



Board Policy 1B.1 Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination in Employment and Education

Part 1. Policy Statement

Subpart A. Equal opportunity for students and employees

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities has an enduring commitment to enhancing Minnesota's quality of life by developing and fostering understanding and appreciation of a free and diverse society and providing equal opportunity for all its students and employees. Minnesota State is committed to a policy of equal opportunity and nondiscrimination in employment and education.

Subpart B. Nondiscrimination

Minnesota State prohibits discrimination and harassment against persons in the terms and conditions of employment, personnel practices, or access to and participation in educational programs, services, and activities on the basis of membership or perceived membership in any of the following protected classes: race, sex (including pregnancy, child birth, and related medical conditions), color, creed, religion, age, national origin, disability, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, familial status, and membership or activity in a local human rights commission. Protected class also includes genetic information for employees.

Minnesota State shall maintain and encourage full freedom of expression, inquiry, teaching and research. Academic freedom comes with a responsibility that all members of our education community benefit without intimidation, exploitation, or coercion. This policy is directed at conduct that constitutes discrimination or harassment under this policy and is not directed at the content of speech. In cases in which statements and other forms of expression are involved, Minnesota State must consider an individual's constitutionally protected right to free speech and academic freedom. However, discriminatory or harassing conduct is not within the protections of academic freedom or free speech.

Part 2. Applicability

This policy applies to all individuals affiliated with Minnesota State, including but not limited to, its students, employees, applicants, volunteers, agents, the Board of Trustees, and others as appropriate and protects the rights and privacy of all involved individuals, as well as prevents retaliation. Complaints of conduct by a student occurring at a location other than on system

property, including online, are covered by this policy pursuant to the factors listed in Board Policy 3.6, Part 2. Complaints of conduct by a system employee at locations other than system property, including online, are covered by this policy. Complaints of conduct on system property, including online, by individuals who are not students or employees are subject to appropriate actions by Minnesota State, including but not limited to, pursuing civil action against them, referral to law enforcement, or pursuing a no trespass. Individuals who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary or other corrective action. Allegations of conduct in violation of Policy 1B.1 may be submitted through the process identified in System Procedure 1B.1.1 Intervention and Resolution.

This policy supersedes all existing college, university, and Minnesota State equal opportunity and nondiscrimination policies.

Part 3. Definitions

Discrimination

Employment decisions, educational decisions, or treatment of an individual because of protected class status or perceived protected class status that subjects the individual to different treatment so as to interfere with or limit the ability of the individual to participate in, or benefit from, the services, activities, or privileges provided by Minnesota State or otherwise adversely affects the individual's employment or education.

Employee

Any individual employed by Minnesota State, including its colleges, universities, and system office, including student workers.

Harassment

Discriminatory harassment

Unwelcome conduct or communication that is based on actual or perceived membership in a protected class, including stereotypes of protected classes, that has a negative effect or is likely to have a negative effect on the complainant or the workplace or educational environment. Harassment may occur in a variety of relationships, including faculty and student, supervisor and employee, student and student, staff and student, employee and employee, and other relationships with persons having business at, or visiting the educational or working environment. Discriminatory harassment includes, but is not limited to:

1. Oral or written conduct such as jokes, innuendo, slurs, name-calling, negative comments about cultural norms, circulating rumors;
2. Physical contact, battery, blocking movement;
3. Non-verbal derogatory gestures, stalking, interference with work performance;

4. Visual displays, including but not limited to, posters, drawings, screen savers, emails and texts with derogatory meaning, epithets written on complainant's personal property or other symbols associated with particular protected classes.

Sexual harassment

Minnesota State further defines sexual harassment as a form of sex discrimination and discriminatory harassment. Sexual harassment is conduct or communication of a sexual nature that is unwelcome, that has a negative effect or is likely to have a negative effect on the complainant or the workplace or educational environment. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to:

1. Unwelcome sexual innuendoes, suggestive comments, jokes of a sexual nature, sexual propositions, degrading sexual remarks, threats;
2. Unwelcome sexually suggestive objects or pictures, graphic commentaries, suggestive or insulting sounds, leering, whistling, obscene gestures;
3. Unwelcome physical contact, such as sexual assault and sexual violence (as defined in Board Policy 1B.3), molestation, or attempts to commit these assaults; unwelcome touching, pinching, or brushing of or by the body;
4. Preferential treatment or promises of preferential treatment for submitting to sexual conduct, including soliciting or attempting to solicit an employee, student or other individual to submit to sexual activity for a benefit including, but not limited to, hiring, promotion, compensation, grades, or authorship;
5. Negative treatment or threats of negative treatment for refusing to submit to sexual conduct;
6. Subjecting, or threatening to subject, an employee, student or other individual to unwelcome sexual attention or conduct; and
7. Conduct which exploits the sexual characteristics of others including transmitting or the threat of transmission of photographs and or videos of graphic nudity or sexually graphic messages of others without the consent of the subject of the photograph, video, or message.

Note: Some of these examples of misconduct may also be subject to Board Policy 1B.3 Sexual Violence Policy.

Protected class

Protected class includes race, sex (including pregnancy, child birth, and related medical conditions), color, creed, religion, age, national origin, disability, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, familial status, and membership or activity in a local human rights commission. Protected class also includes genetic information for employees.

Retaliation

Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, engaging in any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment against an individual because the person:

1. made a complaint or other communication under this policy or opposes conduct prohibited by this policy;
2. assisted or participated in any manner in an investigation, or process under this policy, regardless of whether a claim of discrimination or harassment is substantiated;
3. associated with a person or group of persons who are members of a protected class; or
4. made a complaint or assisted or participated in any manner in an investigation or process with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, the Minnesota Department of Human Rights or other enforcement agencies, under any federal or state nondiscrimination law, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Minnesota Human Rights Act, Minn. Stat. Ch. 363A, and their amendments.

Retaliation may occur whether or not there is a power or authority differential between the individuals involved.

Sexual harassment and violence as sexual abuse

Minnesota law provides special protection for children under 18 and vulnerable adults. These laws, Minnesota Statutes sections 260E and 626.557, identify those who are mandated to report neglect or abuse of children under 18 and maltreatment of vulnerable adults. Faculty, student teachers or clinical participants, day care personnel, and others involved in education or services to children or vulnerable adults may be considered mandated reporters under both of these laws. Reports of abuse or neglect of a child or vulnerable adult, must be made to law enforcement or state or county social service agencies.

Student

For purposes of this policy, the term “student” includes all persons who:

1. Are enrolled in one or more courses, either credit or non-credit, through a college or university;
2. Withdraw, transfer or graduate, after an alleged violation of the student conduct code;
3. Are not officially enrolled for a particular term but who have a continuing relationship with the college or university;
4. Have been notified of their acceptance for admission or have initiated the process of application for admission or financial aid; or
5. Are living in a college or university residence hall although not enrolled in, or employed by, the college or university.

Part 4. Consensual Relationships

A consensual relationship is a sexual or romantic relationship between two or more persons who voluntarily enter into such a relationship. An employee of Minnesota State shall not enter into a consensual relationship with a student or an employee over whom the person exercises

direct or otherwise significant academic, administrative, supervisory, evaluative, counseling, or extracurricular authority or influence. In the event a relationship already exists, each college, university, and the system office shall develop a procedure to reassign evaluative authority as may be possible to avoid violations of this policy. This prohibition does not limit the right of an employee to make a recommendation on personnel matters concerning a family or household member where the right to make recommendations on such personnel matters is explicitly provided for in the applicable collective bargaining agreement or compensation plan.

Part 5. Retaliation

Retaliation is prohibited at Minnesota State. Any individual covered by this policy who engages in retaliation is subject to disciplinary or other corrective action as appropriate.

Part 6. Policies and procedures

College and university policies and procedures on equal opportunity and nondiscrimination in employment and education must comply with Board Policy 1B.1 and System Procedure 1B.1.1.

Date of Adoption: 09/20/94
Date of Implementation: 09/20/94
Date of Last Review: 06/22/22

Date and Subject of Amendments:

06/22/22 – Was reviewed as part of the 5 year review process, the amendment updates and expands the policy language in Part 1, Subp. B Nondiscrimination. The language in Part 2 Applicability was broadened to include activities at non-system locations and online. The definitions of harassment and sexual harassment were updated and examples were provided for both. The definition of “protected class” was clarified to include pregnancy, child birth, and related medical conditions, and also expanded to include veteran status and the genetic information of employees. Technical edits made throughout document from the application of the new writing and formatting standards.

1/29/15 - Amended to include familial status as a protected class protected from discrimination in employment.

Additional HISTORY.