

American Board of Forensic Anthropology Policy on Workplace Harassment: Sexual Harassment and Discrimination

As a business incorporated in the United States, the American Board of Forensic Anthropology, Inc. (hereafter, the ABFA) is bound by U.S. law to provide a safe environment for its members, one that is free from workplace harassment.

Workplace harassment is defined as unwelcome behavior within the workplace. It includes sexual harassment and discrimination.

Sexual harassment is specifically defined as unwanted behavior of a sexual nature. It may take the form of:

- unwanted verbal or written (e.g., letters, texts, emails, social media posts) comments, gestures, or jokes or any other suggestive comments of a sexual nature
- unwanted physical contact of a sexual nature
- sexual assault
- “quid pro quo”—the suggestion that any person’s promotion, employment, compensation, or treatment is in any way contingent upon or related to their participation in or rejection of conduct of a sexual nature
- creation of a hostile working environment when the unwanted behavior is repeated, severe, or pervasive.

Sexual harassment is a violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and is covered in the Codes of Federal Regulation: 29 C.F.R. Part 1604.11.

Discrimination is an action that denies individual’s rights and fair treatment based on their race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, military service, or any other social affiliation or protected class. Discriminatory actions taken by individuals can be considered harassment, as can those actions within institutions (constituting racism, sexism, ableism, classism, heterosexism, ageism, xenophobia, etc.).

Discrimination is a violation pursuant to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1972, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, and other applicable laws specific to the situation at hand.

The ABFA, as an organization comprised of Diplomates and overseen by the Board of Directors, does not tolerate harassment or discrimination against any member or individual on the basis of race, color, national origin, ethnicity, age, ability status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, veteran status, or under any other criteria. This policy applies to all members and in all situations, including forensic field work, private and public laboratories, university classrooms, office and other work environments, and professional meetings/conferences and holds every ABFA Diplomate accountable for their own actions.

Sexual harassment, intimidation, and discrimination may produce long-term negative effects on the individuals experiencing them. These include negative impacts on an individual's:

- feeling of safety, manifested, for example in fear or dread associated with coming into the workplace, going to conferences, or working at field sites,
- anxiety about a possible loss of networking opportunities, positive recommendation letters, entry into graduate programs, future employment, promotion, and salary increases
- belief in their abilities and competencies
- career trajectory and ability and desire to advance and network within the discipline.

Such feelings may result in individuals leaving the discipline to pursue other employment opportunities. They may also contribute to a hostile working environment and decreased workplace morale.

As relevant to this policy, the ABFA recommends and encourages the following practices:

- file a report with the ABFA Ethics Committee Chair if you experience or witness sexual harassment and/or discrimination by an ABFA Diplomat. Official reports filed with the Ethics Committee will be subject to a confidential investigative process as outlined in the ABFA Policy and Procedures Manual (Code of Ethics and Conduct--see the ABFA website at www.theabfa.org). Any member or other individual who has been harassed or discriminated against may inform the ABFA's President or Ethics Committee Chair without fear of retaliation;
- comply with the sexual harassment and discriminatory policies of your place of employment and adopt a policy should your employer not have one in place;
- take a leadership role, particularly if you are in a position of authority in your workplace, in promoting adherence to sexual harassment and discrimination policies, including clearly stating the consequences for violating these policies;
- promote a safe mentorship environment for students, staff, and all protected classes conducive to reporting and expressing issues pertaining to workplace harassment without fear of retaliation;

Additional Resources:

Clancy, Kathryn B. H., Robin G. Nelson, Julienne N. Rutherford, and Katie Hinde. 2014. Survey of Academic Field Experiences (SAFE): Trainees Report Harassment and Assault. PLOS|One, 16 July 2014 DOI:10.1371/journal.pone/0102172.

<http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0102172>

Ginsberg, Daniel. 2017. Sexual harassment: A stubborn fact of anthropologists' work life? 2016 Member Survey #5 Report. http://s3.amazonaws.com/rdcms-aaa/files/production/public/FileDownloads/pdfs/MemberSurvey2016_Report5.pdf

Passalacqua N. V., and Pilloud M. A. 2019. *Ethics and professionalism in forensic anthropology*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

<https://metooanthro.org/resources/>

<https://www.eeoc.gov/>