

# Sexual Harassment Prevention Policies at Japanese Universities

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**Abstract:** In recent years, an accumulation of Japanese research about sexual harassment and a number of very public court cases involving prominent public figures placed the issue of sexual harassment in the media spotlight. Japan was forced to recognise sexual harassment as a national problem, and not an issue, which was confined to the Western world. In April 1999, the Japanese government realised the need to amend existing laws to include sexual harassment under article twenty-one of the Equal Opportunity Law. For the first time in Japan's legal history, sexual harassment against a woman was not just a personal problem between two individuals; employers were now also held responsible for occurrences of sexual harassment in the workplace. Universities across Japan were not exempt from this new legislation and this paper will explore the ways in which universities have tried to tackle the problem of sexual harassment on campus since amendments to the Equal Opportunity Law were created. Visual strategies individual universities have taken up to spread awareness of sexual harassment will be investigated, for example the complex process of creating posters, leaflets and web pages about sexual harassment. Universities in Japan appear to be trying very hard to create an awareness of sexual harassment but unless attitudes on an individual level change how effective these strategies are still remains to be seen.

**Keywords:** Sexual harassment, prevention policies, Equal Opportunity Law, Japanese universities