

# All you need to know about preventing and reporting abusive conduct

ITU has a zero-tolerance approach to abusive conduct. We all have an active role to play in creating an environment that is welcoming to all, where everyone feels safe and where all colleagues can perform at their best. We have a right to be safe at work. And it is our duty as ITU staff to know how to recognize abusive conduct, and how to prevent it and report it, by knowing where to go and what to do if we believe that we have experienced or witnessed any abusive behavior at ITU.

## What you should know

**Abusive conduct** is a generic term to collectively refer to harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of authority and discrimination. It may be a one-time incident or a series of incidents, and may occur in the workplace or in connection with work.

**Discrimination** is any unfair treatment or arbitrary distinction in the workplace, on the basis of a person's race, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, disability, age, language, social origin, or other similar shared characteristics of trait.

**Harassment** is any unwelcome conduct that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another person when such behavior interferes with work or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. Harassment may take the form of words, gestures, or actions that annoy, alarm, abuse, demean, intimidate, belittle, humiliate or embarrass another.

**Sexual Harassment** is any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or perceived to cause offence or humiliation, especially when such behavior interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. Sexual harassment may occur in the workplace or in connection with work.

**Abuse of authority** is the improper use of a position of influence, power or authority against another person, such as to improperly influence the career or employment conditions of another.

## What you can do

If you believe that you have experienced or witnessed abusive conduct, it is important to take action as soon as possible. Resolution through informal means can resolve issues promptly in an informal manner and prevent issues from escalating to formal reporting. However, when informal means are not appropriate or successful, a formal complaint can be filed with ITU Ethics Office, your supervisor, or the Secretary-General. Formal reporting requires submitting a formal complaint.

Anonymous complaints are accepted and should include as many details as possible. It is never too late to report misconduct. Individuals are encouraged to report as early as possible as that can contribute to ITU's ability to address the situation.

If you believe that you have experienced or observed possible misconduct or breach of ITU policies, you can contact the Ethics Office for independent and confidential advice that is available to everyone, inside or outside ITU.

ITU has a [Service Order \(22/03\)](#) on harassment, including sexual harassment, abuse of authority, and discrimination that specifies the responsibilities of staff, supervisors and the organization; identifies informal and formal resolution procedures; and highlights resources available to staff. For more information, please visit [intranet.itu.int](#).

## Examples of abusive conduct:

- **Discrimination:** Derogatory or offensive nicknames or jokes based on a person's gender, race, religion or belief, etc.
- **Harassment:** Making humiliating or offensive remarks to another person, orally or in writing.
- **Sexual harassment:** Attempted or actual sexual assault; sharing or displaying sexually inappropriate objects, images, or videos in any format; sending sexually suggestive communications in any form.
- **Abuse of authority:** Pressuring staff to break rules; use of intimidation or threats in the work environment.



## Informal resolution process

If you feel comfortable and safe in doing so, clarify with the alleged offender in person that you disapprove of their behavior.

If you do not feel comfortable or safe speaking to the alleged offender, approach your **supervisor** for support to address alleged incidents or to request information about the support and services available to you.

You may also speak to:

- **ITU Staff Counsellor** - For psycho-social support/ referrals. [staffcounsellor@itu.int](mailto:staffcounsellor@itu.int)
- **ITU Ethics Office** - For advice on the applicable policies, options available and resources for support. [EthicsOffice@itu.int](mailto:EthicsOffice@itu.int) or [HelplineITU@protonmail.com](mailto:HelplineITU@protonmail.com)
- **ITU Mediators** - For advice on resolution/ mediation/referral. [mediateurs@itu.int](mailto:mediateurs@itu.int)
- **ITU Medical Adviser** - For medical support. [medical@itu.int](mailto:medical@itu.int)
- **Security and Safety Division** - Immediate assistance for safety and physical security. [security@itu.int](mailto:security@itu.int)
- **Your supervisor** - to assist in resolving the problem and to take action to prevent recurrences.

If informal resolution is not sufficient, a formal process can be initiated, too.

## Formal resolution process

