



Operating Standard

Title: Respectful Workplace

Number: A4000.10

Type: Administrative

Responsible: CHRO; Executive Director, Human Resources

Related Policies: [B3001](#), [B3003](#), [B3004](#), [A1200](#), [A4000](#), [A4100](#), [A4200](#), [A4300](#), [A4400](#)

Linked Operating Standards: [A4100.65](#)

Related Laws: Title IV, Title VII, FLSA; [740 ILCS 174](#)

Related External Standards: [CUPA-HR](#), [SHRM](#)

HLC Criterion: 1C, 2A, 4A

1.0 Statement

Shawnee Community College expects all employees to conduct themselves with integrity, professionalism, and respect. The College is committed to maintaining a workplace free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, and to cultivating an environment that supports inclusion, accountability, and organizational effectiveness.

2.0 Purpose & Scope

2.1 Purpose: To define standards of professional conduct, establish expectations for a respectful and inclusive workplace, outline appearance standards, and provide procedures for reporting and addressing violations.

2.2 Scope: This standard applies to all Shawnee Community College employees in all work-related settings, including on campus, remote work environments, virtual meetings, travel, and College-related online or social media activity.

3.0 Definitions

- **Professional Conduct:** Behavior that reflects integrity, accountability, respect, and adherence to institutional expectations.
- **Harassment:** Harassment is any conduct, whether occurring on or off campus, that is so severe or pervasive that it substantially disrupts or materially interferes with an individual's ability to participate in or benefit from the College's programs, services, or opportunities. Harassment also includes conduct that has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or educational environment. Harassment may include, but is not limited to: Intimidation, unwelcome slurs, jokes, comments, and other verbal, graphic, or physical conduct.
- **Sexual Harassment:** Sexual Harassment is a form of harassment and includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:
 - Submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's employment or attendance; or
 - Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment or academic decisions affecting that individual.

Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to:

1. Unwanted sexual advances, propositions, or other sexual comments, such as: Sexually oriented gestures, noises, remarks, jokes, or comments about a person's sexuality or sexual experience directed at or made in the presence of any employee who indicates or has indicated in any way that such conduct in his or her presence is unwelcome.
 2. "Sexting" or electronically sending messages with sexual content, including images or videos, the use of sexually explicit language, harassment, cyberstalking, and threats via forms of electronic communication (including email/text/picture/video messages, online postings, blogs, and social network websites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter).
 3. Preferential treatment, or promise of preferential treatment, to an employee for submitting to sexual conduct, including soliciting or attempting to solicit any employee to engage in sexual activity for compensation or reward.
 4. Threats of or subjecting an employee to unwelcome sexual attention or conduct, or intentionally making an employee's performance more difficult because of that employee's sex.
 5. Sexual or discriminatory displays of publications in the workplace or classroom, such as: Displaying pictures, objects, calendars, graffiti, posters, promotional materials, reading materials, or other materials that are sexually suggestive, sexually demeaning, or pornographic.
- **Discrimination** : Discrimination includes treating an individual less favorably because of their membership in a protected class when such treatment substantially disrupts or interferes with the individual's access to employment or educational opportunities.

Discrimination also includes harassment as defined above, based on sex, race, color, age, national origin, disability, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by state or federal laws. This includes harassment based on stereotypes associated with a protected group or because of an individual's actual or perceived identification with a particular group.

Unlawful Discrimination includes, but is not limited to:

- Derogatory remarks, slurs, or actions motivated by an individual's race, color, religion, national origin, creed, ancestry, disability, age, sex, pregnancy, veteran's status, marital or family status, sexual orientation or gender identity, genetic information, or other status protected from discrimination.
 - Display or circulation of offensive printed or visual material (including through email or the Internet) of offensive physical actions motivated by an individual's race, color, religion, national origin, creed, ancestry, disability, age, sex, pregnancy, veteran status, marital or family status, sexual orientation or gender identity, genetic information, or other status protected from discrimination.
- **Retaliation**: Adverse action taken against an individual for reporting or participating in the investigation of misconduct in good faith.

Retaliation may include, but is not limited to:

- Disciplining, changing assignments of, providing inaccurate information to, or refusing to cooperate or discuss work-related matters with any employee because that person had complained about or resisted harassment, discrimination, or retaliation.
- Intentionally pressuring, falsely denying, lying about, covering up, or attempting to cover up the subject conduct.

4.0 Procedures

4.1 Reporting Concerns

- A. Employees should report suspected misconduct, harassment, discrimination, or retaliation to a supervisor, Human Resources, or through designated reporting channels.
- B. Reports should be made in good faith and without fear of retaliation.
- C. Reports may be submitted through the [College website](#), to a supervisor, a Vice President, or Human Resources.

4.2 Documentation

- A. Supervisors must document observed or reported concerns and forward documentation to Human Resources promptly.
- B. Human Resources will maintain records of reported concerns and related actions.

4.3 Complaint Intake & Review

- A. Human Resources will review any reported concern and determine appropriate next steps.
- B. Once notice of possible harassment or discrimination is received, Human Resources will promptly initiate a review and determine appropriate next steps, which may include informal resolution, formal investigation, or immediate [corrective action](#).
- C. The College may initiate a review or investigation regardless of whether a formal complaint is filed or a request for action is received.

4.4 Complaint Investigation Process

- A. Human Resources is responsible for coordinating and overseeing all investigations and will conduct or coordinate investigations in a timely and impartial manner to ensure consistent application of this standard.
- B. Relevant parties may be interviewed, and documentation may be reviewed as part of the investigation.
- C. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible.
- D. Determinations will be made based on a review of available information and the preponderance of evidence, as applicable.
- E. At the conclusion of the investigation, Human Resources will communicate outcomes to involved parties as appropriate.

4.5 Corrective Action

- A. When a violation is substantiated, Human Resources will advise supervisors on appropriate corrective action.
- B. [Corrective action](#) may include progressive discipline (e.g., verbal coaching, written warning, suspension, or termination), depending on the severity and context of the behavior.
- C. Employees will not be subject to retaliation for making a good-faith report or participating in an investigation.

4.6 Appeals

- A. Employees may dispute disciplinary actions through the College's established [grievance](#) or appeal processes.

5.0 Guidelines

5.1 Professional Conduct Expectations

- A. Employees are expected to conduct themselves with integrity, professionalism, and respect in all work-related interactions. This includes maintaining appropriate communication, behavior, and decision-making aligned with institutional values.

5.2 Respectful & Inclusive Workplace

- A. The College is committed to maintaining a workplace free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. All employees are expected to contribute to a respectful and inclusive environment.
- B. The College will take appropriate steps to address and resolve concerns related to workplace conduct, regardless of whether a formal complaint is filed.
- C. The College prohibits discrimination and harassment based on any characteristic protected by applicable federal or state law.

5.3 Reporting Expectations

- A. Employees who believe they have witnessed or experienced harassment or discrimination are encouraged to report the incident promptly to Human Resources or a supervisor.
- B. Employees who observe potential violations are expected to report concerns promptly and in good faith. Timely reporting supports the College's ability to respond effectively and take appropriate action.
- C. Supervisors are expected to take all reports seriously and consult Human Resources to ensure consistent handling.

5.4 Non-Retaliation and Whistleblower Protections

- A. Retaliation against any individual who reports concerns in good faith or participates in an investigation is prohibited.
- B. Reporting legitimate concerns through appropriate channels is protected and is not considered misconduct. This protection is consistent with the [Illinois Whistleblower Act](#).

5.5 Institutional Response Expectations

- A. The College will respond to all reports or indications of harassment or discrimination, regardless of whether a formal complaint is filed or a specific action is requested by the individual involved.
- B. The College is committed to addressing concerns promptly and taking appropriate steps to stop, prevent, and remedy prohibited conduct.
- C. The College will respond to all reported concerns in a manner that is fair, consistent, and aligned with applicable laws and institutional policies.
- D. *Corrective action* may be taken when warranted, up to and including termination of employment.
- E. Violations of this standard may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
- F. Employees are expected to report known violations in good faith. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

5.6 Confidentiality and Privacy

- A. The College will make reasonable efforts to protect the confidentiality of individuals involved in reports and investigations, consistent with the need to conduct a thorough review.
- B. The College will seek timely resolution and communicate outcomes as appropriate.

6.0 Roles & Responsibilities

- **Employees:** Model professional conduct, comply with this standard, and report concerns in good faith.
- **Supervisors:** Model expected behavior, address concerns promptly, document issues, and consult Human Resources to ensure consistent application.
- **Human Resources:** Provide guidance, ensure consistency and fairness, investigate concerns, support corrective action, and monitor workplace trends.

7.0 SCCES Connections

This Operating Standard supports the Employee Engagement Element within the SCCES framework, particularly the Workplace Climate, Contribution & Voice, and Employee Retention Key Performance Areas.

It establishes expectations for professional conduct, respectful interactions, and appropriate workplace behavior, which serve as foundational inputs and processes influencing workplace climate, employee trust, and organizational culture.

Through consistent application, this standard contributes to:

- A positive and respectful workplace environment (Workplace Climate)
- Clear expectations and accountability for employee behavior (Contribution & Voice)
- A stable and supportive work environment that encourages employee retention (Employee Retention)

The practices defined in this standard support both the prevention of workplace conflict and the consistent resolution of conduct-related concerns, reinforcing institutional integrity and employee engagement across the College. Additionally, these practices inform institutional monitoring of workplace climate, employee relations, and organizational culture.

8.0 Monitoring Report Connections

This Operating Standard supports the College's annual Human Resources Monitoring Report by generating evidence related to workplace conduct, employee relations, and organizational culture.

Evidence generated through this standard contributes to the evaluation of Board policies, including:

- B1012 - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.
- B3000 - General Executive Limitations.
- B3001 - Employee Relationships.
- B3004 - Employment, Compensation, and Benefits.

Evidence generated may include:

- Reported conduct violations.
- Harassment and discrimination complaints.
- Corrective action and disciplinary trends.
- Employee grievance activity.

- Participation in workplace training and compliance initiatives.

These indicators provide insight into workplace climate, accountability, equity, and adherence to institutional expectations. Collectively, they support Board policy evaluation of employee relations, organizational culture, and compliance with Executive Limitations.

The following alignment illustrates how operational practices defined in this standard contribute to key Monitoring Report measures:

Operational Area	Evidence Generated	Monitoring Alignment
Conduct Expectations	Reported conduct issues	Workplace Climate
Harassment & Discrimination	Complaint volume and resolution	Equity & Institutional Integrity
Corrective Action	Disciplinary trends	Accountability Culture
Reporting & Whistleblower Activity	Reporting frequency	Trust & Transparency
Professional Standards	Training and compliance	Organizational Culture

Collectively, these indicators provide insight into employee behavior, workplace conditions, and institutional culture, supporting continuous improvement and timely intervention.

9.0 Data Collection & Review

This Operating Standard supports ongoing evaluation of workplace conduct, employee relations, and organizational culture through structured data collection and review.

Data Collection: Human Resources will maintain and review data related to:

- Reported conduct violations
- Harassment and discrimination complaints
- Corrective action and disciplinary activity
- Employee grievance activity
- Participation in required training and compliance initiatives

Review and Analysis: Human Resources will evaluate compiled data for patterns, trends, and areas of concern, including recurring conduct issues, department-level patterns, and indicators of workplace climate. Findings will be used to inform training, policy refinement, and leadership guidance, and to support development of the annual Human Resources Monitoring Report.

Review Cycle: Data will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, with formal reviews conducted at least annually or as needed in response to emerging trends, legal requirements, or institutional priorities.

Coordination: Human Resources will coordinate with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, as appropriate, to support alignment with SCCES and Monitoring Report development.

10.0 Oversight & Review

This Operating Standard will be reviewed at least every three (3) years, or sooner as required by legal, regulatory, accreditation, or institutional needs.

Oversight of this standard is coordinated by Human Resources, with support from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to ensure alignment with SCCES and Monitoring Report development.

Revisions will follow the College's Shared Governance processes and will be documented in the Change Log.

Change Log		Governance Unit: Human Resources Council
Date	Description of Change	
04.23.26	Initial Adoption; Replaces legacy policy 6281 and consolidates conduct-related provisions from 6195 and 6235.	