

Conversations about cases of sexual harassment or discrimination at Heidelberg University

1. Sexual harassment or discrimination is a burdensome experience for those who have been subjected to such behaviour. You should keep that in mind when having conversations about such incidents.
2. There are contact persons at the University who are available for a conversation or a counselling session. These contact persons can offer a confidential conversation in which a course of action can be discussed with the person affected by sexual harassment or discrimination.
3. If solving a problem or settling a conflict directly among the parties involved is impossible or unreasonable, those affected by harassment or discrimination can consult said contact persons, the head of the institute, members of the institute or the staff council.
4. If the person who has been subjected to sexual harassment or discrimination contacts the head of the institute, members of the institute or the staff council, first talks can take place there. It is, however, advisable to involve or hand over the case to the contact persons of the University. They are trained and experienced, they can advise on next steps and, if necessary, establish contact with counselling services (e.g. psychological counselling).
5. If the head of the institute or members of the institute hold(s) such a conversation, they have to bear in mind that as superiors or heads/members of the institute they represent the University and as such are bound to exercise its responsibilities.
 - ➔ This means that they cannot conduct confidential conversations and do not have the privilege to refuse to give evidence. It also means that they are required officially to take appropriate action.
 - ➔ If as a first step the person(s) affected by sexual harassment or discrimination seek(s) a confidential conversation, you should advise them to get in touch with the contact persons at the University.
6. The institutes as well as the contact persons are guided by the "Internal Procedural Rules of Heidelberg University," which determine possible or necessary courses of action in case of a complaint, depending on who is being contacted.
7. If a conversation is taking place between the head of the institute, the complainant and the accused party, both may bring in (a) trusted person(s).
8. If this conversation does not result in an agreement or apology, formal procedures will be initiated, the HR Division or the Law and Committees Division will be consulted and the accused will face consequences under disciplinary law, labour law or public service law.
9. For documenting these conversations the University-wide format applies, please use the respective form.
10. This documentation and all related documents are to be submitted to the Equal Opportunities Office, where they are stored safely (according to current data protection regulations). After the documents have been passed on to the Equal Opportunities Office (at the latest after conversations about the complaint have been completed), the institute does not store any copies.