



Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment has been defined generally as including unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature whenever: (1) submission to the conduct is either an explicit or implicit term or condition of employment; (2) an individual's reaction to the conduct is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting that individual; (3) the conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with the individual's work performance; or (4) the conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

No employee, member, volunteer, or attendee should be subjected to sexual harassment or unsolicited and unwelcome sexual overtures, nor should any employee, member, volunteer, or attendee be led to believe that any benefit will in any way depend upon "cooperation" of a sexual nature.

Sexual harassment is not limited to demands for sexual favors. It also may include such actions as: (1) sex-oriented verbal "kidding," "teasing," or jokes; (2) repeated offensive sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions; (3) continued or repeated verbal abuse of a sexual nature; (4) graphic or degrading comments about an individual or his or her appearance; (5) the display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; (6) subtle pressure for sexual activity; and (7) inappropriate physical contact.

Sexual harassment does not refer to occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature or consensual personal and social relationships without a discriminatory employment or professional effect. It refers to behavior that is not welcome and that is personally intimidating, hostile, or offensive.

Other Unlawful Harassment or Conduct

Harassment on other grounds, including race, color, religion, national origin, age, marital status, gender identity, or disability is also prohibited. Harassment may include such actions as: (1) jokes or verbal "kidding," or "teasing;" (2) verbal abuse and epithets; (3) degrading comments; (4) the display of offensive objects and pictures; (5) conduct or comments of a lewd or lascivious nature; and (6) other conduct that an individual might reasonably find to be intimidating, hostile, offensive, coercive, or threatening.

Scope of Policy

This policy prohibiting harassment, whether sexual or of another nature, is not limited to relationships between and among employees, members and volunteers, but also extends to interaction with attendees and vendors. No officer, director, members, or other volunteer shall subject any employee, member, volunteer, attendee, or vendor to sexual or other harassment of any nature, including that conduct described above. Any forms of harassment as described in this policy are reportable immediately to the ombudsperson on call at the annual meeting, any OHA Council member, or either of the co-executive directors.

The Oral History Association will fully investigate all complaints and will maintain confidentiality to the greatest extent possible. Anyone who is found to have engaged in harassment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include the following: (1) a written reprimand or censure; (2) a request for resignation; (3) removal of such person from the individual's position within OHA; or (4) suspension or termination of the individual's membership, employment, engagement, and/or participation in current and/or future OHA-operated, sponsored and/or affiliated events. No individual will be retaliated against for making a complaint or assisting with the investigation of a complaint.

Informal and Formal Complaint Procedures

OHA Council will appoint an ombudsperson from its membership to serve as a point of contact during the annual meetings. The ombudsperson would be available at set times during the conference to receive complaints of harassment or unprofessional conduct. Members and attendees at OHA functions who believe themselves to be victims of harassment could then initiate complaints in person, by text, email, or other means to the ombudsperson. Complaints could also be made to any OHA Council member or to either of the co-executive directors. Such initial contacts would then be referred to the ombudsperson who would then initiate the investigation process. Complainant would be informed of two options: initiate an informal resolution and/or launch a formal investigation. The informal resolution process would be employed if the complainant desires a confidential and immediate intervention to stop the harassing behavior. A formal investigation would be employed if the complainant so desires. At the initiation of the complaint and any subsequent time, the complainant can request a formal investigation. An informal resolution in no way precludes a subsequent formal investigation.

The ombudsperson working with co-executive directors would have the unilateral power to intervene and remove an individual from any OHA function in cases where behavior is egregious, disruptive, or violent, and prevents the normal conduct of the Association's business.

If the complainant desires a formal investigation, such a process would be initiated by the submission of a confidential written request to the ombudsperson. At the initiation of the complaint, one or both of the co-executive directors would oversee an investigation in cooperation with the ombudsperson, soliciting written statements from the parties involved. If the complainant lodges an accusation against an individual on Council or the Executive Office staff, the ombudsperson would conduct the investigation with the assistance of two members of the Association in good standing identified by the president or president-elect. All materials would then be submitted to the executive committee comprised of the current president, immediate past president, and president elect for adjudication on the basis of the preponderance of evidence and, if warranted, appropriate sanction as indicated under the section "Scope of Policy." Confidentiality to the greatest extent possible would be maintained throughout the process.

A Commitment to Education

OHA will create an information page on its website, explaining this policy and offering educational materials about harassment and appropriate professional conduct. The policy will also be included in the conference program. This will be in place by the opening of registration for the annual meeting.

For example, OHA has been given permission to link to a training video created by a member of the American Sociological Association: “Bystander Intervention for Sexual Harassment: A Training for Scholarly Society Members.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DzOWaKs-xS4&t=4s>