



University of Brighton

Harassment and Bullying Policy

The University of Brighton believes that everyone is entitled to work and study in a supportive environment that values and promotes personal dignity. The university is committed to creating and maintaining a positive work and study environment for all members of its community, and as such it takes all reports of harassment and bullying extremely seriously.

University staff, students, contractors and visitors are all responsible for ensuring that they treat others with respect and consider how their behaviour is perceived, in order to promote an inclusive and constructive environment which is in accordance with the university's [Equality and Diversity Policy](#).

While the university places an emphasis on informal resolution wherever possible, all complaints of harassment or bullying will be regarded seriously and may lead to disciplinary action. Formal complaints will be investigated by an independent member of staff, to ensure the procedure is thorough and fair to all parties involved.

Individuals who bring a complaint, or act as witnesses to a complaint, under this policy will be protected from victimisation or unfavourable treatment arising as a result of bringing the complaint.

The university recognises its equal duty of care to both the complainant and the alleged harasser, and allegations will not be presumed proved until properly investigated using the appropriate procedures. Any allegations proved to be malicious or vexatious are likely to be the subject of disciplinary action.

Students who feel that they may be experiencing bullying or harassment should consult the [Student Bullying and Harassment Procedure](#).

Staff who feel that they may be experiencing harassment or bullying should consult the [Harassment and Bullying Procedures, Guidance and Toolkit](#).

Appendix - Types of Bullying and Harassment

Bullying and Harassment related to Age

This is unwanted behaviour based on known or presumed age (excluding under-18s). Such behaviour may include:

- name calling, jokes, taunts and use of offensive language;
- verbal or physical abuse or intimidation;
- making assumptions about an individual's ability or competence because of their age;
- inappropriate reference to age;
- refusal to carry out instructions because of a manager's or lecturer's age;
- refusal to work/study with and exclusion of an individual(s) from social events or meetings because of their age.

Harassment on the grounds of age also includes harassment of an individual(s) because of the age of the people they associate with.

Bullying and Harassment related to Disability

This is unwanted behaviour based on known or presumed disability, impairment or additional need. Under the Equality Act 2010, a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment (such as a mental health issue or learning difficulty) that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on an individual's ability to do normal daily activities. Such behaviour may include:

- name calling, jokes, taunts and use of offensive language;
- verbal or physical abuse or intimidation; inappropriate reference to disability;
- asking inappropriate intimate questions about an individual's impairment;
- assuming that a physical or mental disability means that the individual is inferior;
- assuming that a mental disability means that the individual lacks intelligence;
- speaking to colleagues or peers rather than the person with the disability;
- refusal to work/study with and exclusion of disabled people from social events or meetings.

Harassment on the grounds of disability also includes harassment of an individual(s) because of their association with a disabled person.

Bullying and Harassment related to Gender Identity/Re-assignment

This is unwanted behaviour directed at anyone who is known or assumed to be undergoing or to have undergone gender reassignment. 'Gender reassignment' is considered a social process and not a medical process and therefore includes people who have chosen to permanently live in their preferred gender role but have not had or do not intend to have any medical gender reassignment treatments.

Bullying and harassment on the grounds of gender identity/re-assignment may include:

- name calling, jokes, taunts and use of offensive language;
- verbal or physical abuse or intimidation;
- breaching the confidentiality of someone who is intending to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone gender reassignment (this may also be a criminal offence);
- refusing to treat a person as of their new gender when they transition;
- failing to address a person by their preferred name and correct gender pronouns;
- inappropriate exclusion of a trans person from toilet or changing facilities for their preferred gender;
- intrusive questioning;

- refusal to work/study with and exclusion of trans people from social events or meetings.

Harassment on the grounds of gender identity/reassignment also includes harassment of an individual(s) because of their association with someone who is intending to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone gender reassignment.

Bullying and Harassment related to Race

This is unwanted behaviour based on race, ethnic or national origin, nationality (including citizenship), caste or skin colour. Such behaviour may include:

- name calling, jokes, taunts and use of offensive language;
- verbal or physical abuse or intimidation;
- displaying racially offensive material including graffiti;
- refusal to work/study with and exclusion of an individual(s) from social events or meetings because of their race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin.

Harassment on the grounds of race also includes harassment of an individual(s) because of the race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin of the people they associate with.

Bullying and Harassment related to Religion or Belief

This is unwanted behaviour based on religious beliefs or practices, including non-belief (such as atheism or agnosticism) and non-religious beliefs (such as Humanism and Pacifism). Such behaviour may include:

- name calling, jokes, taunts and use of offensive language;
- verbal or physical abuse or intimidation;
- mocking or deriding people's religious or non-religious beliefs or lack of belief;
- ridiculing people for wearing items for religious reasons;
- denigrating cultural customs;
- dismissive treatment of requests for holidays for religious or cultural festivals.

Harassment on the grounds of religion or belief also includes harassment of an individual(s) because of the religion or beliefs of the people they associate with.

Bullying and Harassment related to Sex/Gender

This is unwanted behaviour based on known or presumed sex/gender. Such behaviour may include:

- name calling, jokes, taunts and use of offensive language;
- verbal or physical abuse or intimidation; making assumptions about an individual's ability or competence because of their sex/gender;
- inappropriate reference to an individual's sex/gender;
- refusal to carry out instructions because of a manager's or lecturer's sex/gender;
- refusal to work/study with and exclusion of an individual(s) from social events or meetings because of their sex/gender;
- harassing or bullying a woman because she is pregnant (for example, a woman's manager not letting her attend antenatal appointments)

Harassment on the grounds of sex/gender also includes harassment of an individual(s) because of the sex/gender of the people they associate with.

Sexual Bullying and Harassment

This is unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature. It includes attention that denigrates or ridicules or is intimidating. This may be physical, ranging from unwanted touching, groping or the

invasion of personal space to sexual assault, rape or indecent exposure. Sexual harassment can be verbal and may include:

- unwanted personal comments or sexual slurs;
- belittling, suggestive, lewd or abusive remarks;
- explicit 'jokes' or innuendo;
- compromising invitations, including demands for sexual favours.

Examples of non-verbal sexual harassment include:

- suggestive looks, leering and explicit gestures;
- sending sexually explicit emails or the display of pornographic material on University equipment or premises. (The IT implications are discussed further in the University's separate [Conditions of Use of University of Brighton Computing Facilities including Networks](#)).

Whilst sexual harassment of women by men is more common, it is important to remember that sexual harassment can occur of men by women, and also between members of the same sex.

Bullying and Harassment related to Sexual Orientation

This is unwanted behaviour based on known or presumed sexual orientation whether gay, lesbian, bisexual or heterosexual. Such behaviour may include:

- name calling, jokes, taunts and use of offensive language;
- verbal or physical abuse or intimidation; actual or threatened unwanted disclosure of an individual's sexual orientation;
- intrusive questioning about an individual's personal or sex life;
- inappropriate references to a person's sexual orientation;
- excluding a same sex partner from social events when opposite sex partners are included;
- refusal to work/study with and exclusion of an individual(s) from social events or meetings because of their sexual orientation.

Harassment on the grounds of sexual orientation also includes harassment of an individual(s) because of the sexual orientation of the people they associate with.