



3.0. Academic Regulations

Bullying and Harassment Policy

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Version Control Statement

Version	Date	Changes	Reason	Author	Next re-view
1	03/08/2021	New Policy	N/A	Principal	Aug 2022
2	Aug 2022	Aligned policy to the new structure	Annual Review	Principal	Aug 2023
3	April 2024	Refresh	Refresh due to changes to safeguarding policy	Principal	April 2025

External Reference Points

This policy is developed based on the:

- Equality Act 2010

Internal References

- Fitness to Practice Policy
- Fitness to Study Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Appeals Policy
- Non-Academic Misconduct Policy
- Freedom of Speech Policy
- Academic Freedom Policy

Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure

The purpose and scope of this policy

The policy explains the College's approach to dealing with cases of bullying and harassment experienced by students and outlines procedures for staff and students to resolve situations promptly and effectively.

The College is not directly responsible for bullying or harassment that takes place outside the learning environment and off college premises but will take appropriate action if activities outside of College have an impact on that student's safety at College.

The College is committed to providing a supportive, friendly, safe and positive environment so that the students can learn in a secure atmosphere and get the most out of their experience of college life. Bullying or harassment of any kind is unacceptable at the College. If it does occur, students are urged to voice their grievances in the secure knowledge that incidents will be taken seriously and dealt with sensitively.

What are Bullying and Harassment?

Definition and Examples of Bullying and Harassment

The standard definition for harassment is unwanted conduct on the grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation etc. which has the purpose or effect of either violating the claimant's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or creating an offensive environment for them.

The following are some examples of specific types of harassment, but it should be noted that this policy applies to all forms of harassment and/or bullying.

Bullying

Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

Examples of bullying could be:

- abuse of power or authority
- verbal, written and/or physical intimidation e.g., threats, derisory remarks
- persistent unjustified criticism
- public humiliation

- the setting of impossible deadlines or intolerable workload burdens
- having responsibilities or decision-making powers withdrawn without good reason or explanation
- unwarranted exclusions

Vigorous speech and comment, academic debate and legitimate management of the performance or behaviour of students can be distinguished from bullying behaviour. However, care should be taken to ensure that students are not made to feel intimidated.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment may be homosexual or heterosexual. It may be defined as any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment.

It may include:

- physical contact
- invasion of personal space
- suggestive remarks or sounds
- unwanted comments on dress and appearance
- jokes of a sexual nature
- display of sexually offensive material
- inappropriate downloading of pornographic or sexually exploitive and degrading material by computer
- verbal threats

It is important to remember that sexual harassment can happen to women by men, men by women, and also between members of the same sex. It can also refer to unwanted conduct that is related to the sex of the other person.

Racial Harassment

Racial harassment is any behaviour, deliberate or otherwise about race, colour, nationality - including citizenship, or ethnic or national origins, which is directed at an individual or group and which is found to be offensive or objectionable to recipients and which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

Such behaviour may include:

- derogatory name-calling
- insults and racist jokes
- display of racially offensive material and abusive language
- exclusion from normal workplace/ college conversation or activities
- unfair allocation of work
- verbal threats
- physical attack
- incitement of others to commit any such acts

Harassment on Grounds of Sexual Orientation

This act of harassment is any behaviour deliberate or otherwise, about sexual orientation. Homophobia is a term used to describe hatred and rejection of gays, lesbians and homosexuals. It may be directed against individuals or groups of people who are, or are thought to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered and is behaviour which can be defined as unwanted conduct violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Examples may include:

- offensive jokes
- ridicule
- verbal threats
- derogatory comments
- intrusive questioning about a person's domestic circumstances
- innuendo
- gossip
- physical attack
- unfair allocation of work
- exclusion from class conversation or activities
- incitement of others to commit any such acts

Harassment on Grounds of Religion Religious

Harassment is any behaviour deliberate or otherwise, about religion, religious belief or other similar philosophical belief and it is behaviour which can be defined as unwanted conduct violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading humiliating or offensive environment.

Examples can include:

- offensive jokes
- ridicule
- display of offensive material

Political Harassment, or Harassment on the Grounds of Trade Union Membership

Political harassment, or harassment on the grounds of trade union membership, can include:

- offensive jokes
- ridicule
- display of offensive material

Harassment on the Grounds of Disability

Harassment may be based on the fact that a person has a physical or mental impairment, learning difficulty or disfigurement.

This can include:

- offensive or patronising language

- offensive or patronising action or behaviour
- jokes or inappropriate comments
- questions which offend the individual or group of individuals concerned
- display of offensive material

Harassment on the Grounds of Age

Ageism can affect anybody regardless of how old they are. Harassment on the grounds of age may include:

- assumptions regarding the individual's inability to learn
- offensive remarks
- exclusion based on age

Harassment on the Grounds of Gender Re-assignment

Harassment on the grounds of gender re-assignment can include:

- suggestive remarks or sounds
- unwanted comments on dress and appearance
- verbal threats

Harassment via social media including email

The College requires all students to agree to a code of conduct when enrolling and this makes it clear that any harassment or bullying via social media is unacceptable.

It should be noted that offensive remarks and material could constitute harassment.

When to use this policy

Students

If you feel you are a victim of bullying or harassment, TELL SOMEONE. This may be, in the first instance, your Programme Leader, subject tutor/lecturer, Welfare Officer or any other member of staff.

Once a member of staff has been alerted, they will then inform the Welfare Officer who will interview those involved separately. You will be listened to sympathetically and your concerns were taken seriously.

All incidents that are reported and interview notes will be recorded and kept securely on file.

As a result of the interviews both parties may be offered appropriate support or in more serious cases referred to Academic Board for misconduct disciplinary proceedings.

Mediation will also be used where appropriate, to bring all parties together to look for a resolution or way forward for all involved.

All incidents reported are monitored termly by the Academic Board under the

complaint's procedure. This is to monitor incidents and the effectiveness of interventions, no names are discussed, only the actions and outcomes that were involved.

Staff

All complaints about bullying or harassment will be taken seriously and treated sensitively. It is important to discuss possible/desirable strategies with the victim in the first instance and proceed as appropriate.

Inform the Head of Student Support immediately. Lecturers/Tutors are advised not to try and resolve the issue themselves as it can affect their relationship with the students.

Before any action is taken check if students involved are receiving additional support, if so, liaise with the Head of Student Support / or Records Manager.

Use sympathetic questions initially when speaking to the student(s).

Mediation can be arranged where appropriate, where those involved can look at reconciliation or a way forward.

Any follow-up action or reports must be reported to the Records Manager so that they can be logged with the other information about the incident.

Where it is found that a student has failed to observe the College's Bullying and Harassment Policy, then the student will be referred to the Academic Board for Disciplinary Procedure.

Counselling and other support can be offered to all students involved where appropriate.

If appropriate, Programme Leader/Lecturer/tutor to hold tutor group discussion on bullying/harassment.