

Dignity at Work and Study Policy

Version Control

Version Number	UEB Sponsor	Approval Body/Officer	Date of approval
V_01	Chief Operating Officer & University Secretary	University Executive Board	24/03/2026

This document is available in Welsh.

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1. The University is committed to building an inclusive environment where opportunities are open to all, diversity is valued, and where everybody can reach their full potential without fear of harassment, bullying, discrimination or victimisation.
- 1.2. All members of the University community are expected to demonstrate behaviours that uphold the principles of dignity, respect and inclusion at all times. This includes treating others courteously, valuing different perspectives, communicating in a professional manner, and contributing to a safe environment.
- 1.3. Members should act in ways that do not undermine, intimidate, or exclude others, and should actively challenge or report conduct that falls below these standards.
- 1.4. The University operates a zero-tolerance approach to behaviours of harassment (including sexual harassment and misconduct), bullying, discrimination or victimisation. Zero tolerance means that we will not condone or ignore reports of harassment, bullying, or victimisation.
- 1.5. Bullying and harassment can have a detrimental effect upon the health, confidence, morale and performance of those impacted and create a negative working and learning environment. The University aims to ensure a timely response to all complaints and to treat them with due respect, appropriate confidentiality and fairness.

- 1.6. The University explicitly recognises racial harassment as a serious form of unlawful discrimination. In line with the Equality Act 2010 and our institutional commitments to anti-racism, we are committed to challenging racism in all its forms – including microaggressions, racial stereotyping, and any behaviour that creates a hostile, degrading, or offensive environment for individuals or groups. Our values and strategic commitments require all members of the University to actively promote racial equity and model anti-racist behaviour.
- 1.7. Any allegation of bullying, harassment or victimisation will be treated seriously, regardless of the seniority of those involved; anyone found to have behaved unacceptably may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal or exclusion. Anyone making frivolous, vexatious, malicious, or unsubstantiated complaints will be dealt with under the appropriate disciplinary procedures.

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1. The University has a legal responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of its members (see 3.1 for definition).
- 2.2. This Policy is part of a University-wide framework that fosters a working, learning, and research environment and culture where differences are embraced, and all forms of harassment, bullying, and victimisation will not be tolerated.¹
- 2.3. This policy and accompanying procedures aim to ensure that if bullying or harassment occurs, employees and students have support and adequate procedures to address the problem.
- 2.4. This policy ensures that both employees and students have the confidence and clarity about the processes in place to address bullying and harassment when they occur, without fear of victimisation.
- 2.5. Definitions of, and examples of what may be considered bullying, harassment and victimisation can be found on the University's [Report and Support System](#).
- 2.6. When considering whether behaviour may constitute harassment, the University will apply a test of reasonableness - namely, whether a typical person, in

¹ Physical assault is a criminal offence and will not be tolerated. All staff and students should be treated with dignity, courtesy and respect and feel safe and valued. If any staff or student were to experience a physical assault this should be reported to the appropriate university representative and the Police immediately.

possession of the same facts and circumstances, would regard the conduct as unacceptable or inappropriate.

3. SCOPE

3.1. This policy applies to all members of Cardiff University engaged in the course of University business. Members, by definition, include:

- all employees²
- honorary title holders
- students
- Council members (“internal members”)
- agency staff
- volunteers
- contractors
- third parties who act on behalf of or provide services to the University (“external members”).

3.2. It is expected that all members of the University will always maintain acceptable behaviours, for example, at University-related social occasions, work or study-related events and trips abroad, or on social media (both work/study and personal). Please note, this is not an exhaustive list.

4. PROCEDURES

4.1. The University seeks to ensure that people who feel they have been the subject of harassment, bullying, or victimisation can raise their concerns and have them addressed appropriately.

4.2. Informal resolution can often be the most effective and efficient way to deal with bullying/harassment. The University encourages a degree of flexibility appropriate to the individual circumstances to allow for informal resolution. However, where a formal complaint is made, every effort will be made to ensure it is dealt with expeditiously.

² For simple ease of reference, in this policy, we refer to all categories of staff listed in section 3 as “Employees”, including those [categories of staff](#) who are not considered to be employees as a matter of law.

5. PROCEDURES FOR EMPLOYEES

5.1. SUGGESTIONS FOR INFORMAL RESOLUTION – EMPLOYEE ACTION

- 5.1.1. If a University employee believes that they are experiencing treatment that contradicts the principles of this policy, it is important to address the situation as soon as possible. The University encourages individuals to resolve issues informally, as this is often the fastest, most effective, and efficient way to address bullying or harassment.
- 5.1.2. The employee may wish to speak to a [Dignity and Wellbeing Contact](#), their manager, HR or their trade union representative, who will be able to discuss the various options available to them. Alternatively, they may wish to submit their concerns through the [Report + Support](#) System.
- 5.1.3. Complaints made by University employees may be addressed informally through the initial stages of the relevant University [Procedures](#). Trying to resolve a situation informally will not preclude any person from bringing a formal complaint. Suggestions for informal resolutions for employees can be found on the [Dealing with Complaints](#) intranet page.
- 5.1.4. In accordance with the Welsh Language Standards that came into effect on 1 April 2018, employees have the right to use the Welsh language to make a complaint and/or respond to a complaint or allegation. Employees also have the right to use the Welsh language in meetings where they are the subject of complaints and allegations (or have made the complaint). A simultaneous translation service from Welsh to English will be provided at the meeting when the meeting cannot be conducted solely in Welsh.

6. FORMAL INVESTIGATION AND RESOLUTION - EMPLOYEE ACTION

- 6.1. If the employee has been unable to resolve the issue informally, or if they believe it cannot be resolved in this way, they can take further action by following the appropriate procedures outlined in this Section of the policy.
- 6.2. All formal complaints relating to harassment, bullying or victimisation should be made through [existing complaints and disciplinary procedures](#).
- 6.3. The employee may submit their complaint in Welsh or English. Both complainants and respondents have the right to use Welsh or English at every stage of the procedure, and the University will ensure that no individual is treated less favourably on the basis of the language they choose, in line with the Welsh Language Standards.

- 6.4. The rules of the formal procedures will apply in full. If the person whose behaviour is alleged to be unacceptable should make a counter-allegation, this will be investigated through the relevant procedures.
- 6.5. Employees wishing to raise concerns about a student's conduct should do so through the [Student Conduct Procedure](#).
- 6.6. Disciplinary action may be taken where complaints are proven to be knowingly based on false information or made with malicious intent. Such action will not be taken against anyone who brings a complaint in good faith, even if that complaint is not upheld.
- 6.7. Whilst dealing with a formal complaint, it will sometimes be necessary to consider appropriate interventions, such as separating individuals in the workplace, redeployment, working from a different location, or suspension from duty. These steps may be taken to protect one or both parties or protect the integrity of the investigation and do not constitute disciplinary action.
- 6.8. The decision as to which individual will be moved to affect the separation will be based on objective criteria such as service needs, impact on students, and any accessibility issues or caring responsibilities. The Head of School or Professional Service will decide whether it is appropriate to separate those involved, based on the available information and advice from HR. The terms and conditions of the arrangements will be confirmed in writing to the affected employee(s) and will be regularly reviewed.
- 6.9. Some forms of harassment can constitute criminal offences or grounds for civil proceedings. Nothing in this policy or related procedures will prevent employees or students from exercising their rights to take legal action.

7. DISCIPLINARY ACTION

- 7.1. Whenever an allegation of harassment, bullying or victimisation is upheld, disciplinary action may be taken against the employee(s) found to be responsible³. Any such action will take place through the existing disciplinary procedures.

³ As part of some funding applications/current grant conditions, information of upheld disciplinary action relating to harassment, bullying or victimisation is required to be passed to the funding body for further action that the body may choose to undertake.

- 7.2. Serious cases of harassment, bullying or victimisation perpetrated by employees will be treated as gross misconduct and may lead to dismissal through the disciplinary hearing process. Less serious incidents may result in a written or oral warning, or in informal action (such as requiring an employee to attend a relevant training session).
- 7.3. In extreme circumstances, incidents of harassment or bullying may be so severe (for example, involving violence or sexual offences) that the University may inform the police of the situation. In such situations, Human Resources (in relation to employees) should always be contacted for advice.

8. SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYEES

- 8.1. Bullying and harassment can cause humiliation, isolation, loss of confidence and serious harm to mental health and wellbeing in both the short-term and longer-term. A range of [support and advice services](#) is available to members of the University's community who have experienced, witnessed or been accused of bullying and harassment.
- 8.2. The employee's manager, Head of School/Professional Service, and HR will also be able to provide support during this time. Alongside this, Trade Union support is also available. Where appropriate, a stress risk assessment should also be considered to ensure the employee's wellbeing is supported.
- 8.3. A referral to counselling can also be made, either by the employee themselves or through HR, using the [Employee Assistance Programme](#).
- 8.4. All external support and services are described and can be accessed through the University's [Report + Support](#) platform. Please note, this is not an exhaustive list.

9. PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS

9.1. SUGGESTIONS FOR INFORMAL RESOLUTION – STUDENT ACTION

- 9.1.1. The University encourages individuals to resolve issues informally if they feel it is safe and achievable, as this approach is often the fastest and most efficient way to address bullying or harassment. Students can access support on informal processes through the University's [Report + Support](#) platform.
- 9.1.2. Students can access support without making a complaint; they can do so confidentially online through [Report + Support](#). The report will go directly to the [Student Support Intervention Team](#), trauma-informed practitioners who offer

support around harassment, harmful behaviour, and serious mental health concerns. They provide help but do not investigate complaints.

- 9.1.3. The [Student Conduct Procedure](#) explains how to raise concerns about another student's conduct.
- 9.1.4. The [Student Complaints Procedure](#) explains how to raise concerns about a staff member's conduct for formal action.
- 9.1.5. Impartial, confidential, free advice on these processes is available from Student Advice in the Students' Union: www.cardiffstudents.com/advice
- 9.1.6. Students are entitled to engage with this process in Welsh or English, including meetings, written communication, and any follow-up actions. A simultaneous translation service from Welsh to English will be provided at the meeting when the meeting cannot be conducted solely in Welsh.

10. FORMAL PROCEDURES – STUDENT ACTION

- 10.1. If a student has been unable to resolve the issue informally, or if they believe it cannot be resolved in this way, they can raise a concern by following the appropriate procedures outlined in this Section of the policy.
- 10.2. Students can submit their concerns in Welsh or English. Both complainants (reporting students) and respondents have the right to use Welsh or English at every stage of the formal procedure, and the University will ensure that no student is treated less favourably on the basis of the language they choose, in line with the Welsh Language Standards.
- 10.3. Where a student elects to make a formal complaint to the University regarding harassment, bullying or victimisation, this should be raised with the [Student Cases](#) team under the following procedures by following the links:
 - the [Student Complaints Procedure](#) – where a complaint relates to the behaviour of a Cardiff University employee. The complaint may be investigated under the Disciplinary Procedure, and if allegations of harassment, bullying or victimisation are upheld, disciplinary action may be taken. Severe cases may be reported to the police.
 - the [Student Conduct Regulations](#) – where a complaint relates to the behaviour of a fellow Cardiff University student. The Regulations include the

Student Conduct Procedure and, where applicable, the Fitness to Practice Procedure and Student Support Intervention Policy may be used. Where a breach of conduct regulation is found to have taken place, penalties or sanctions may be imposed.

- 10.4.** Where a student wishes to raise a formal complaint against the behaviour of an external contractor or supplier of goods and services, complaints should be raised through the organisation's complaint procedure. Further guidance on how to raise a formal complaint can be found on the Cardiff University [website](#).
- 10.5.** Some forms of harassment can constitute criminal offences or grounds for civil proceedings. Nothing in this policy or related procedures will prevent students from exercising their rights to take legal action.

11. SUPPORT AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS

- 11.1.** A range of [support and advice services](#) is available to students who have experienced, witnessed or been accused of bullying and harassment, including:
- their personal tutor, supervisor, Head of School or other member of School staff
 - [Residence Life team](#) for students who are living in University accommodation
 - [Student Advice Centre](#)
 - [the University Chaplaincy](#)
- 11.2.** The University's [Student Support Intervention Team](#) are available to speak to and support students who are experiencing any form of violence or abuse, including harassment, hate crime, stalking, relationship abuse, sexual violence and any other inappropriate behaviour.

12. EMPLOYEE AND STUDENT GUIDANCE ON HARRASSMENT BY THIRD PARTIES

- 12.1.** An employee or student who is bullied or harassed by a third party (for example, a customer, contractor, individuals within a placement provider, or individuals involved in joint appointments) should not enter into any confrontation with the third party that may put their own personal safety at risk, or which may make them feel uncomfortable.
- 12.2.** In such circumstances, Cardiff University may also need to refer the concern to the relevant partner organisation to be addressed in accordance with the agreed procedures and/or Service Level Agreement (SLA).

- 12.3. [Report + Support](#) can also provide important support and safety planning guidance in these circumstances.
- 12.4. If, however, an employee or student decides to tackle the matter themselves, they should take the following steps:
1. Politely ask the third party to stop the bullying or harassment and inform them that bullying or harassment of university employees/students by a third party will not be tolerated.
 2. If the third party does not stop the bullying or harassment, repeat **step 1** and warn them that action will be taken against them if the bullying or harassment continues.
 3. If the third party still does not stop the bullying or harassment, report the incident to their line manager (where known), who will raise the matter with the appropriate individual. An employee/student should report any incident of bullying or harassment by a third party to their line manager or Head of School/ Personal Tutor, whether or not they have managed to resolve it.
- 12.5. The report will be used for the purpose of monitoring the effectiveness of the University Dignity at Work and Study Policy.

13. PROCEDURES FOR OTHERS

- 13.1. Where individuals who are neither employees nor students wish to raise an issue under this policy, they should use the following methods:
- Where the complaint relates to the behaviour of a Cardiff University student, this should be raised with the Student Cases team. Student Cases may contact you for further information and will make a decision about whether or not action will be taken under the Student Conduct Regulations. Student Cases can be contacted via email: studentcases@cardiff.ac.uk
 - Where the complaint relates to the behaviour of an employee of Cardiff University, this should be raised with the appropriate Head of School/Professional Service, who will arrange for the matter to be investigated and responded to.

14. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

14.1. UNIVERSITY RESPONSIBILITY

14.1.1. Ultimate responsibility for this policy rests with the University Council. However, Council will require the Vice-Chancellor and the University Executive Board to ensure that the policy is applied effectively.

14.1.2. The Vice-Chancellor will devolve responsibility for the application of this policy, and any supporting guidance, to Heads of College, Heads of School and Heads of Professional Services.

14.2. INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

14.2.1. It is the responsibility of all University employees and students to:

- behave in accordance with this policy and the University's [Behaviours and Standards](#)
- take requests seriously to cease or amend behaviour and respond courteously to them
- not participate in, encourage or condone the harassment, bullying or victimisation of others.
- promote an inclusive culture in which colleagues or peers are not subjected to harassment, bullying or victimisation by challenging these forms of behaviour or reporting them to the line manager or supervisor of the person involved. This could be a tutor, a [Dignity and Wellbeing Contact](#) for employees or [Student Cases](#) for students.
- maintain confidentiality of any disclosures or allegations of harassment, bullying or victimisation in line with the University's [Confidentiality Policy](#), only sharing personal information in accordance with the University's Confidentiality Guidelines: "when the vital interests of any person are threatened, and the disclosure is made to a relevant, appropriate person."

14.3. MANAGERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

14.3.1. Managers have a responsibility to:

- set a good example by treating all colleagues and members of the University community with respect
- foster a culture in which all members of the University community feel able to challenge unacceptable behaviour
- treat informal and formal complaints seriously, with sensitivity to the feelings and perceptions of all those involved

- deal with any issues raised fairly and promptly, in accordance with the relevant University Policy and in line with duties of care to employees and students
- take steps to ensure that employees and students who bring complaints, or support others to do so, are not treated less favourably than others because of this (victimisation).
- conduct difficult conversations with affected staff with professionalism and sensitivity. The University recognises that this can be a challenging aspect of the role and provides dedicated training to support this: [*Holding Difficult Conversations - Intranet - Cardiff University*](#)

15. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- 15.1.** This policy forms part of a wider advice framework that fosters a working, learning, and research environment and culture where differences are embraced, and all forms of harassment, bullying, and victimisation will not be tolerated. It should be read in conjunction with:

[Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#)

[Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment Policy](#)

[Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech](#)

[Social Media guidance](#)

[Trans Policy](#)

[Disclosure of Interest Guidance](#)

[Welsh Language Service Delivery Standards Policy](#)

[Welsh Language Operational Standards Policy](#)

[Internal Use of Welsh Policy](#)

[Stress Management policy](#)

[Personal Relationships Policy](#)

[Student Charter](#)

[Student Complaints Procedure](#)

[Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)

[Student Support Intervention Policy and Procedure](#)

[Staff Disciplinary Procedures](#)

[Staff Grievance Procedures](#)

16. MONITORING AND REVIEW

16.1. This policy will be informally reviewed by the Policy Owner on an annual basis, formally every three years, and will be updated as needed in response to any changes in relevant legislation.

16.2. The University will take steps to monitor the differential impact of its policies, procedures, practices, and services on protected characteristic groups and the Welsh language via its Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process.

VERSION CONTROL INFORMATION

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UEB Policy Sponsor	Chief Operating Officer and University Secretary
Policy Owner	Senior Compliance Advisor
Policy Author(s)	Non Ellis, Compliance and Risk Officer, Compliance and Risk Team Thomas Tudor Jones, Senior Compliance Advisor, and Welsh Language Officer
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Change History Record

The table below should be completed by the Author each time a change is made to the policy.

Version amended and date of review	Reviewer(s)	Description of Change	Version created