

## DIGNITY AT STUDY POLICY

### Purpose and Context

The University is committed to providing an environment where students are treated with respect and dignity. We recognise that behaviours such as discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation cause significant distress to the individual and to others who are directly or indirectly involved.

The purpose of this policy is to promote a positive culture where these behaviours are known to be unacceptable and not tolerated. Individuals must be able to raise concerns, confident that their issues will be dealt with appropriately, consistently, fairly and without fear of ridicule or victimisation.

### Scope

This policy and associated procedures apply to all students who are enrolled at the University of Huddersfield, when on campus, on placement, study visits or in other circumstances where the interests of the University of Huddersfield are affected. The policy applies to behaviour and conduct whether expressed verbally, in writing or electronically. This includes social networking sites, blogs, websites or other media. It includes behaviour which can occur either at University premises or elsewhere.

This policy does not apply to staff members who are covered by the Dignity at Work Procedure. Where staff members are also students, the Dignity at Work procedure will normally take precedence. Where students undertake paid work for the University but are primarily a student (e.g. Postgraduate Researchers), the Dignity at Study policy will normally take precedence.

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The University is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive environment, whereby our diverse student community can learn and thrive, free from discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation.
- 1.2. This policy has been developed to foster a culture which does not tolerate bullying and harassment, as all of our students have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

## 2. General Principles

- 2.1. To help maintain and develop good relations within our University community, we have developed a [Code of Conduct](#), which draws together the principles which underpin appropriate behaviour.
- 2.2. Harassment and bullying can take a variety of different forms, ranging from repeatedly ignoring a colleague or subjecting them to unwelcome attention, to intimidation, humiliation, ridicule or offence. More extreme forms of bullying and harassment include physical threats or violence. This may consist of a single incident or a series of incidents.

- 2.3.** Behaviour that may appear trivial as a single incident can constitute harassment or bullying when repeated.
- 2.4.** The University expects everyone to be sensitive to the needs of others and to respect individual differences. The University has both a legal and moral obligation to recognise that bullying, harassment and discrimination are serious issues. We use the definitions of discrimination formally adopted by the UK government, and other associated legal advice.
- 2.5.** Harassment and bullying behaviour may not always be intentional, but is always unacceptable, whether intentional or not. Differences of attitude, culture, background or misinterpretation of social signals can mean that what is perceived as harassment or bullying by one may not seem so to another.
- 2.6.** The University will not tolerate discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation of any kind. All allegations of such behaviour will be investigated and appropriate action will be taken.
- 2.7.** Any form of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation that is proven may lead to penalties under the University's student disciplinary procedure.
- 2.8.** The University will not tolerate victimisation of a person who had made an allegation of bullying, harassment or other inappropriate behaviour.
- 2.9.** If an allegation is being investigated by the police, the University procedures are likely to be postponed until the police have completed their investigations. In these instances the University may take precautionary measures to restrict aspects of study (e.g. access to buildings or IT) whilst the criminal proceedings are ongoing.
- 2.10.** Definitions of bullying and harassment can be found in Appendix 1 – Definitions.

### **3. Responsibilities - The University of Huddersfield will:**

- 3.1.** Treat all complaints of harassment, discrimination, bullying and victimisation seriously and in a sensitive, timely and objective manner, with due respect for the rights of all parties involved.
- 3.2.** Consider any complaint of alleged harassment as a serious matter. We aim to deal with any concerns at an early stage promptly, impartially, effectively and with sensitivity.
- 3.3.** Provide students with a confidential, anonymous and safe space to report and discuss incidents of harassment and bullying.
- 3.4.** Consider invoking the student disciplinary procedure when there is evidence that there has been a breach of expected behaviours and the University's Code of Conduct.

- 3.5. Ensure whilst undertaking any aspect of this procedure, we seek to make reasonable adjustments for students with a disability.

#### **4. Responsibilities – Students will:**

- 3.1. Treat other students, staff, and visitors fairly and in accordance with the Code of Conduct, regulations and policies that form the conditions of enrolment.
- 3.2. Act promptly and seek support if they perceive that they are being harassed or bullied and should not wait until it reaches an intolerable level or their wellbeing is jeopardised.
- 3.3. Where possible, if they feel comfortable in doing so, students are encouraged to attempt to resolve their concern informally, by raising with the individual concerned. This is with the aim of providing constructive feedback to others, if they believe their behaviour is unacceptable and causing offence. It may be that the person whose conduct is causing offence is genuinely unaware their behaviour is unwelcome or objectionable. Support is available from the Students' Union or Wellbeing Services to achieve this aim.
- 3.4. If they witness harassment, bullying, or any incidents of unacceptable behaviour this should not be ignored and they should encourage the student concerned to report it and/or report it themselves.
- 3.5. Be aware that behaviour which impacts negatively on fellow students, staff or visitors or is in any way disruptive or offensive, will not be tolerated and may be subject to the Student Disciplinary Procedure.
- 3.6. Ensure any complaints made are true, not vexatious or made for personal gain.
- 3.7. Be aware that being under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be accepted as an excuse for any form of inappropriate behaviour.
- 3.8. Be encouraged to report incidents through Report and Support, or gain support from the Students' Union, Wellbeing Services and Student Support and Guidance Teams in Schools.

#### **4. Responsibilities - Staff will:**

- 4.1. Encourage students with a complaint of inappropriate behaviour to use [Report and Support](#) which is available on our website.
- 4.2. Make students aware of this policy and offer them appropriate support through Report and Support, the Students' Union, Wellbeing Services or Student Support and Guidance Teams in Schools.

- 4.3. Be aware of what constitutes unacceptable behaviour, watch for signs of harassment and bullying and challenge inappropriate behaviour by others.
- 4.4. Attend compulsory training in relation to sexual harassment awareness and diversity in the workplace.
- 4.5. Maintain an appropriate professional relationship between themselves, colleagues and students.
- 4.6. Apply fair, objective and measurable criteria when investigating and adjudicating on complaints about behaviour.

## **5. Making a complaint**

- 5.1. Alleged breaches of this policy will be investigated under the [Student Complaints Regulations](#) and Procedure.
- 5.2. Students may report an incident of bullying, harassment or victimisation where the alleged perpetrator is a student, a member of staff, a visitor or a contractor.
- 5.3. The emphasis will be on resolution rather than blame.

## **6. Sources of support**

- 6.1. Support is available to both the reporting party and the reported party. Students seek advice from the Students' Union Advice Centre, Wellbeing and Disability Services and/or one of the [student conciliators](#).
- 6.2. Staff can seek support from their line manager, the University Counselling Service and/or one of the [student conciliators](#).

## Appendix 1 – Definitions

### What is Bullying?

Bullying is persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, abuse of power or unfair sanctions, which makes the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable, which undermines their self-confidence and which may cause them stress.

Examples include but are not restricted to personal insults, demeaning remarks, threats of violence, misuse of power or position, social exclusion, scape-goating. Bullying normally relates to negative behaviours that are repeated and persistent. Although unpleasant, to be the target of occasional aggressive behaviour is not normally defined as bullying.

### What is Harassment?

Harassment is 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 an individual.

### What is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is where someone, or a group of people, threaten/harass someone using social media, email or mobile phone.

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