

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

**STAFF MEMORANDUM**

**OD 17-07  
July 20, 2017**

**ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT**

**SUBJECT: Policy Statement on Equal Opportunity and the Prevention of Harassment**

Investing in science, engineering, and education for the Nation's future necessitates an environment that fosters equal opportunity for all. The National Science Foundation (NSF) recognizes that to fulfill its chief mission of funding science and engineering research proposals that enable scientists, engineers and students to work at the outermost frontiers of knowledge, the agency must be a role model for teamwork, fairness, and equity. NSF is committed to ensuring that all employees and applicants have an equal opportunity to compete in all aspects of Federal employment and program delivery.

NSF does not tolerate discrimination in employment, including workplace harassment, based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex (including gender identity, sexual orientation, and pregnancy), age, disability, or genetic information. In addition, NSF does not tolerate retaliation for opposing discriminatory practices or for participating in the discrimination-complaint process. This applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including recruitment, hiring, promotions, transfers, reassignments, training, career development, benefits, and separation. Reasonable accommodations will be provided to employees, applicants, and visitors with a qualified disability in accordance with applicable Federal laws. NSF is fully committed to complying with all civil rights statutes.

NSF employees must view our commitment to equal opportunity as a critical component of their daily activities. As your leaders, we will always partner with each of you to ensure NSF's mission is achieved in an environment that respects and values all aspects of equal opportunity. NSF's Office of Diversity and Inclusion is responsible for administering an impartial and effective management process to receive, investigate, and resolve, if possible, complaints of employment discrimination at the earliest possible stage.

Furthermore, NSF will not tolerate harassment in the workplace. Examples of such prohibited practices would include gossiping, slurs, offensive or derogatory comments, or other verbal or physical conduct. 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. Any employee who believes he or she has been subjected to harassing conduct can report the matter to his or her immediate supervisor (or second-line supervisor in the event the first-line supervisor is the alleged harasser), or the Anti-Harassment Coordinator, who is the Branch Chief of the Employee Relations Branch (ERB) in the Division of Human Resource Management (HRM). Supervisors or managers who observe or are notified of harassing conduct are required to immediately assess the situation and report to HRM.

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Allegations of harassment will be immediately investigated, and NSF will take the actions necessary to ensure that these investigations are carried out fairly and effectively. The confidentiality of employees bringing forth complaints will be protected to the extent possible. The outcome of the inquiry and findings shall determine if the conduct violated the Agency's policy and, if so, what type of action is warranted. Any employee, supervisor, or manager who is found to have violated NSF's anti-harassment policy or procedures may be subjected to appropriate disciplinary action.

Finally, employees alleging harassment or providing information related to such claims are protected by law from retaliation. Any complaint of retaliation should be reported to the Anti-Harassment Coordinator. As with harassment allegations, allegations of retaliation will be immediately investigated, and NSF will take actions necessary to ensure that these investigations are carried out swiftly, fairly, and effectively. Where allegations are substantiated, appropriate corrective action will be taken.

For further information, please see the NSF Policy for Preventing and Addressing Workplace Violence in the NSF Personnel Manual (PER), Chapter 9, subchapter 500.

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Distribution: All employees  
Originating Unit: Office of Diversity and Inclusion  
Replaces: [OD 15-02](#) and [OD 15-03](#)