

State Bar of Wisconsin
Position Statement Against Sexual Harassment

Respect for the dignity and worth of each individual is a fundamental tenet of our democracy, our justice system, and a decent civil society. Every individual has the right to work in an environment that is free from discriminatory practices. Sexual harassment is unlawful, reprehensible, and a matter of particular concern to the legal community which is charged with upholding justice and equality.

The State Bar of Wisconsin does not tolerate sexual harassment as an employer nor as a professional association. It is the legal and moral responsibility of the State Bar and its members to adhere to the laws and Rules of Professional Conduct prohibiting sexual harassment, and to foster a professional environment and legal system that does not tolerate nor enables harassment.

The term *sexual harassment* includes, but is not limited to, any unwelcome sexual attention, innuendos, advances, requests of a sexual nature, and other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature, especially when repeated or when:

- (a) such conduct has the purpose or effect of demeaning or objectifying an individual;
- (b) such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's work performance; or
- (c) such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment;
- (d) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment; or
- (e) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for cooperation, employment, and/or favorable decisions affecting such individual.

The State Bar of Wisconsin is committed to eradicating sexual harassment in all of its forms and manifestations and encourages its members to make a similar commitment. Examples can include jokes or other verbiage that incorporates sexually explicit or offensive language; unwelcome/unsolicited comments about appearance; questioning an individual's competence for a particular job due to physical appearance or perceptions about gender roles; displaying pornography; and/or making sexually explicit gestures.

The State Bar of Wisconsin will not tolerate harassment that involves unwanted sexual attention including, inter alia, suggestive comments about a person's body or attractiveness; unsolicited and unreciprocated sexual advances; unwanted and unnecessary physical contact; the display in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; and unwelcome sexual advances by attorneys, clients or other visitors to the workplace, the extended workplace, employer-sponsored events, other professional events, or the courthouse and its environs.

Finally, the State Bar of Wisconsin opposes any form of sexual coercion, including, inter alia, threatening adverse employment actions if requests of a sexual nature are not granted, promising preferential treatment in return for complying with a sexually-related request, and any action requiring sexual activity or other degrading or involuntary behaviors as a condition of employment or job rewards.