which reasonably can be required in order to prevent future harassment.

## Forms of Harassment

**8a§** A university may not discriminate against a current or prospective student through harassment of him or her. Law (2003:311).

## The University of Gävle educates

University personnel at all levels are educated in questions which relate to harassment concerning sex, ethnic origin and identity, sexual orientation, and disability. Students are informed of the university's policy against harassment. The Anti-Harassment Support Group, appointed by the university to respond to alleged cases of harassment, receives continuing education.

## A hidden problem

Harassment connected to sex, ethnic origin and identity, sexual orientation, and disability is a hidden problem. A person who has been the target of such harassment often chooses to avoid the situation by denying or repressing it. This kind of reaction is understandable as a person who is subjected to harassment feels violated, powerless, and even afraid.

For students, one way to avoid the situation can be, for example, to stop attending course meetings. This turns into an invisible solution to the problem.

## Visibility is everyone's responsibility

It is the responsibility of everyone to make the invisible visible, in other words to give attention to harassment relating to sex, ethnic origin and identity, sexual orientation, and disability and to support the person or persons who have been targeted. Direct intervention in a situation where harassment is occurring often gives legitimate attention and has a ripple effect. Such attention can prevent more negative behavior of the same kind.

## Advice and support

The Anti-Harassment Support Group, consisting of a counselor from Student Health Center, the Coordinator for Equal Opportunity, and a student representative (see [www.hig.se/organisation/jamst](http://www.hig.se/organisation/jamst)), receives continuing education in order to prevent harassment of all kinds.

**Anyone**, whether they have been the target or witness of harassment, can contact one of the members in the support group. These persons are under professional obligation to uphold the confidentiality of those who contact them.