

## Dignity at Work and Study Policy – Additional Guidance Document

### How can I promote a healthy working environment?

There are a number of steps we can all take to prevent harassment and bullying.

#### Think about your behaviour

Most people would not deliberately seek to cause upset or distress. However, it is important to recognise behaviour that is acceptable to you may not be acceptable to others. For example ‘teasing’ or ‘banter’ about an individual’s sexuality or religion can create a humiliating or offensive environment for that person which is likely to be considered harassment.

Harassment and bullying can take many forms including exclusion, ignoring someone, deliberately excluding an individual, as well as traditional examples of bullying such as shouting, aggression or violence.

A growing concern in relation to harassment or bullying is in relation to activity online. Consider remarks or comments you make in an email or on social media. You may consider them to be throw away comments; however they may not be interpreted that way. The University would also advise if you have a large number of ‘friends’ or ‘followers’ on a social media platform, then your comments will not be considered private. A good question to ask yourself is “Would I say this to the person face to face?”. If you wouldn’t, then it’s probably advisable not to say it online or at all.

There’s a wide range of behaviours which could be considered unacceptable and may constitute harassment or bullying, these include:

- demeaning, abusive, indecent or offensive language or comments (including those in writing/email/social media);
- threatening behaviour or language, or actual threats;
- written, verbal or physical harassment;
- comments that discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, age, disability, religion and belief or other irrelevant distinction;
- unsubstantiated allegations;
- use of aggressive or inappropriate gestures;
- demanding responses within inappropriate timescales;
- persistent emails or mass circulation of emails;
- making lengthy or repeated phone calls and expecting attention from staff outside normal office hours;
- approaches to other people or agencies when due process has already commenced or has been completed;

- persistently interrupting others;
- behaviour which distracts others from the main activity, or disrupts the good order of the event;
- engaging in antisocial behaviour.

It is imperative you remember you may not be intentionally harassing someone, however if their interpretation is of harassment, you should address it.

### **Learn More**

- Watch the [Creating an Environment based on Respect](#) video resource (14mins).
- All staff should complete the **Equality and Diversity Essentials** online course, which is available [here](#). (enrolment key = equality)
- If your job involves managing staff you have a particular responsibility to encourage dignity and respect in the workplace and to challenge unacceptable behaviour. The University would then encourage you to complete the online [Managing Diversity](#) course (enrolment key = equality), and watch the Creating an Environment based on Respect video resource. You may also wish to ask your team members to watch this too.

### **Support colleagues/students who are being harassed or bullied**

Staff or students who allege harassment and bullying often feel isolated. If you believe a colleague/student is being harassed or bullied, take a quiet moment to speak with them and encourage them to take action, for example, by pointing them to this website or encouraging them to contact a volunteer Respect Adviser.

### **Line manager/Adviser of Studies support/interventions**

Inaction can be seen as condoning unacceptable behaviour and can create a workplace culture where this is tolerated. If you are a manager and are concerned your staff are engaging in behaviour that could constitute harassment or bullying, you have a responsibility to challenge this. If a member of staff approaches you with a concern about harassment or bullying, please ensure you read the [Dignity at Work and Study Policy](#) and the Guidance Notes for Managers which should support you in these conversations.