



UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

Dignity and Respect Policy (Staff)
(Version 1.0)



Table of Contents

1. Summary and Purpose	3
2. Definitions	3
3. Process.....	4
3.1 – Informal resolution	4
3.2 – Formal resolution.....	4
3.3 – Online reporting	4
3.4 – Work-related violence/aggression	5
3.5 – Timescales	5
3.6 – Hate crime/hate incidents	5
3.7 – Reporting and monitoring	5
3.8 – Academic Freedom	6
4. Support and Guidance	6
Appendix A – Examples	7
5. Document Governance	10

1. Summary and Purpose

Equality, diversity and inclusion are at the core of what it means to work or study at the University of Plymouth. We are committed to equal opportunities, maintaining an inclusive environment and ensuring all members of the University community treat each other with dignity and respect.

Bullying and harassment undermine dignity and respect and the University takes such allegations seriously. Staff should have the confidence to report harassment or bullying without fear of victimisation. No member of our community should experience any form of harassment including racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, antisemitism, islamophobia or any other form of discrimination based on a protected characteristic. Regardless of protected characteristic all staff and students should be treated with dignity and respect.

This policy applies to staff and anyone else working on our behalf. This policy also protects individuals who are applying to work at the University and members of the public who come into contact with our staff. We will draw this policy to the attention of consultants and contractors and make it clear that we will not tolerate behaviours which undermine the dignity and respect of our staff or students.

This policy covers the process regarding staff allegations of bullying, harassment and behaviours that undermine dignity and respect and is not applicable to students. Students should refer to the [Student Disciplinary Procedure](#) and contact Student Services if they are being subject to such behaviours.

2. Definitions

Harassment	A form of discrimination. Harassment is often unwanted behaviour based on someone's protected characteristic, sexual harassment or treating someone less favourably because they reject or submit to sexual harassment. Harassment can also happen without discriminatory motives. (See Appendix A)
Unwanted Behaviours	Behaviour which intends to, or has created the effect of, violating someone's dignity by creating a hostile, intimidating, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
Bullying	Often identified as intimidating, malicious, offensive or insulting behaviour by one or more individuals. It may involve words, physical actions or general conduct. It can also include abuse or misuse of power. What one person may consider as bullying may be viewed as no more than firm management by another. However, any behaviour that leads to someone becoming stressed, demotivated or frightened is unacceptable. (See Appendix A)
Victimisation	Less favourable treatment of someone because they have made, or have helped someone else make, a complaint of bullying and/or harassment. (See Appendix A)
Protected Characteristics	According to the Equality Act (2010), it is against the law to discriminate against someone because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/belief (or lack of), sex and/or sexual orientation. (See Appendix A)

3. Process

If you are not being treated with dignity and respect then you have several options if you need to report an incident of bullying or harassment. This includes reporting incidents that may have occurred in online spaces such as social media or via email. Throughout this process you are not alone; we have a network of trained Dignity and Respect Advisors who you can talk to for advice. The following pages provide you with information on the three routes to reporting unacceptable behaviour; informal, formal and online reporting. If you are not a student or member of staff then you can use the online reporting tool or email equality@plymouth.ac.uk to raise your concerns.

3.1 – Informal resolution

Step 1

Speak to individual and ask them to stop. If that doesn't stop the behaviour, or you feel that you cannot speak to them, then go to step 2. Always keep a diary of details, dates, times, circumstances and witnesses to each incident.



Step 2

Speak to a Dignity and Respect Advisor, your manager or a Trade Union representative. You can request a Dignity and Respect Advisor confidentially by emailing equality@plymouth.ac.uk. If this has not worked, then go to step 3.



Step 3

If the above hasn't worked then you should follow the formal resolution process outlined in Section 3.2.

If the person responsible is not an employee (for example a student or a contractor) then you should contact your HR Partner immediately.

3.2 – Formal resolution

In situations where informal action has not been successful or in limited circumstances where informal action is not appropriate, you should raise your concerns through the [Grievance policy and procedure](#). If you have worked with a Dignity and Respect Advisor then they can tell the HR Partner what steps have already been taken as part of the informal action. It is expected that individuals will try and resolve grievances informally in the first instance.

If the allegations relate to a student's behaviour, then the [Disciplinary Procedure for Students](#) will be used. This process will be managed by Student Services.

3.3 – Online reporting

Whilst you are supported confidentially throughout an informal or formal process of reporting bullying and/or harassment, we understand that sometimes you would rather report things anonymously. You can report any bullying, harassment or any behaviours where you haven't been

treated with dignity and respect anonymously via the University website; you can also use this service to report something as a witness.

To report an incident online, go to www.plymouth.ac.uk/speak-up and click 'Report an incident'. The online reporting tool can be used to report behaviour from staff, students and external contractors. You can use it to report an incident on or off campus.

The tool will give you the option to report anonymously or provide your contact details. It is important to remember that we cannot act on an anonymous report as we will be unable to contact you to corroborate evidence. Even if you name an individual, we cannot take action without your details. We can, however, use your report to identify areas for concern and pass this onto Heads of Schools or Heads of Services with any identifying details removed.

3.4 – Work-related violence/aggression

Work-related violence/aggression can be defined as any incident, in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted by a staff member, student or visitor in circumstances arising out of the course of their employment.

The University never tolerates work-related violence/aggression and any incidents should be reported in line with the [Violence and Aggression at Work Code of Practice](#). This document also outlines information on relevant post-traumatic support for staff.

3.5 – Timescales

We would encourage you to raise your concerns as soon as possible following the incident, and this should be within 90 days of the incident occurring. Your concerns will be dealt with swiftly and in the most appropriate manner. If you have any concerns about how your matters are progressing then email equality@plymouth.ac.uk so this can be investigated.

3.6 – Hate crime/hate incidents

An incident of bullying and/or harassment may constitute a hate crime or hate incident. The term 'hate crime' can be used to describe a range of criminal behaviours where the alleged perpetrator is motivated by hostility or demonstrates hostility towards the alleged victim's disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or transgender status.

There are trained third-party hate crime reporters at the University and you can also report a hate crime or hate incident via Devon and Cornwall Police.

3.7 – Reporting and monitoring

Dignity and Respect Advisors monitor informal complaints and their outcomes confidentially and anonymously. They never record any information on the monitoring forms which would allow any individual to be identified.

The Equality and Diversity Team will analyse the monitoring forms to monitor the success of the informal complaints procedure and identify any areas of particular concern.

Anonymous Reports are recorded confidentially and analysed by both the Equality and Diversity Team and Student Services to identify any areas of particular concern.

3.8 – Academic Freedom

Academic freedom is protected by law and the University encourages genuine academic debate within Higher Education. Protection of academic freedom recognises that academic staff have the right to explore unpopular or controversial subjects and opinions. However, in line with the Equality Act (2010), individuals are not protected by academic freedom if discriminating against or causing harassment on the grounds of age, disability, ethnicity, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity status, religion and belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Should such behaviours be found to occur, the University will act in line with this Dignity and Respect Policy. This should not stifle genuine academic debate in genuine academic settings or publications.

4. Support and Guidance

If you are experiencing behaviours that undermine your dignity and are being treated with a lack of respect then you are strongly encouraged to report this but regardless of what action you choose to take, you will be supported. The below services are available to you for further advice, guidance and support.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

You can contact the EDI department confidentially for advice and support at any time via the following routes:

- Email: equality@plymouth.ac.uk
- Twitter: www.twitter.com/PlymUniEquality
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/PlymUniEquality

You can also access further information on independent support services, policy guidance and terminology used by visiting www.plymouth.ac.uk/equality

Dignity and Respect Advisors

As stated previously in this policy, the University has a network of trained, confidential dignity and respect advisors who can act as a listening ear and go through your options with you. You can request an advisor confidentially by emailing equality@plymouth.ac.uk

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

The University has an employee assistance programme which is available to all staff. This service offers support and guidance as well as 24/7 telephone counselling, cognitive behaviour therapy and much more. You can access the EAP by visiting the [HR SharePoint site](#).

Staff Networks

All staff have access to a wide-range of staff networks for peer support, support and guidance. Current staff networks include the LGBT+ Staff Forum, Women's Network, Menopause Network and Staff with Disabilities Network. You can join a network by visiting the [equality webpages](#). Membership of staff networks is confidential.

Trade Unions

The University has several recognised trade unions of which staff can join. You can find out more via the [HR SharePoint site](#).

Appendix A – Examples

Included in Appendix A are examples of bullying, harassment, victimisation and more information on protected characteristics.

This document should also be read in conjunction with the University's agreed EDI definitions [available here](#) which includes information on homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, antisemitism, islamophobia, sexual violence and gender-based violence.

Bullying

Bullying can be described as threatening, abusive, intimidating, undermining or insulting behaviour that may be an abuse of power, position or knowledge. What one person may consider as bullying behaviour may be viewed as no more than firm management or strong personality by another and so may sometimes be difficult to define. However, inappropriate behaviour that leads to other people becoming stressed, demotivated or frightened is unacceptable.

Bullying can take many forms, and we consider all types to be equally serious and bullying also includes actions taken in online spaces such as social media. We have given a number of examples below:

- Overbearing supervision, shouting, or verbal, written, online or other published abuse.
- Abuse of power or behaviour that causes fear or distress for others.
- Academic bullying, for example, asserting a position of intellectual superiority in an aggressive, abusive or offensive way, including by electronic media (for example, by email or on social media).
- Deliberately undermining someone by not allocating work fairly or constantly criticising them.
- Inconsistent management style where some people are favoured more than others.
- Public ridicule, sarcasm or humiliation.

Harassment

The Equality Act 2010 defines harassment as being 'unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual'. The Equality Act 2010 bans the following three types of harassment:

1) Harassment related to the following 'protected characteristics' (as defined by the Equality Act 2010):

- Age;
- Disability;
- Race;
- Sex;
- Gender reassignment;
- Religion or belief;
- Sexual orientation.

2) Sexual harassment.

3) Treating an employee or student less favourably because they reject sexual harassment related to sex or gender reassignment or submits to it (tolerates it or allows it to happen).



Behaviour that is acceptable to one person may be unwanted by another. When assessing whether behaviour is harassment, we must look at if the behaviour, whether unintentional or deliberate, is unacceptable to the person on the receiving end and would be judged as harassment by any reasonable person. The word 'unwanted' means the same as 'unwelcome' or 'uninvited'. The person the behaviour is directed toward does not have to expressly object to the behaviour before it is considered to be unwanted.

If the person responsible for the behaviour did not intend to create a negative environment, the behaviour will still be harassment if it has the effect of creating such an environment. When deciding whether behaviour has had a negative effect, we will take account of each of the following:

- The view of the person who made the complaint. For example, whether they feel the behaviour has created an intimidating environment.
- Whether it is reasonable for the behaviour to have the stated effect. This is an objective test.

Whether you are an employee or student, you can make a complaint of harassment if you find behaviour offensive and it relates to a protected characteristic. This applies even if the behaviour is not directed at you. You do not need to have the relevant characteristic yourself to make a complaint.

The Equality Act also protects people from harassment because of perception and association. This means it is still harassment even if the person does not have the characteristic but is wrongly considered to have the characteristic or is harassed because of their association with someone who has the characteristic, such as a family member, friend or partner.

Harassment may take many forms and includes behaviour related to a protected characteristic. However, harassment is not always related to any of the above. Examples of behaviour which is likely to be considered harassment are given below. This is not a full list, and we will view other forms of harassment equally seriously:

- Behaviour of a racist, sexist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, ageist, antisemitic or disablist nature.
- Any behaviour or abuse which may cause distress, such as name-calling, ridicule, insults, jokes, graffiti, physical abuse.
- Abuse through email, texts, websites or social media.
- Invading someone's personal space.
- Displaying offensive material. This can be on paper or electronically (for example, on social media).
- Spreading malicious rumours or insulting someone (particularly because of that person's age, race, sex, disability, sexuality, religion or belief, or because they are transgender).
- Preventing other people from progressing by deliberately blocking their educational progress or training and development opportunities or promotion.
- Intentionally isolating or excluding someone.
- Persistent, unwelcome contact, which may include text messages, emails, phone calls, gifts, letters, and calling at a person's home or place of work or study.
- Stalking.



- Offensive sexual behaviour such as suggestive looks, leering and remarks (including on social media and electronic communication devices), offensive flirting, unwanted physical contact, unwanted sexual advances or demands for sex and compromising invitations.
- Offers of favourable treatment in return for sex (or threats of disadvantage if the person refuses).
- Making it public that someone is gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender when they would prefer to keep this information private (known as 'outing').
- Making it public that someone has an underlying health condition without their consent (such as HIV)
- Drawing unwelcome attention to, or abusing someone's, religious beliefs including ethical veganism or a lack of religion/belief

Victimisation

Victimisation is when a person is mistreated because they have made, or intend to make, a complaint of discrimination (including harassment or bullying), or have helped another person to make a complaint under the Equality Act 2010 by providing evidence or information. Victimisation can count as unlawful discrimination and result in disciplinary action, regardless of the outcome of the original complaint.

5. Document Governance

TITLE	Dignity and Respect Policy (staff)
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HR Document Review History

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