

## Dignity at Work and Study General Guidance

Contents	Page
Section 1: Guiding Principles for Staff and Students	2
Section 2: Procedure and guidance for staff	4
Section 3: Appendices Appendix 1 Sources of support and advice	7

### Related links

- [Definitions of Harassment, Bullying and Victimisation – Unacceptable behaviours](#)

## **Section 1. Guiding Principles for Staff and Students**

QMUL is dedicated to creating a safe, welcoming, inclusive and diverse community, which allows staff and students to thrive without fear of any form of harassment, or bullying. The Dignity at QMUL Statement reflects the core values that shape and influence the life of our institution, and describes our zero tolerance approach to all forms of behaviour from staff, students or visitors that might violate the dignity of others.

### **1. Rights and responsibilities**

- 1.1 All staff and students are expected to behave professionally and have the right to expect professional behaviour from others. All members of the QMUL community have a personal responsibility for complying with these guiding principles and demonstrating active commitment to it by:
- a) Treating each other with respect, courtesy and consideration at all times.
  - b) Discouraging any form of harassment by suitably challenging inappropriate behaviour, making it clear that such behaviour is unacceptable (and raising concerns with managers and leaders where appropriate so these can be dealt with).
  - c) Supporting any member of QMUL who feels they have been subject to harassment, including supporting them to make a formal complaint if appropriate or not resolved through informal means.
  - d) Managers and leaders have particular responsibility for setting standards and ensuring appropriate workplace behaviours are maintained. They should set a good example and ensure concerns are raised and actioned. (See Section 4 below)

### **2. Zero tolerance**

- 2.1 QMUL is committed to working proactively to raise awareness, set acceptable standards of behaviour and codes of conduct to eradicate behaviours that infringe people's dignity. QMUL is also committed to taking action to resolve disputes and conflicts early on wherever possible and to work in partnership with key parties across the university, including Human Resources, Occupational Health, Students Services, Academic Registry, Schools and Institutes and Professional Services departments, the Student's Union and recognised trade unions. This will be with a view to develop and deliver comprehensive and evolving approaches to prevention, reporting, investigation and resolution. ([see Unacceptable behaviours](#))

### **3. What is Harassment or bullying**

- 3.1 Harassment or bullying occurs when someone intentionally or unintentionally violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment, which interferes with an individual's learning, working or social environment.
- 3.2 Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour (possibly involving the misuse of power) that can make a person feel humiliated, undermined or threatened.
- 3.3 Harassment may involve sexual harassment or be related to a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, including age, disability, race, sex, gender & gender identity, transgender identity, pregnancy and maternity, marriage & civil partnership, nationality, religion or belief (including no belief), or sexual orientation.

- 3.4 A hate crime or incident that is perceived by the victim or person to be motivated by hostility or prejudice towards any aspect of their identity could be another form of harassment.
- 3.5 Further examples of what behaviours constitutes bullying and harassment can be found [here](#)

#### **4. Reasonable management actions/workplace interactions**

- 4.1 To enable Queen Mary to meet its strategic objectives managers are expected to lead and manage their staff. This will involve:
  - a) Issuing reasonable instructions and expecting them to be carried out.
  - b) Setting and informing staff of expected standards of performance and behaviour.
  - c) Invoking the disciplinary and capability procedures to manage cases of misconduct or poor performance
- 4.2 Managers are expected to carry out these duties in a fair and consistent manner. Carrying out these functions in itself does not constitute an act of bullying or harassment. Any possible abuse of this authority may, however, constitute bullying or harassing behaviour.
- 4.3 It is also important for staff and students to recognise that every individual has a responsibility to understand that views and opinions held by others and decisions made by managers and supervisors may not always concur with their own; such differences are unlikely to constitute harassment and bullying unless they are raised, or dealt with, in an unfair or discriminatory way ([see unacceptable behaviours](#))
- 4.4 QMUL recognises harassment as being distinct from vigorous academic debate, the latter being characterised as respectful, encouraging a variety of viewpoints and having the effect of stimulating and encouraging thought and discussion is critical to the success of the University. Whilst colleagues and students will clearly hold a range of views on a variety of issues, they are expected to treat all members of the QMUL community with dignity and respect and to ensure that the expression of their views (in whatever form, including social media), is not manifested in such a way that creates an environment that is intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive to others.

#### **5. Criminal offences**

- 5.1 Some forms of bullying or harassment constitute unlawful discrimination, e.g. if it relates to a person's age, disability, gender reassignment, gender, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Serious bullying and harassment may amount to other civil or criminal offences under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 and criminal offences of harassment, alarm and distress under the Public Order Act 1986.
- 5.2 In case of alleged assault or behaviour that is considered a criminal offence, members of staff and students are strongly advised to report them to the police. Any of the services listed under Appendix 1 in this guidance can help a member of staff or student report a physical attack.
- 5.3 Once a formal complaint is pursued, it is likely to be appropriate and/or necessary for certain information to be provided to others within the university or to external bodies. QMUL will not normally report a matter to the police without the complainant's agreement except in

those rare circumstances where there is sufficient evidence to suggest that an individual poses an extreme risk.

## Section 2. Procedure and Guidance for staff

### 1. Scope

1.1 This procedure applies to bullying and harassment by:

- a) A member of staff against another member of staff.
- b) A member of staff against a student.
- c) A student against a member of staff.
- d) Third-parties such as external contractors and agencies against staff or students or vice-versa.

### 2. Making an informal complaint

2.1 It is often possible to sort out matters informally, particularly if the person does not know that his or her behaviour is unwelcome or upsetting. An informal discussion may help them to understand the effect of their behaviour and agree to change it. Other informal routes are:

- a) Making it clear to the person or persons causing the offence that their behaviour is unacceptable to you. You might want to ask a colleague to support you in this conversation.
- b) Seeking support or advice from a friend, a work colleague or if appropriate, a trade union representative.
- c) Contact the QMUL employee assistance programme, Workplace Options (**Freephone: 0800 243 458**).
- d) Speak to a member of staff from HR, who can advise on your options including mediation.
- e) Raise your concerns with your line manager.

### 3. Making a formal complaint

3.1 If you wish to make a formal complaint you can do so under the university's arrangements for dealing with grievances. These may be found at [www.hr.qmul.ac.uk/procedures/policies/grieve/index.html](http://www.hr.qmul.ac.uk/procedures/policies/grieve/index.html)

3.2 If you wish to make a formal complaint of harassment/bullying, please include:

- a) the name of the person(s) whose conduct you consider amounts to harassment or bullying;
- b) the type of conduct that is causing offence, together with specific examples;
- c) dates and times when incidents of harassment or bullying occurred, and where they occurred;
- d) the names of any colleagues or other students who witnessed any incidents, or who themselves may have been the victims of harassment or bullying by the same person;
- e) Detail of actions that you have already taken to try to deal with the issues raised.

3.3 During the process of dealing with the grievance, the Head of School/Institute/Directorate (or nominated representative) will, if appropriate, take proportionate and reasonable steps to

minimise and/or supervise any contact between the relevant parties and to keep them informed of these steps at all times.

- 3.4 Every safeguard will be put in place against the possibility of recrimination or victimisation, particularly in cases where a grievance is upheld. The Head of School/Institute/ Department (or nominated representative) has a duty to monitor the longer term situation as far as possible, both with respect to day-to-day working relations within the department and in the wider community.

#### **4. Physical assault**

- 4.1 If you have been physically attacked or assaulted you should seek help immediately. If you have been sexually assaulted or raped it is particularly important that you seek advice and medical assistance immediately. It is strongly recommended that such crimes be reported to the police. For cases of sexual assault an alternative is to seek advice from The Havens (see Appendix 1).
- 4.2 Suggested contacts, as listed in Appendix 1, will offer support in deciding what action to take and no additional parties will be involved without your permission. If there is a serious risk of harm to yourself or others, information may need to be passed on, but attempts to obtain your permission for this will always be sought first.

#### **5. Accusations of harassment or bullying**

- 5.1 If you are approached informally by someone or on behalf of someone about your conduct or behaviour, do not dismiss the complaint. Remember that people find different things acceptable or unacceptable and everyone has the right to decide what behaviour is acceptable to them and to have their feelings respected by others. You should carefully consider the information provided as it may be that you have upset or offended someone unintentionally. If that is the case the person who approached you may be content with your explanation and an apology, together with an assurance from you that you will not repeat the conduct or action. If accused of harassment or bullying support and advice is available (see para 2 above).
- 5.2 If you are approached about informal allegations in relation to your conduct or behaviour and mediation is proposed as an option then you should carefully consider this as a helpful way forward to resolve the concerns raised. Mediation will only be viable where both parties agree to mediation. Speak to a member of staff from Human Resources for further advice on mediation.
- 5.3 If a formal complaint is made about your behaviour this will be investigated under QMUL's arrangements for dealing with grievances. These may be found at <http://hr.qmul.ac.uk/procedures/policies/grieve/>

#### **6. Harassment or bullying by a student**

- 6.1 Should you wish to make a complaint against a student, you should first raise the issue with your line manager so that the necessary support and guidance can be given and so that a

decision can be made on whether to refer the complaint to the Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Unit.

**7. Harassment or bullying by a third party**

7.1 If you believe you are being harassed whilst at work by someone who is not employed or studying at the university but is associated with it (i.e. contractors or visitors) you should report such incidents to your Head of School/Department or a relevant manager.

**8. Confidentiality**

8.1 Information concerning allegations of harassment will, so far as reasonably possible, be treated as confidential by those that staff or students choose to disclose to. If there is a serious risk of harm to the staff, student or others, information may need to be passed on, but attempts to obtain the staff or students permission for this first would always be sought. Information will be shared on a need to know basis, including (as appropriate), with the individual against whom a complaint is brought.

**9. Vexatious or Malicious Complaints.**

9.1 If at any time, there is evidence a complaint has been made vexatiously or maliciously or the complaint is deemed not of genuine substance by the member of staff hearing the complaint, no further action will be taken regarding the complaint.

9.2 Disciplinary action may be taken in relation to the complainant if the complaint is considered to be vexatious or malicious.

**10. Monitoring**

10.1 QMUL will collect information relating to staff and students experience of the implementation of this policy through relevant surveys (which include questions relating to harassment where appropriate).

10.2 Review of the Dignity at Work and Study general guidance will be undertaken by the Human Resources Department every two years.

**Appendix 1**

## Sources of Support

1. If you believe you are being subjected to harassment or bullying it can help to talk about the situation. A wide range of support is available to you within and outside the University.

Service	Information and Contacts
<a href="#">The Havens</a>	Specialist centres in London that provide medical help, counselling, practical advice and emotional support for anyone who has been raped or sexually assaulted. You do not need to report anything to the police to get support from the Havens. There is a Haven centre at the Royal London Hospital in Whitechapel. <b>Tel (Whitechapel centre): 020 7247 4787 (staff on call 24 hours a day, every day of the week)</b>
<a href="#">East London Rape Crisis Service</a>	A free, confidential specialist help for women who have been raped or experienced any form of sexual violence, whatever the assault and whenever it occurred. If you would like to access the service or would simply like more <b>information call 0207 683 1210</b> , if your call is unanswered leave a message with a safe telephone number and they will call you back.
<a href="#">Being Heard</a>	A support group that runs weekly for young people aged 16-25 affected by sexual violence. <b>Please refer to the website for more details</b>
<a href="#">CliniQ</a>	Sexual health and well-being service for Trans people, their partners and friends based in Soho.
<a href="#">Survivors UK</a>	offers information, support and counselling to men who have been raped or sexually abused as adults or in childhood
National Helplines	<a href="http://nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/">http://nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/</a> <a href="https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk">https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk</a> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/discrimination-your-rights/discrimination-at-work">https://www.gov.uk/discrimination-your-rights/discrimination-at-work</a>
<a href="#">ELOP</a>	East London's LGBT Centre offering a range of advice, information, counselling and support services to lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans* (LGB&T) communities.

<u>Specifically for Staff</u>	
Human Resources	<a href="http://hr.qmul.ac.uk/contact/">http://hr.qmul.ac.uk/contact/</a>
Occupational Health	<a href="http://hr.qmul.ac.uk/about-us/">http://hr.qmul.ac.uk/about-us/</a>
Workplace Options	<a href="https://www.workplaceoptions.co.uk/">https://www.workplaceoptions.co.uk/</a>
Trade Union Representatives	<a href="http://www.hr.qmul.ac.uk/workqm/unions/index.html">http://www.hr.qmul.ac.uk/workqm/unions/index.html</a>
Stop Hate UK	<a href="https://www.stophateuk.org/qmul-reporting-page/">https://www.stophateuk.org/qmul-reporting-page/</a>
<u>Specifically for Students</u>	
<a href="#">Advice and Counselling Service</a> : counselling is available for confidential emotional support:	

[Academic Advice Service, QMSU: Confidential advice and support about bullying and harassment, and support with submitting a complaint under the code of student discipline](#)

[Residential Support: Pastoral support for students living in QMUL accommodation](#)

[Student Support within Academic Schools: Support with pastoral support for issues that affect your academic programme and studies](#)

<http://www.qmul.ac.uk/studentlife/support/index.html>