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# u:respect

Campaign for the prevention of gender-based violence and sexual harassment

PhD Orientation Week, 30 September 2025

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# Facts and figures about gender-based violence and sexual harassment

- **62% have experienced** at least one form of **gender-based violence** at universities
- The most prevalent forms: **psychological violence (57%)**, **sexual harassment (31%)**
- **Disproportionately affected:** non-binary people, women, people with a disability or chronic illness, people belonging to an ethnic minority group and people identifying as LGBTQ+
- **7% of students** and **23% of employees** have **reported** gender-based violence
- **Consequences for people affected:** Dissatisfaction with job/studies, less productivity, isolation from colleagues, considering changing or leaving team/supervisor/faculty/university

Survey by [UniSAFE](#) (2022)

# Objectives of u:respect

## Culture of mutual respect through...

- Awareness what constitutes (sexual) harassment
  - For those affected
  - For bystanders
- Visibility of support options
  - Confidential advice
  - Formal complaints
- Building trust that the University of Vienna/my colleagues take (sexual) harassment seriously
  - Transparency and information
  - Strengthening bystanders to support those affected

### Key target groups

- People affected
- Witnesses (e.g. study or work colleagues)
- Teaching staff
- Executives (duty of care and duty to respond!)



# We are all responsible

All university members are jointly responsible for making the University of Vienna a safe place for everyone who works or studies at and visits the university.

Sexual harassment concerns us all.

# A closer look at sexual harassment

## Harassment is...

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- an abuse of power
- a form of discrimination according to the Federal Equal Treatment Act (B-GlBG)
- a spectrum that can range from seemingly harmless to serious forms
  - verbal
  - nonverbal
  - physical
- a criminal offence in severe cases

## What does NOT constitute harassment?

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- an amicable, familiar work environment or an informal atmosphere that is considered acceptable and appropriate by everyone involved
- consensual flirting or romantic relationships (this also applies to relationships between superiors and subordinates, provided that conflicts of interest are avoided, and biases are disclosed)
- a conflict, provided it remains negotiable

# Sexual harassment under the Federal Equal Treatment Act (B-GIBG § 8)

When a certain behaviour...

- is of a **sexual nature**

*This can be verbal (e.g. inappropriate jokes, belittling, remarks, questions, invitations), non-verbal (e.g. gestures, looks, pictures) or physical (e.g. closeness, touching)*

- **affects a person's dignity** (or intends to so)

*Behaviour is objectively disrespectful due to a certain degree of intensity, especially in hierarchies*

- is **unwanted** or considered inappropriate or offensive **by the person affected**

*Behaviour is subjectively experienced as inappropriate, the perception of boundaries is individual*

- **affects the working/learning environment** (or intends to so)

*It has negative consequences for those affected (e.g. avoidance of people or places, stress/strain symptoms)*

# Legal aspects (B-GlBG): Good to know

- The behaviour does **not** refer to the **sexual sphere**, but to **gender**?

*Gender harassment (§ 8a) includes, for example*

- *degrading remarks or assignments of tasks that are based on gender stereotypes/roles*
- *unwanted questions or remarks about relationships, familial status and family*
- *offensive comments, jokes, images or similar about women, trans\*, inter\* or non-binary people, men*
- *repeated misgendering, invasive questions (e.g. about body, name, gender) or forced outing of trans\*, inter\* or non-binary people*

- Harassment due to **other/multiple characteristics**?

*Ethnicity, religion or belief, age, sexual orientation and disability are also protected from harassment or discrimination. Multiple discrimination must be taken into account in the claims for damages.*



# Counselling and complaint options

## Counselling and advice

- Strictly confidential
- Can inform, support and lighten the load
- Clarifies your needs as well as potential solutions and courses of action
- No action without your consent
- Seek advice as soon as possible (to prevent a potential further escalation) and as often as is helpful

[Support services for students](#)

[Support services for staff](#)

## Formal complaints

- Reporting of misconduct
- Those affected and witnesses must not suffer any disadvantages as a result of making a complaint
- The University of Vienna is obligated to respond (duty of care)
- Clarification/statement of facts
- In the event of proven violations, disciplinary action under student regulations or the service code (depending on severity)

→ There are different procedures and sanctions for students and employees:

[Making a complaint about staff](#)

[Making a complaint about a student](#)





# Prevention

The first step in prevention is to assume that (sexual) harassment can also occur in your environment.

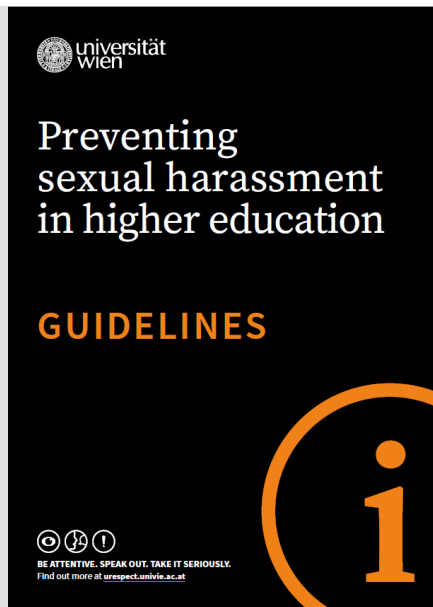
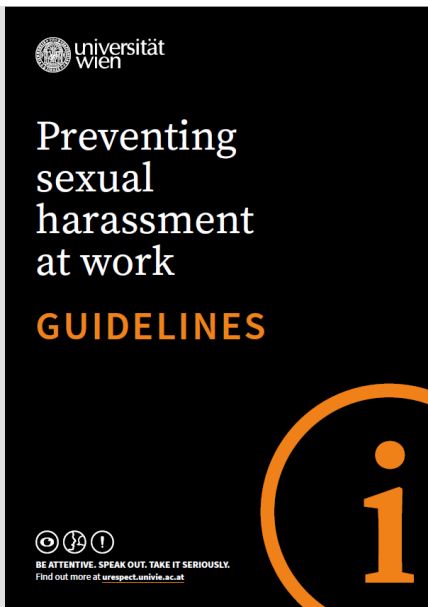
Address the issue of respectful behaviour and harassment.

Signal that you take those affected seriously and that harassing behaviour has consequences.

Provide informational material.



# Guidelines for work and study contexts



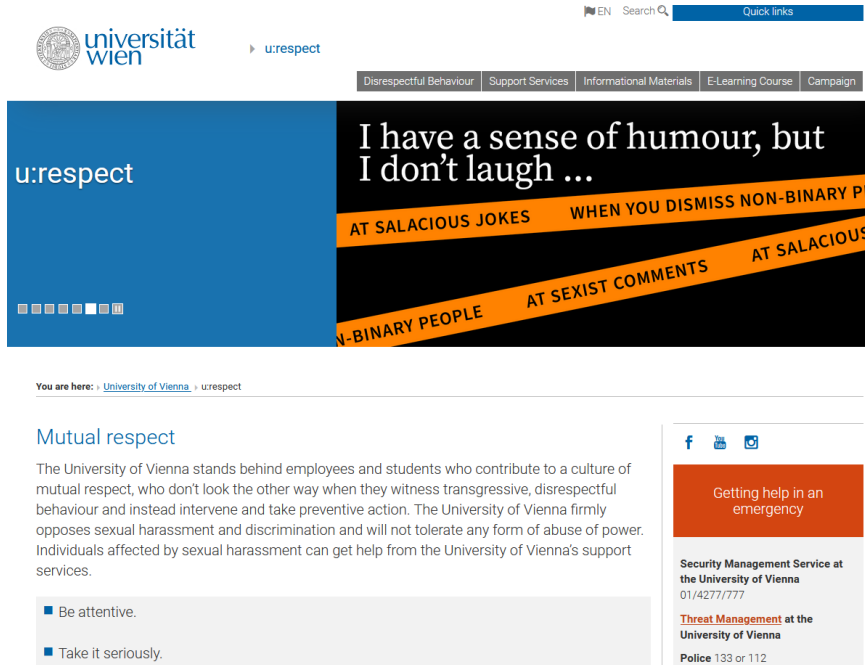
- A closer look at sexual harassment
- Legal aspects
- Differentiation between confidential advice and formal complaints
- Counselling and complaint: options and procedures
- Sanctioning of sexual harassment

# Checklists



- Quick, simple and clear instructions for incidents
- For 4 key target groups:
  - [People affected](#)
  - [Witnesses](#)
  - [Executives](#)
  - [Teaching staff](#)

# Website [urespect.univie.ac.at](https://urespect.univie.ac.at)



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EN Search Quick links

u:respect

Disrespectful Behaviour Support Services Informational Materials E-Learning Course Campaign

I have a sense of humour, but I don't laugh ...

AT SALACIOUS JOKES WHEN YOU DISMISS NON-BINARY PEOPLE AT SEXIST COMMENTS AT SALACIOUS

You are here: [University of Vienna](#) > u:respect

### Mutual respect

The University of Vienna stands behind employees and students who contribute to a culture of mutual respect, who don't look the other way when they witness transgressive, disrespectful behaviour and instead intervene and take preventive action. The University of Vienna firmly opposes sexual harassment and discrimination and will not tolerate any form of abuse of power. Individuals affected by sexual harassment can get help from the University of Vienna's support services.

- Be attentive.
- Take it seriously.

Getting help in an emergency

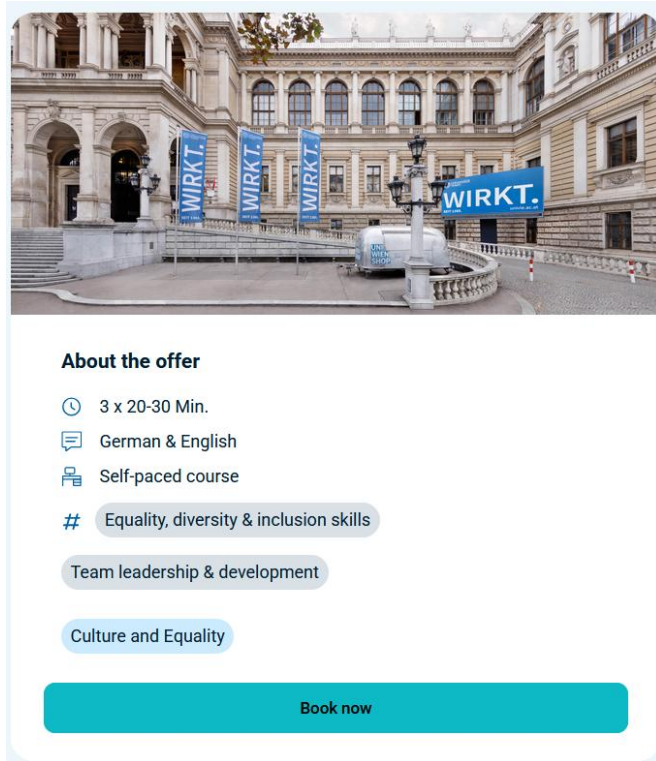
Security Management Service at the University of Vienna  
01/4277/777

Threat Management at the University of Vienna

Police 133 or 112

- For those affected and anyone who wants to get information
- Quick overview of support services, counselling and complaints
- Informational material for those affected, witnesses, executives and teaching staff
- E-learning course
- Definitions of disrespectful behaviour

# E-learning course in u:rise



**About the offer**

🕒 3 x 20-30 Min.

🗨 German & English

📖 Self-paced course

# Equality, diversity & inclusion skills

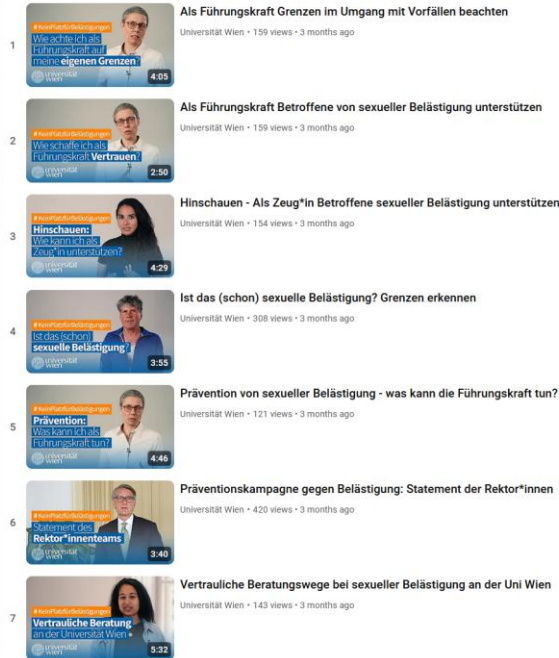
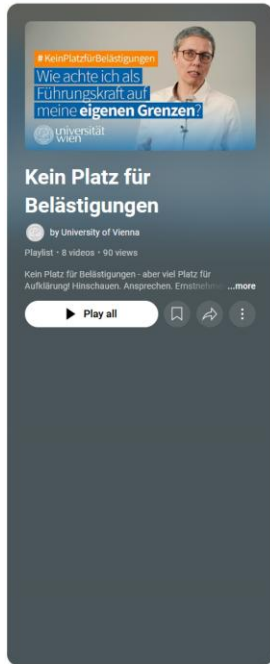
Team leadership & development

Culture and Equality

**Book now**

- Aimed at all employees and students, particular focus on available interventions and executives' obligations
- Three course sections with definitions, legal information, explanatory videos, quizzes and more:
  - Learn & Recognize
  - Understand & prevent
  - Intervene
- Final test
- Confirmation of participation

# (Explanatory) video series

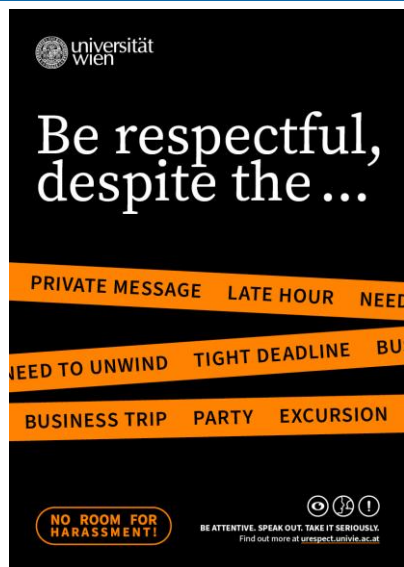


- What does the Rectorate team say about sexual harassment?
- What confidential support services are there?
- Does that (already) count as sexual harassment?
- How can I support as a witness?
- What can I do as an executive to prevent this?
- How do I handle incidents as an executive?

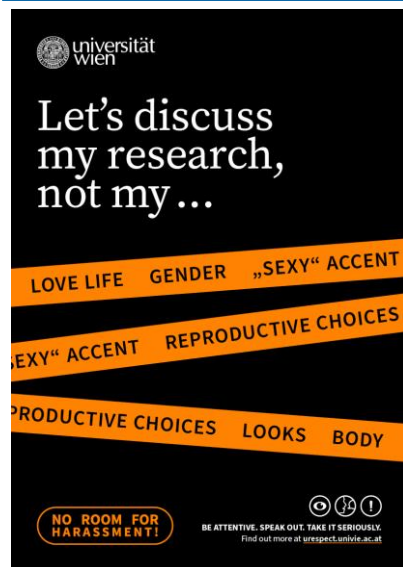
[YouTube playlist](#) (videos in German, English subtitles available)

# Campaign posters

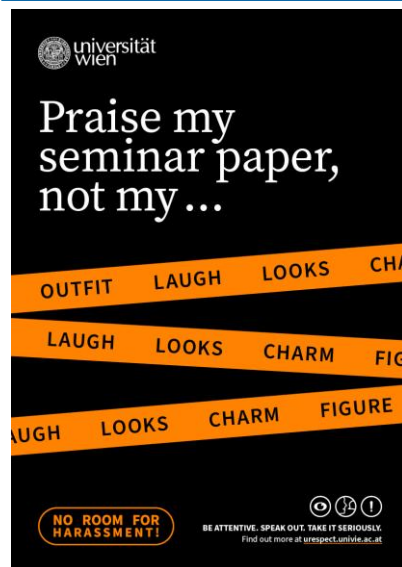
## University context



## Research context



## Study context



## Claim & call for action

- No room for harassment!
- Be attentive.
- Speak out.
- Take it seriously.

[Download posters and banners](#)

[Order posters and stickers](#)





Your support matters!

# Spread u:respect in the following channels, for example:

- Refer to guidelines, checklists and contact points in onboarding information channels (e.g. intranet, welcome events)
- In (introductory) lectures: info slide, link in Moodle courses, etc.
- Ask employees (especially those with personnel responsibility) to take part in the e-learning course, request a confirmation of participation
- Link to u:respect website
- Newsletter on the topic
- Post on Social Media
- Put up posters/use u:screens
- Organise a lecture, workshop, discussion
- ...

Thank you!

# Do you have questions or feedback about u:respect?

Questions, comments, suggestions, requests,  
etc.?

Contact our unit or us the [feedback form](#) (also  
possible anonymously)!

[equality@univie.ac.at](mailto:equality@univie.ac.at)

<https://gleichstellung.univie.ac.at>





# Thank you for your attention.

Nina Krebs, BA MA

Culture and Equality unit

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[equality@univie.ac.at](mailto:equality@univie.ac.at)



# Appendix

Legal aspects (Federal Equal Treatment Act )

Counselling and complaint options

# Legal aspects (B-GIBG): Good to know

- What about **unintentional harassment**?

*According to the law, sexual harassment is irrespective of fault, which means that whether the harassing person claims their conduct was unintentional is beside the point. The question is whether the person affected experienced the behaviour as inappropriate.*

- What if those affected don't **defend themselves**?

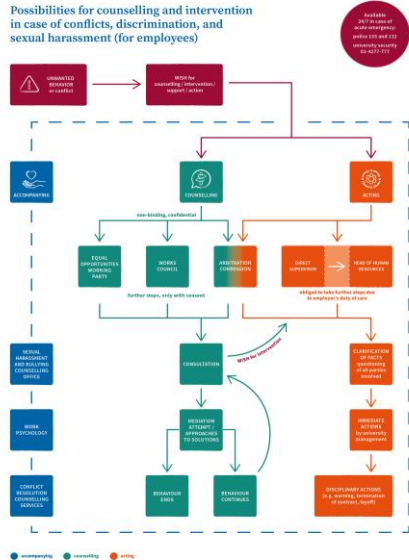
*Signalling a boundary or defending yourself is often very difficult. It is not a prerequisite for claims for damages.*

- What about **proof**?

*The harassment must only be made credible by describing the incident coherently and without contradictions. If it is plausible, the harasser has to disprove the facts presented by the person affected.*

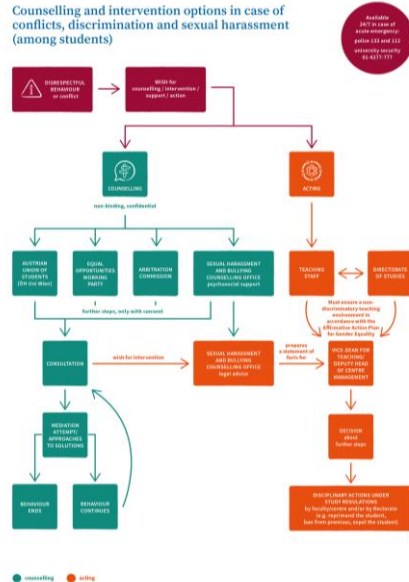
# Counselling and complaint options: overview of support services

Possibilities for counselling and intervention in case of conflicts, discrimination, and sexual harassment (for employees)



*Members of staff*

Counselling and intervention options in case of conflicts, discrimination and sexual harassment (among students)



*Students*

- For orientation and, if necessary, advice in the event of an incident
- Those affected decide for themselves which support service(s) they would like to contact
- Should the selected service be unable to provide appropriate support for your needs, they will advise you which service(s) should be able to help