

Sexual Harassment Policy

Respect and community are two key values at Bentley. Bentley strives to maintain a supportive, civil workplace, one in which employees treat each other with respect and dignity. In keeping with its values, Bentley prohibits and does not tolerate sexual harassment against or by anyone in our community - faculty, staff, students, or anyone else who is working on campus or visiting. Sexual harassment is prohibited on campus and at any Bentley-sponsored event whether on- or off-campus. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination that is unlawful under federal and state law. If Bentley determines that this policy has been violated, the person found to have violated this policy may be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Bentley University is committed to principles of free speech and upholding the principles of academic freedom. This policy is not intended to restrict reaching methods or freedom of expression, nor will it be permitted to do so. Harassment or discrimination prohibited by this policy is not a proper exercise of academic freedom.

What is sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment is offensive or unwelcome conduct based on someone's sex, gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity and/or expression. It includes offensive or unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Offensive and unwelcome behaviors may constitute sexual harassment *regardless of the intention of the person engaging in the conduct.*

While it is not possible to list all behaviors that may constitute sexual harassment, the following are some examples of conduct that may constitute sexual harassment:

- Unwanted, persistent requests for dates or for a sexual or personal relationship
- Requests for sexual favors in exchange for actual or promised job or academic benefits such as favorable reviews, salary increases, promotions, benefits or continued employment
- Sexual jokes
- Use of sexual epithets, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's own or another's sex life, comments on an individual's body, sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess
- Displaying or sharing sexual objects, pictures or cartoons
- Leering, brushing against the body, sexual gestures, suggestive or insulting comments
- Inquiries into one's sexual activities

- Assault or coerced sexual acts

If Bentley becomes aware that a violation of this Sexual Harassment Policy may have occurred, it reserves the right to investigate even if the conduct is not reported.

Sexual Harassment Training. Bentley requires all employees to complete an online sexual harassment training program at the time of hire and periodically thereafter so that we share a common understanding about what sexual harassment is and how to respond to sexual harassment.

What to do if sexual harassment occurs to you. If you believe that you have been subjected to sexual harassment, let someone know! If someone at Bentley in a position to help is not aware of the problem, we can't make sure the behavior stops and does not recur. There are several ways sexual harassment can be addressed –

- **Talk to someone, such as** your supervisor, division head, HR Business Partner or the University Ombudsman. These individuals can provide guidance and coaching on how to approach the person engaging in the unwanted behavior, or they can counsel you on how to proceed in other ways. These people may have additional information and may be a source of support.
- **Talk to the person engaging in the behavior**, *only* if you are comfortable doing so. Explain that their behavior makes you uncomfortable or is offensive and that you want it to stop. In some cases, the person is not aware that their behavior is inappropriate or causing offense. However, not everyone is comfortable having such conversations, so don't worry if you would prefer not to go this route.
- **File a report** of sexual harassment by following the procedure set forth in [How to Report Sexual Harassment or Workplace Discrimination, Harassment or Bullying](#). By filing a report, you can either request informal assistance or a formal investigation, as explained in that document.
- **File an external complaint.** While employees are encouraged to report and resolve sexual harassment complaints internally, employees may file a formal complaint with either or both of the government agencies listed below within their mandated timeframes.

Mass. Commission Against Discrimination
One Ashburton Place, Room 601
Boston, MA 02108
617-994-6000
TTY: 617-994-6196

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
John F. Kennedy Federal Building
475 Government Center
Boston, MA 02203
1-800-669-4000
TTY: 1-800-669-6820

See something, say something - don't be a bystander! If you believe that another employee has been subjected to conduct that violates this policy, report the conduct immediately to your supervisor or division head, your HR Business Partner, or the University Ombudsman. If employees do not report sexual harassment, Bentley may not become aware that such conduct exists and can't take steps to ensure that the behavior stops.

What will happen if someone is found to have engaged in sexual harassment?

At times, employees are reluctant to report sexual harassment because they think that “nothing will be done” or they “don't want anyone to lose their job.” Bentley takes sexual harassment seriously. If a report of sexual harassment is brought to the attention of Human Resources or the ombudsman, we will work with you to determine how to proceed. The goal is to be sure that the harassment stops and does not recur.

Any time an employee may be subject to discipline, the consequence should be proportionate to the offense. Counseling may be appropriate in some cases, while termination may be appropriate in other cases. If an employee is determined to have violated the Sexual Harassment Policy, Bentley will consider factors such as the nature and severity of the offense, whether there is a history of prior offenses, and what consequence will be effective in making sure the behavior stops and does not recur.

Protection from Retaliation. No retaliation will be taken against anyone who reports sexual harassment, files internal or external harassment complaints, opposes harassing practices, or participates in the investigation of such complaints.

Duty of Good Faith. While employees are encouraged to raise issues regarding sexual harassment, employees may not knowingly or recklessly make a false complaint of sexual harassment. Any such action may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Last Revised: August 2021