



UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

DIGNITY AND RESPECT POLICY

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1. Policy Statement

1.1 The University of London is committed to a safe and secure working environment in which everyone can effectively contribute to the best of their abilities regardless of their personal characteristics. The University promotes mutual respect, tolerance and understanding throughout our diverse workforce.

2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to promote a respectful and inclusive workplace culture at the University of London. It sets out the standards of behaviour that are expected of our staff in carrying out their employment in order to foster a positive working and studying environment.

2.2 The University recognises, however, that disputes will arise from time-to-time in the workplace. Where possible and appropriate we will encourage the resolution of disputes by informal means as set out in this policy.

2.3 The aim of this policy is provide staff with an **informal route** to dispute resolution. It is based on good-will and with the aim of improving working relationships.

2.4 As this is an informal approach, it is staff member led and *no formal record is kept* on any staff file by the University itself. However, staff may retain their own records and the informal process may be cited as part of a formal grievance.

The informal Dignity & Respect approach outlined in this document will not always be appropriate route to resolving disputes.

If the behaviour in question is deemed by the complainant as too serious to be resolved informally, the appropriate formal Grievance Procedure for staff should be instigated. The University regards any incident of bullying, harassment or discrimination as a serious matter and will respond promptly and sensitively to formal complaints, and where appropriate take disciplinary action.

*For further advice and support options refer to **Appendix A***

3. Scope

3.1 The approach outlined is open to all employees of the central University of London including those at CoSector and Health Education England.

3.2 It does not, however, apply to agency workers or those with a contract for services. Agency or contracted staff should raise issues of inappropriate behaviour directly with their own employers. Staff experiencing inappropriate behaviour from contractors or agency staff should consult HR colleagues in the first instance.

3.3 This policy should not be followed at the same time as any formal complaint or grievance made in accordance with University of London Grievance policy.

4. Respectful behaviour

4.1 As employees of the University of London, we all have a responsibility to treat colleagues, students and other visitors to our campus with dignity and respect.

4.2 Staff are expected to work in a cooperative and collaborative manner with teams and individuals throughout the institution and when representing the University externally.

4.3 Colleagues are encouraged to address any issues that may arise themselves on an informal basis when this is appropriate and a positive outcome is possible.

4.4 Staff are also urged to consider the potential impact of their own behaviour when an issue is raised by a colleague.

4.5 Managers are required to promote dignity and respect by their own behaviour and to address concerns raised in accordance with the relevant procedures referenced in this document.

5. Promoting dignity and respect

5.1 The University is committed to embedding an inclusive and respectful workplace culture. The following measures have been adopted in order to demonstrate this commitment:

- Working with staff union representatives, HR colleagues and the Head of Inclusion on a comprehensive review of our approach to ensuring dignity and respect to ensure our approach is in accordance with best practice
- Developing a Relationships Code of Conduct for staff to clarify what is unacceptable behaviour
- Reviewing our Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure
- Reviewing our approach to training and communications in this area
- Appointing and training Dignity and Respect Contacts across the institution
- Adopting a new process for students to report harassment
- Establishing a central record of incidents to identify trends and monitor the effectiveness of measures taken

6. Dignity & Respect Contacts

6.1 Dignity and Respect Contacts will provide impartial advice and guidance on the options that are available to staff without making a judgement on whether any alleged behaviour is, or is not acceptable. The University will nominate senior staff to act as contacts for staff who wish to discuss the options available to them to address inappropriate behaviour. A call for volunteers from other levels will also be undertaken. This will provide staff with contacts outside their own departments or teams or HR should they prefer this option.

6.2 Appropriate training will be provided to the nominated contacts to ensure that they can fulfil this role in a consistent manner. It should be noted that the role of the Dignity & Respect contacts **is not** to advocate on behalf of a member of staff. Neither is it their

role to provide a counselling service. Their role is to provide impartial advice on process and they will remain neutral at all times.

6.3 The list of UoL Dignity and Respect contacts can be found on the dedicated intranet page.

6.4 Staff may seek support, representation and counselling from the list of internal and external agencies listed in the Appendix (page 9).

Sexual harassment and assault

The University of London recognises the profound and lasting impact that sexual harassment and assault can have on those targeted and is committed to a 'zero tolerance' approach in the institution.

A member of staff can consider addressing such inappropriate behaviour informally within the terms of this policy. Alternatively, they may consider that a more formal approach is required and submit a formal complaint under the terms of the Grievance Procedure. The formal route for making a complaint in respect of the Grievance Procedure can be found here: [LINK](#)

In both cases, the member of staff concerned can seek support and guidance from the internal and external agencies listed in the appendix (page 8) of this document).

7. Sending a 'Stop' message

7.1 If a member of staff considers a colleagues' behaviour to be inappropriate, they can send the other party a 'Stop' notice. The aim of a 'Stop' notice is to alert a colleague to the impact of their inappropriate behaviour on the author, in the hope that this will prompt a change in that behaviour.

7.2 It is for the staff member themselves to define what they consider the inappropriate behaviour to be. Given that each case is different, it is not possible to list or define what is unacceptable in all possible situations. The definitions of bullying and harassment above and examples in the Appendix (page X) may, however, help with this consideration.

7.3 A 'Stop' message can be verbal and delivered during a meeting between the parties. It is, however, recommended that the message be written in the form of email or letter to give the staff member time to compose thoughts and reflect on the message before sending it.

7.4 The 'Stop' notice is a message between colleagues and others associated with the University and does not involve the HR team nor line-management. Therefore no formal record of a 'Stop' notice is retained by the University.

Writing a 'Stop' notice: It is recommended that a 'Stop' Notice includes the following elements:

- A description of the inappropriate behaviour that is causing distress or concern
- An explanation that the 'Stop' message is within the terms of this Dignity and Respect Policy.
- A description of the impact of the inappropriate behaviour on the staff member
- A politely worded request for the behaviour to stop
- An understanding that working relationships can be improved with good-will and respect between both parties

7.5 What to do if you receive a stop notice:

Often people are not aware that things they say or do can be upsetting to others and had no intention to deliberately offend. If you receive a 'Stop' notice, please remember that:

- It is an attempt by a colleague to improve working relationships based on good-will
- It is an informal alternative to the formal grievance process
- No formal record will be retained by the University at the time that the Stop message is sent
- A positive response from you in respect of future working relationships is not in any way an admission that you have done anything inappropriate
- Try to respond as positively as you can in light of the above
- You can request support from the internal and external sources set out in the Appendix (page 8)

8. Mediation

8.1 If the result of the stop notice is not satisfactory to the staff member involved, a request can be made for mediation to be facilitated. Mediation will be facilitated by trained staff members who have no immediate connection with either party. In some cases, Mediators may come from external institutions.

8.2 The role of the mediator will be to facilitate a discussion on how the parties would like to improve their working relationship in the future. The mediator will not represent, nor advocate on behalf of either party. Mediation can be arranged by contacting the appropriate [HR Partner](#).

8.3 Please note that mediation **can only be facilitated** if both parties agree to participate with good-will. The process is confidential and any mutually agreed outcomes will not be provided to anyone other than the parties involved. If the Mediation does not result in the desired outcome, a staff member can consider the formal approaches outlined in the Grievance Policy.

9. Alternative routes to dispute resolution:

9.1 If the aggrieved staff member is not satisfied by the response to the 'Stop' message; the outcome of the mediation; or considers that an informal approach under the Dignity and Respect Policy is not appropriate, a formal grievance can be considered at any time in accordance with the University of London policy which can be found here: **LINK**

9.2 The staff member/s concerned may also consider whether it would be suitable to submit a confidential complaint in accordance with the [Public Interest Disclosure \('whistleblowing'\) policy](#).

9.3 Internal and external support mechanisms for staff members in this situation are outlined in the Appendix at page 8.

10. Legal considerations

10.1 The Equality Act (2010) defines Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) as public authorities and sets out their obligations under Section 149 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The PSED requires institutions to have due regard to a number of general and specific duties. In summary, the University is obliged by the Act to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in respect of nine defined 'Protected Characteristics'¹.

10.2 This Policy is one of the ways in which the University seeks to discharge its duties under the Equality Act (2010).

11. What is bullying and harassment?

11.1 Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, and/or an abuse or misuse of power that is meant to undermine, humiliate or injure the person on the receiving end.

11.2 Under the terms of the Equality Act (2010), harassment is unwanted conduct related to relevant protected characteristics, which are sex, gender reassignment, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief and age, that:

- has the purpose of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person; or
- is reasonably considered by that person to have the effect of violating their dignity or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them, even if this effect was not intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

¹ The Equality Act (2010) defines the Protected Characteristics as: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

11.3 Conduct may be harassment whether or not the person behaving in that way intends to offend. Something intended as a "joke" may offend another person. Different people find different things acceptable. Everyone has the right to decide what behaviour is acceptable to them and to have their feelings respected by others. Behaviour which any reasonable person would realise would be likely to offend will be harassment without the recipient having to make it clear in advance that behaviour of that type is not acceptable to them, e.g. sexual touching. It may not be so clear in advance that some other forms of behaviour would be unwelcome to, or could offend, a particular person, e.g. certain "banter", flirting or asking someone for a private drink after work. In these cases, first-time conduct which unintentionally causes offence will not be harassment but it will become harassment if the conduct continues after the recipient has made it clear, by words or conduct, that such behaviour is unacceptable to them.

11.4 Harassment may also occur where a person engages in unwanted conduct towards another because they perceive that the recipient has a protected characteristic (for example, a perception that they are gay or disabled), when the recipient does not, in fact, have that protected characteristic. For example, it would be harassment for an individual to tease repeatedly an individual because of an incorrect belief that the recipient is deaf. Similarly, harassment could take place where an individual is bullied or harassed because of another person with whom the individual is connected or associated, for example if their child is disabled, wife is pregnant or friend is a devout Christian.

11.5 There may also be circumstances in which an individual is subjected to unwanted conduct from a third party, such as a client or customer. For example, it might be that a client makes a series of racist remarks to an employee. If an employee feels that they have been bullied or harassed by customers, suppliers, vendors or visitors, they should report any such behaviour to their manager who will take appropriate action. Bullying or harassment of customers, suppliers, vendors or visitors or others by an employee will be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure.

11.6 A single incident can be harassment if it is sufficiently serious.

11.7 All bullying and harassment is misconduct and is a disciplinary offence which will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure. Bullying or harassment will often be gross misconduct, which can lead to dismissal without notice.

11.8 Bullying or harassment will constitute unlawful discrimination where it relates to one of the protected characteristics, which are sex, gender reassignment, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief and age. Serious bullying or harassment may amount to other civil or criminal offences, e.g. a civil offence under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 and criminal offences of assault. However, the University accepts that bullying and harassment may not relate to one of the protected characteristics (i.e. it can happen to anyone). Some examples of bullying and harassment can be found in Appendix C page 10.

What is victimisation?

11.9 Victimisation is subjecting a person to a detriment because they have, in good faith, complained (whether formally or otherwise) that someone has been bullying or harassing them or someone else, or supported someone to make a complaint or given evidence in relation to a complaint. This would include isolating someone because they have made a complaint or giving them a heavier or more difficult workload.

11.10 Provided that you act in good faith, i.e. you genuinely believe that what you are saying is true, you have a right not to be victimised for making a complaint or doing anything in relation to a complaint of bullying or harassment and the organisation will take appropriate action to deal with any alleged victimisation, which may include disciplinary action against anyone found to have victimised you. Making a complaint that you know to be untrue, or giving evidence that you know to be untrue, may lead to disciplinary action being taken against you.

12. Confidentiality and record keeping

12.1 This policy suggests an informal route to dispute resolution. So whilst individual staff members may save correspondence, no formal record of correspondence is retained by the University. However, the University will keep an anonymised record of requests for advice made under this Dignity and Respect Policy. This will be to facilitate trend analysis and reporting purposes only.

13. Policy Ownership and Review

13.1 This Dignity and Respect Policy sits within the HR Directorate policy suite and updating it will be the responsibility of the Director of HR Services. Initially adopted in April 2018, this policy will be reviewed in April 2020, unless external events or legislation necessitate an earlier date.

13.2 This policy was developed in accordance with the UoL Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2016/19) and in recognition of the University's obligations under the terms of the Equality Act (2010). An Equality Impact Assessment was completed in February 2018 and the identified actions assigned to responsible officers for completion.

APPENDIX – A: SUPPORT OPTIONS

i) INTERNAL SUPPORT

Dignity and Respect Contacts:

Will provide impartial advice and guidance on the options that are available to staff without making a judgement on whether any alleged behaviour is, or is not acceptable. A list of Contacts can be found [here](#).

Line Manager:

A staff member may initially discuss their concerns with their line-manager if possible and appropriate

The Human Resources Department:

The HR Team can supply guidance to staff members on the operation of this policy and other employment matters. The HR intranet site page provides contact details for staff members. Please contact your designated HR Partner: [Human-Resources](#)

The Employee Assistance Programme: [EAP link](#)

Union Representatives:

Staff can also contact their trade union representative: UNISON@london.ac.uk or UCU@london.ac.uk

ii) EXTERNAL SUPPORT

Camden Safety Net: [Call 020 7974 2526 \(office hours\)](tel:02079742526)

CSN provide support to the victims of sexual and domestic abuse who live work and study on the London Borough of Camden. This includes all UoL students regardless of where they live.

Equality Focus: <http://www.equalityfocus.co.uk/>

Equality Focus work with the University to provide high-quality specialist Non-Medical Help (NMH) support staff to enable students with a diverse range of needs to fulfil their academic potential.

GALOP: <http://www.galop.org.uk/> (London's LGBT anti-violence & abuse charity)

The Gender Trust: www.gendertrust.org.uk

The Gender Trust provides support and an information centre for anyone with any question or problem concerning their gender identity, or whose loved one is struggling with gender identity issues.

National stalking helpline: <http://www.stalkinghelpline.org/> or 0808 802 0300

09:30 – 16:00 Weekdays (except Wed 13:00 – 16:00)

The Rights of Women Helpline: 020 7490 2562

The Rights of Women Helpline provides legal advice for women.

The Samaritans: 08457 909090

Available 24 hours a day providing support through trauma.

Survivors UK (male survivor organisation): <https://www.survivorsuk.org/>

Women's Aid: (domestic violence support): <http://www.womensaid.org.uk/> or call 0808 2000 247

Men's Advice Line: (domestic violence support): <http://www.mensadvice.org.uk/>

APPENDIX B: Examples of bullying or harassment

Bullying and harassment may be misconduct that is physical, verbal or non-verbal. Examples of unacceptable behaviour that are covered by this policy include (but are not limited to):

- physical conduct ranging from unwelcome touching to serious assault;
- unwelcome sexual advances;
- the offer of rewards for going along with sexual advances, e.g. promotion, access to training;
- threats for rejecting sexual advances, e.g. suggestions that refusing advances will adversely affect the employee's employment, evaluation, pay, advancement, assigned work, or any other condition of employment or career development;
- demeaning comments about a person's appearance;
- unwelcome jokes or comments of a sexual or racial nature or about an individual's age, disability, sexual orientation or religion;
- questions about a person's sex life;
- unwanted nicknames related to a person's age, race or disability;
- the use of obscene gestures;
- excluding an individual because he/she is associated or connected with someone with a protected characteristic, e.g. his/her child is gay, spouse is black or parent is disabled;
- ignoring an individual because he/she is perceived to have a protected characteristic when he/she does not, in fact, have the protected characteristic), e.g. an employee is thought to be Jewish, or is perceived to be a transsexual;
- the open display of pictures or objects with sexual or racial overtones, even if not directed at any particular person, e.g. magazines, calendars or pin-ups;
- spreading malicious rumours or insulting someone;
- picking on someone or setting him/her up to fail;
- making threats or comments about someone's job security without good reason;
- ridiculing someone;
- isolation or non-cooperation at work; and
- excluding someone from social activities

Please note that the appropriate fulfilment out of legitimate line-management duties (e.g. performance management) would not in itself constitute bullying or harassment.

APPENDIX C: FLOW CHART

The Dignity & Respect process may include **some or all** of the following steps dependant on the wishes of the staff member initiating the process. **No stage** is dependent on the successful completion of the previous step in this sequence:

**Incident causing
distress**



**Issue raised with
Dignity & Respect
Contact/HR/Line
Manager**



**Stop message
delivered**



**Mediation
Facilitated**



**Formal Grievance
considered**

**If you need this document in an alternative
format please contact:
diversity@london.ac.uk**