

## BULLYING & HARASSMENT POLICY

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### 1. Aims

- 1.1 The aims of this policy are to:
- a) prevent harassment and bullying at the University;
  - b) provide a safe and supportive environment;
  - c) provide a sensitive, fair and effective means of dealing with complaints;
  - d) provide victims of harassment with guidance and support.

### 2. Scope

- 2.1 The policy applies to all students of the University, whether at the University (on campus and/or in a virtual/online environment associated with the University) or on secondment/placement with an external organisation.
- 2.2 There is a separate HR policy setting out the conduct expectations of staff, the procedure for staff to follow if they have experienced bullying or harassment in the workplace, and the support available to them.

### 3. Definition

- 3.1 Harassment and/or bullying is behaviour that is intended to diminish a person's status or worth. It is conduct which is unwanted by the recipient and is viewed as offensive, intimidating or hostile.
- 3.2 It can interfere with the victim's work/academic studies and can cause stress, anxiety, fear or, in extreme cases, physical illness.
- 3.3 Individuals can be subjected to harassment or bullying in a variety of ways. Sometimes the unwanted behaviour can be related to a protected characteristic. For example, a victim's:
- a) skin colour, race, ethnic origin, nationality;
  - b) gender, sexual orientation, marital status;
  - c) physical, mental ability or disability;
  - d) age, size, personal appearance;
  - e) real or suspected infection with HIV/AIDS.
- 3.4 However, the University does not tolerate *any form of harassment or bullying*, regardless of whether such behaviour is related to a protected characteristic or not.

### 4. Interpretation

- 4.1 Behaviour which is welcomed and reciprocated is not harassment. Differences in attitudes, background, culture and misinterpretation of social signals could mean that what is perceived by one individual may not seem so to another. The critical feature is that the conduct is unwanted, offensive and intimidating to the recipient. The experience of the complainant will determine whether further action is necessary.

### 5. Management responsibility

- 5.1 As set out in the Dignity at Work Policy, in addition to their general responsibilities, staff with management responsibility are expected to set standards of acceptable behaviour by always

treating others with respect, and promoting a working environment where unacceptable behaviour is not tolerated.

**6. Staff and student responsibility**

- 6.1 Everyone has a responsibility to ensure they do not incite, perpetrate or condone any form of harassment or bullying within their place of work or study. If any behaviour, considered as harassment or bullying, cannot be resolved on an informal basis, or which continues following a request to stop, it will lead to disciplinary action. Where this involves a member of staff, any such action would be in accordance with the Dignity at Work Policy and/or Disciplinary Policy, and for serious cases may include dismissal. Where the behaviour is by a student, any such action would be in accordance with the Student Disciplinary Policy & Procedures, and in serious cases may result in exclusion from the University.
- 6.2 In certain circumstances a harasser may have committed a criminal act and be liable for prosecution.

**7. Advice and support**

- 7.1 In the first instance, a student who considers they have been bullied or harassed may wish to seek advice and support before deciding how to proceed. The following routes are available:
- a) Student Services – trained student counsellors, Living Support Officers;
  - b) Member of the FXU/Students' Union representative.

Advice and support given will be done so in the strictest of confidence.

- 7.2 A member of staff who considers they have been bullied or harassed should follow the procedure set out in the Dignity at Work Policy.

**8. Making a complaint**

- 8.1 In the first instance, where appropriate, every effort will be made to resolve the situation on an informal basis. The harasser will be advised that the behaviour is unacceptable and must stop. This may be very difficult and, in some cases, not possible. The advice and support above may facilitate a ceasing of the activity/behaviour. In some cases the alleged harasser may be unaware of the distress their actions are causing. In drawing it to their attention, misunderstandings can be dealt with speedily.
- 8.2 If the behaviour does not stop and/or the behaviour or the incident is considered to be particularly serious, a formal complaint should be made. Students should refer to Step 2 of the Complaints Procedures. Complaints cannot be made anonymously.