Consultation FAQs

Seeking consultation for the first time feels uncomfortable for many people. Here are some frequently asked questions and answers related to harassment that may help ease any feelings of anxiety.

Q1 I’m not sure which person in the harassment officer list I should talk to.
A Except for the names marked with *, you can talk to any harassment officer, regardless of which faculty you are attached to. (The harassment officers whose names are marked with * are specialists who provide professional advice within the field of their expertise and are brought in for consultation on referral.) Please call or e-mail any harassment officer you think you will feel comfortable with.

Q2 Is there any chance that my confidentiality will be breached if I seek consultation?
A Harassment officers have a strict obligation to protect confidential information. Everything you say will be kept in the strictest confidentiality so you have no need to worry. In order to solve the problem, the harassment officers may explain the situation to relevant parties at a minimum level required with your consent. Even in such a case, confidentiality will be strictly observed.

Q3 I’m not sure if my experience constitutes harassment or not. Can I still seek advice?
A Please seek advice if you are troubled, even if you are not sure if what happened to you would be considered harassment. Your harassment officer will work with you to improve your situation.

Q4 What are the steps involved in seeking consultation or advice from a harassment officer?
A First, the harassment officer will meet with you in person to hear your story. If any action is to be taken, the harassment officer will confirm each proposed step with you beforehand so that the process remains under your control.

Q5 What specific actions can be taken?
A Actions taken depend upon your specific situation and desire. Examples of actions that may be taken include providing you with advice so that you can solve the problem yourself, taking steps to improve your study environment or research conditions in accordance with the situation, and providing instructions or warnings to the perpetrator or taking disciplinary action against him or her. Although in some cases it may not be possible to completely satisfy your wishes, your harassment officer will work with you to determine the best approach.

Q6 I’m worried that if I seek advice, the perpetrator may enact revenge.
A As necessary, your harassment officer may interview other relevant parties, including the perpetrator, with your consent. In such cases, your harassment officer will fully explain the “prohibition against retaliation” to the interviewees. Notwithstanding this explanation, if any retaliatory action is taken, such conduct will itself become a further issue and the harassment officer will take action accordingly.

If you have any other questions related to harassment consultation, please contact the Kanazawa University General Consultation Office (consult@adm.kanazawa-u.ac.jp 076-264-6154, 6160) or our harassment officers for harassment-related advice or questions about this guide.
What is academic harassment?

~Here are some examples~

1. Emotional damage resulting from verbal abuse, slander, and ridicule
   I became very upset when subjected to verbal abuse, slander, and ridicule in class and while seeking advice on my research.

2. Unfair evaluation
   For no justifiable reason that I could see, I was told that I would not be earning credits and would not be able to graduate or continue my studies at a higher level.

3. Unfair treatment of work
   I was not included as a primary author of a submitted paper even though I did all the work, from selecting the research team and creating the research plan to conducting the research and experiments and calculations. My academic adviser only provided advice. I was excluded from co-authorship even though I made substantial contributions to the work.

4. Forced to help
   My academic adviser forced me to assist him/her with his/her research but did not give me any credit for my academic or research achievements.

5. Being forced into a line of research
   I was not included as a primary author of a submitted paper even though I did all the work, from selecting the research team and creating the research plan to conducting the research and experiments and calculations. My academic adviser only provided advice. I was excluded from co-authorship even though I made substantial contributions to the work.

6. Being compelled to conduct experiments and research late at night and on the weekends
   Without being provided with any kind of rationale, I was forced to conduct experiments and research late at night and on weekends for a long time.

7. Unfair treatment for seeking guidance from other people
   I was treated unfairly by my academic adviser because I sought advice and guidance from other faculty members.

8. Prohibited from job hunting
   I was unreasonably prohibited from seeking employment opportunities.

9. Interference with job offers and higher education
   A preliminary job offer made to me was cancelled and my entry into graduate school was obstructed when both my potential employer and the graduate school wanted to go to a different school.

10. Interference with research and experiments
     Experimental equipment and reagents I used for my graduation research were discarded without my consent. I was prohibited to use computer and other equipment, library facilities, and reference materials for no reason.

Abusive words were spoken about my employer repeatedly in my presence, which made me extremely upset. (Female undergraduate)

I feel disgusted to hear the academic adviser constantly telling students, “You can’t learn,” “You are trash,” and “just quit university.” Without providing any instructions, he says, “If your experiment fails again, you have to pay for it.” (Female graduate)

Immediately after my enrollment, the academic adviser told me, “I’m not going to give you a degree.” (Female doctoral candidate)

Students with lower test scores than mine were passed for the reason that their post graduation pathway was fixed, whereas I was failed because my post graduation situation was not fixed. (Male undergraduate)

I assisted with research and supported my academic adviser because I was told that having a broad range of experiences under my belt would open up my future prospects, but I could not decide on a research topic. As a result, I could not concentrate on one thing and had a hard time. (Female doctoral candidate)

Despite the fact that the academic adviser had a teaching assistant, he ordered me to make arrangements and prepare for his classes. Because of this, I could not concentrate on my studies. (Female doctoral candidate)

My academic adviser told me, “Do this,” without even asking me about my own interests or desire. He did not even show me the research objectives. (Male doctoral candidate)

I was forced to conduct experiments on weekends. I was told that the time spent attending the classes and practicals needed to earn credits were a waste, and I was not able to attend them. (Female doctoral candidate)

Whenever I conversed with other teachers, my academic adviser spoke ill of those teachers afterwards and got angry with me. So I began to feel scared to speak to other teachers. (Female doctoral candidate)

Neglecting of responsibilities by academic adviser

11. Insufficient guidance
     Not receiving sufficient guidance to conduct graduation research and write a thesis, and not receiving necessary study and research advice.

12. Refusing to provide necessary documents and recommendation letters
     The academic adviser did not provide documents and recommendation letters required for applying to graduate schools and jobs that he/she was supposed to prepare.

13. Sexual harassment
     Being subject to sexual violence or unpleasant behavior such as the use of obscene language, unnecessary touching including touching the shoulders and back, habitual staring, etc.

14. Withholding of essential information
     Being intentionally cut off from essential information such as scheduled events put on by the research unit.

15. Discrimination
     Treated in a discriminatory manner because of gender, place of birth, age, status, etc.

16. Poor research environment
     Prohibited from entering the office or not provided with a desk when usual practice is for everybody to have a desk. Or being the only one assigned to work in a poor research environment.

17. Invasion of privacy
     Being forced to attend personal activities or being subject to unnecessary meddling into personal matters.

18. Being forced to choose between work and family
     Being forced to make a choice between continuing research and quitting to concentrate on homemaking.

19. Alcohol-related harassment
     Even though I can’t hold alcohol, I was pressured to drink at parties and other occasions where alcohol consumption was a prominent feature.

20. Moral harassment
     I was subjected to extreme social harassment, such as being excluded and ignored.

Tyrannical behavior and verbal abuse

1. Verbal abuse
2. Unfair evaluation

Discrimination

Excessive meddling

Other harassment

My research plan was rejected a number of times. I felt lost. When I asked for help, my academic adviser said, “You need to think harder,” which made me even more confused. When I conducted research on my own, he said to me, “Do you really have time for that?” (Male graduate)

When asked for advice on an experiment and for signatures on necessary documents, my academic adviser said, “I’m busy” or “it’s not my business,” and refused to help me. (Female doctoral candidate)

I went to the office to ask questions, but the academic adviser told me he was busy and told apologizing. Some days later, the academic adviser scolded me, saying, “That was selfish of you to come to the office without an appointment,” and “you won’t be able to get a job if you keep behaving like that.” But when his favorite student went to the office without an appointment, he responded with a smile. (Female doctoral candidate)

Regarding my participation on trips and at academic conventions, I was told, “You are not making progress with your research,” and “Remember that you are a graduate student. You should voluntarily refrain from such activities.” (Female doctoral candidate)

I was very frequently asked to do favors regarding personal matters. (Male doctoral candidate)