

# **DIGNITY AT WORK AND STUDY**



The School of City and Regional Planning is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity. We aim to provide a working and learning environment which is free from unfair discrimination and will enable staff and students to fulfil their personal potential. All individuals should be treated with dignity and respect whether at work or study; staff and students have an important role to play in creating an environment where harassment is unacceptable.

The purpose of this policy is to assist in developing and encouraging a working and learning environment and culture in which harassment is known to be unacceptable and where individuals have the confidence to deal with harassment without fear of ridicule or reprisals. The School will take steps to protect its staff and students from harassment, bullying or victimisation, whether this arises from race, sex, sexual orientation, age, appearance, political or religious views or any other grounds.

Those who believe they have been treated in a way which undermines their dignity should in the first instance try to deal with the matter informally, where necessary, involving a senior member of staff or tutor. Frequently all that will be needed is an explanation that behaviour is damaging or hurtful, followed by an apology.

Where matters cannot be dealt with informally, the complaint will be investigated by the Head of School or a senior member of Management Team. If a resolution is not forthcoming at this stage the University complaints procedure or disciplinary procedures may be invoked.

# **DEFINITIONS OF HARASSMENT AND BULLYING**

## **Harassment**

Harassment may involve bullying, victimisation or making unreasonable demands on others directly or indirectly (e.g. e-mail). Grounds may include sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, political views, trade union membership, disability or age. Harassment may take the form of unfair allocation of work, unreasonable pressure to complete work, ridicule or exclusion from conversation or social events, inappropriate written comments on assessed work or evaluation forms.

## **Bullying**

Bullying may appear insignificant in isolated incidents, but the cumulative effect can be devastating. Bullying may involve actions or words which humiliate, patronise, threaten, intimidate, undermine or demean.

## **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature affecting the recipient's dignity. It may include physical contact, invasion of body space, suggestive remarks, unwanted comments on dress and appearance, jokes of a sexual nature or display of sexually offensive material. It is not uncommon for the person responsible to be unaware of the degree of distress produced.

## **Racial Harassment**

Racial Harassment is harassment based on race, nationality or national origin. It includes racist jokes, insults, display of racially offensive material and abusive language. Distressing behaviour may be deliberate, but may also be the result of cultural misunderstanding.

## **Harassment on the Grounds of Sexual Orientation**

Harassment may be against individuals or groups of people who are or are thought to be lesbian, gay or bisexual. Examples include offensive jokes, ridicule, anti-gay comments and stereotyping, verbal abuse, threats, derogatory comments or intrusive questioning about a person's domestic circumstances. Innuendo, gossip or failure to accept partners in appropriate circumstances may also constitute harassment.

## **Harassment on the Grounds of Disability or Disfigurement**

Harassment may be based on the fact that a person has a physical or sensory impairment, learning difficulty or disfigurement. It includes offensive or patronising language, action or behaviour, jokes, or inappropriate comments and questions which cause offence to the individual concerned.

## **Age**

Ageism is usually experienced by older people but can be also affect those who are younger. It may include assumptions regarding an individual's ability to learn, offensive remarks or exclusion on the ground of age.

## **Religious or Political Harassment, or Harassment on the Grounds of Trade Union Membership**

Religious or Political Harassment is based on religious or political views. This includes offensive jokes, ridiculing or name calling, or display of offensive written or visual material.

While the examples listed above are standard definitions, in practice those making a complaint usually define what they mean by bullying and harassment: something that has happened to them that is unwelcome, unwarranted and causes a detrimental effect. All complaints of harassment or bullying should be dealt with regardless of whether they fit into one of the standard definitions (*Bristol University, 2003*).

## **GUIDANCE FOR RECIPIENTS**

If you experience behaviour that upsets you or causes you offence, you are encouraged to make this clear at an early stage to the person concerned. This will give the person the opportunity to recognise the effect of his or her behaviour and to change it. Wherever possible, tell the person involved that the behaviour is upsetting and unwanted and that it must stop. This may be done face to face or in writing and may involve a third party as mediator.

You are advised to keep a written record of incidents, including time, date, place, a full description of what happened, the names of individuals concerned and witnesses to the incidents.

Where the above steps have failed, you may wish to refer the matter to your supervisor, line manager or tutor where appropriate. It may be possible for him or her to speak informally to the other person. Where the person concerned is your supervisor, line manager or tutor then you should seek the assistance of any member of staff with whom you feel comfortable. If the inappropriate behaviour continues it should be referred to the Head of School for investigation. If the complaint involves the Head of School, a senior member of Management Team should be approached.

If you are a student who is experiencing harassment or bullying from another student or a member of staff, you can also access support from the Student Advisory Service, based in 50 Park Place, full details can be found at:

**[www.cardiff.ac.uk/schoolsanddivisions/divisions/stude/advis/index.html](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/schoolsanddivisions/divisions/stude/advis/index.html)**, or the Student Union Advice centre: details at

**[www.cardiffstudents.com/main/support/advice](http://www.cardiffstudents.com/main/support/advice)**.

If you are a member of staff you can access advice from the Training and Development Section or the School's allocated Human Resources Manager, both in the Human Resources Directorate.

## **GUIDANCE FOR MANAGERS AND TUTORS**

Where you witness harassment or where alleged harassment is brought to your attention, you should consider taking some action. You are responsible for advising members of your staff and students accused of harassment that their behaviour is inappropriate and causing offence. It is important to establish the facts. Disciplinary action may or may not ultimately be appropriate

It is advisable, where possible, to bring the two parties together in order to agree future standards of behaviour and conduct and to establish the consequences of harassment. It may be appropriate for either party to be accompanied if they so wish. It is the manager's or tutor's responsibility to monitor and review the ongoing relationship.

All incidences of harassment should be treated in confidence and with sensitivity. However, where you feel ill-equipped to deal with a particular situation, it may be helpful to involve a senior member of staff, the Human Resources Department or the Student Advisory Service (see above), first asking permission of the recipient.

# DEALING WITH A COMPLAINT

All complaints will be taken seriously and progressed quickly with confidentiality, sensitivity and discretion. Care will be taken during any investigation to protect the interests of both the complainant and the person against whom the complaint is made and to establish the nature of the problem.

If the unwelcome and inappropriate behaviour continues following an informal approach to the instigator the complaint should be referred to the Head of School who will undertake an investigation. Decisions on taking disciplinary action will lie with the Head of School or Management Team.

## Discipline

Harassment can cause great distress to individuals, interfering with work or study, increasing absenteeism and lowering morale.

However, recipients of harassment should remember that sometimes distress is caused inadvertently, and the person responsible may be unaware of the effect of his or her behaviour. In such cases the person who feels harassed or bullied should seek support in addressing the problem, but disciplinary action against the perpetrator may not necessarily be appropriate.

Disciplinary action against perpetrators may be appropriate if their behaviour is intended to cause distress, or if inappropriate or offensive behaviour persists, following formal advice that it must cease. The procedures that may be invoked if disciplinary action is taken differ depending on whether the perpetrator is a student, an academic or non-academic member of staff.

For the Student Disciplinary Procedure see:

**[www.cardiff.ac.uk/schoolsanddivisions/divisions/regis/sfs/regs/discipline.html](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/schoolsanddivisions/divisions/regis/sfs/regs/discipline.html)**

For non-academic members of staff see the Local Discipline and Grievance Policy at:

**[www.cardiff.ac.uk/schoolsanddivisions/divisions/humrs/staffinfo/policies/index.html](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/schoolsanddivisions/divisions/humrs/staffinfo/policies/index.html)**

For academic staff see:

**[www.cardiff.ac.uk/schoolsanddivisions/divisions/humrs/index.html](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/schoolsanddivisions/divisions/humrs/index.html)** (policies currently under review).

## Accused of Harassment or Bullying

If you are accused of harassment or bullying by a student or member of staff you may also wish to seek support in dealing with the situation. It may be appropriate to seek the support of a fellow student, colleague, tutor or line manager, or, you may wish to seek support and advice from other sources outside the School. If you are a student either Student Advisory or the Student Union will be able to provide advice (see above for contact details). If you are a member of staff, advice will be available from the Human Resources Directorate (see above) or the appropriate Union, if you are a member.

For useful website links please see the School's Equal Opportunities web pages:

**[www.cardiff.ac.uk/cplan/school/eq-opp.html](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/cplan/school/eq-opp.html)**.

*Definitions of harrassment used in this leaflet were taken from:  
Bristol University (2003) **Dignity at Work or Study.***