

Identifying when sexual harassment occurs

Sexual harassment is an unwelcome advance, request or conduct of a sexual nature, which makes a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated.

Sexual harassment can vary from distasteful comments to sexual predation.

Sexual harassment includes:

Unwelcome comments about looks, dress, hairstyles

Staring or leering

Stalking, following

Whistling and catcalling

Demeaning comments

Sexual objectification of people

Suggestive comments or jokes of a sexual nature, or about a person's sexual orientation or gender identity

Repeated or inappropriate invitations to go out on dates

Unwelcome touch gestures e.g. arm around, kiss hello

Touching or fiddling with a person's clothing

Forced intimacy e.g. touching, massaging, hugging, kissing

Requests or pressure for sex or other sexual acts

Sexually explicit emails, text messages or social media

Sexually explicit pictures or posters displayed around the office

Intrusive questions about a person's private life, body, sexual relationships or sexual practices

Uninvited, repeated personal contact via email or social media that makes suggestive or demeaning comments or makes inappropriate requests or suggestions of a sexual nature

Ongoing unwelcome contact (e.g. in person, phone, email, social media) following the end of a consensual relationship

Actual or attempted sexual assault or rape



These behaviours vary in seriousness and can occur in isolation or together. Normalising, tolerating and excusing disrespectful behaviour at the lower end of the continuum can lead to more serious issues.