

Dignity at work policy and procedure - USW Employees

Dignity at Work Policy

1. Introduction
2. Scope
3. Policy Statement
4. Definitions
5. Dignity at Work Advisers
6. Roles and Responsibilities
7. Procedure
8. Formal Procedure
9. Confidentiality
10. Relocation or Suspension
11. Training, Awareness & Communication
12. Monitoring
13. Non-Compliance With This Policy
14. Links to Other Policies and Procedures
15. Appendix 1 – Definitions of Unacceptable Behaviour
Appendix 2 - Role Description of Dignity at Work Advisers
Appendix 3 - What should I do if my behaviour has upset or offended another person?
Document Information

Dignity at Work Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 The University of South Wales is committed to providing a working environment that is free from discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation and to promoting a culture where all colleagues feel valued and respected. This policy sets out how the University will promote dignity at work for all colleagues and outlines the procedure for dealing with complaints of a dignity at work nature. The procedure incorporates the principles of the University's [Grievance Procedure](#).

1.2 Colleagues come from a range of backgrounds and may have different understandings of what is acceptable at work. This policy seeks to clarify standards and obligations expected from all individuals. It sets out the procedure for dealing with any incidents of unacceptable behaviour should they occur. Examples of unacceptable behaviour include, discrimination, harassment, victimisation, bullying or exclusion.

1.3 Reference to the manager throughout this document refers to the post holder who has managerial responsibility for you (unless otherwise identified): a Head of Department/School, delegated manager or equivalent post holder, including but not limited to those employed by the University of South Wales and Professional and Support Services Limited.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all employees/workers of the University of South Wales, including permanent and fixed term employees.

2.2 The policy covers unacceptable behaviour in any situation that might affect your work with the University. It covers unacceptable behaviour in the workplace or during work hours and also situations outside of work that may affect the relationship between colleagues. It also covers situations where an employee is subject to unacceptable behaviour from someone not employed by the University, such as a student or external speakers or contractors.

2.3 The policy covers unwanted conduct that relates to discrimination, harassment, victimisation, bullying or exclusion as defined in [Appendix 1](#). If you have a complaint relating to other matters you should use the [Grievance Procedure](#). A complaint cannot be raised under both policies.

2.4 Students who feel they have been subject to unacceptable behaviour within the University should use the [Dignity at Study Policy](#).

3. Policy Statement

3.1 The University wishes to promote a culture where mutual trust and respect is the foundation of working relationships between colleagues. The University will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour such as discrimination, harassment, victimisation, bullying or exclusion under any circumstances. This includes, but is not exclusive to, discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation in relation to a person's age, disability, gender identity, gender reassignment, marital or partnership status, race, religion / belief or non-belief, sex or sexual orientation whether it is factual or perceived

3.2 The University aims to ensure that every person is treated with dignity and respect regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marital

or partnership status, race, religion / belief or non-belief, sex or sexual orientation or any other distinction.

3.3 The University recognises that preventing discrimination, harassment, victimisation, bullying and exclusion can have a positive impact upon the health and wellbeing, attendance and performance of employees. It is therefore important you raise any concerns about unacceptable behaviour as soon as possible.

3.4 It is the University's policy to provide a teaching, learning and working environment where:

- the dignity of individuals is respected and where all colleagues take responsibility for promoting equality and creating and maintaining a supportive environment
- any member of staff who feels that they have not been treated with dignity at work is able to raise a complaint in the knowledge that it will be treated seriously and sensitively, without fear of ridicule, reprisal or victimisation
- a means of resolution in a discreet and confidential way is available, with the option of pursuing a complaint formally

3.5 The University will treat a breach of this policy seriously and considers any proven (on the balance of probabilities) unacceptable behaviour to amount to misconduct or gross misconduct, depending upon the nature and extent of the behaviour. Such misconduct will be considered at a Disciplinary Hearing dealt with under the University's Disciplinary Procedure and may lead to dismissal.

3.6 The University recognises that it has a duty to protect its employees from malicious or vexatious complaints and as such appropriate action in line with the University's Disciplinary Procedure may be taken when it can be demonstrated that a complaint is made on that basis. However, this will not include any allegation that is made in good faith.

3.7 Members of staff have the right to make a complaint in Welsh. Members of staff also have the right to respond to a complaint made against them in Welsh.

4. Definitions

4.1 This policy uses the term 'unacceptable behaviour' to describe any unwanted conduct which violates a person's dignity or creates an

intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. This includes inadvertent or deliberate exclusion.

4.2 Differences in attitude, background or culture can mean that what is perceived as unfair treatment or unacceptable behaviour by one person may not seem so to another.

4.3 Unacceptable behaviour can occur without intent; however, lack of intent to use unacceptable behaviour is not a defence.

4.4 Unacceptable behaviour includes discrimination, harassment, victimisation, bullying and exclusion. Definitions and examples what could constitute 'unacceptable behaviour' are contained within [Appendix 1](#).

5. Dignity at Work Advisers

5.1 The University has Dignity at Work Advisers who are members of staff trained to support employees who feel they are being subjected to unacceptable behaviour. Dignity at Work Advisers act as a first point of contact to listen to staff who may have concerns or issues about a dignity at work issue.

5.2 Dignity at Work Advisers ensure that staff have access to clear, informed, sensitive advice and support to address difficulties in the workplace. Dignity at Work Advisers are able to support both staff who feel they are being subjected to unacceptable behaviour and staff whose behaviour has been challenged as harassing or bullying (an Adviser will not be expected to support both parties and will refer to another Adviser or other University services).

5.3 Meeting with a Dignity at Work Adviser will give you the opportunity to discuss any concerns you may have about unacceptable behaviour. The Adviser will explain their role and discuss options available to you for resolving the issue. However, Dignity at Work Advisers do not take the role of a counsellor and are not able to resolve issues themselves. Further details about the role of Dignity at Work Advisers can be found in [Appendix 2](#).

5.4 You are able to contact a Dignity at Work Adviser through email or phone or you can arrange to meet with an Advisor face to face. A list of names of the Dignity at Work Advisers and their contact details are available above.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The University has produced guidance to ensure that there is clear understanding of the expectations of employees when dealing with matters that relate University policies such as this.

6.2 In addition to this guidance, all staff are responsible for:

- ensuring that they do not incite, condone or commit any form of discrimination, harassment, victimisation, bullying or exclusion within the University;
- being aware of behaviour that is not acceptable and, if appropriate, to challenge such behaviour, or to report such situations to a senior manager.

6.3 Line Managers are responsible for:

- supporting individuals who bring complaints under this policy in a sensitive manner and ensuring that they are not treated unfairly as a result;
- reporting the situation where they become aware of discrimination, harassment, victimisation, bullying or exclusion, whether or not a formal complaint has been made, to the Head of Human Resources after discussing it with the complainant;
- understanding the University's Dignity at Work Policy and being able to provide information on it as required.

7. Procedure

7.1 This policy details an informal and a formal procedure for dealing with unacceptable behaviour. Unacceptable behaviour can often be resolved informally and this is encouraged wherever possible. The person causing distress may not know that you find their behaviour offensive and an explanation may be sufficient to resolve the matter. If attempts to resolve the problem informally are unsuccessful, or if you prefer to not use the informal procedure, then the formal procedure can be used.

7.2 There may be instances where the severity of the behaviour means that the informal stage is inappropriate and should be by-passed. The decision of whether to take a formal complaint under the formal procedure rests with the complainant. However, the University has a duty of care and may, in exceptional circumstances, start an investigation without a complainant where there is considered to be an unacceptable risk to an

employee, another person or to the university (e.g. if there is a danger of harm or where a criminal act or a serious act of discrimination is suspected).

7.3 If the complaint raised concerns of a matter relating to a potential risk of someone being drawn into non violent or violent extremism then the University PREVENT protocols should be initiated along side this policy.

7.4 The University recognises that raising complaints of unacceptable behaviour can be difficult or embarrassing therefore impartial confidential advice and support can be sought from Dignity at Work Advisers (see paragraph 5), the Occupational Health and Safety Service and/or your recognised Trade Union representative.

7.5 Recording Incidents

7.6 For both the formal and informal procedures, you are encouraged to keep a record of any incidents that have occurred. It is important that this is recorded in as much detail as possible. You should record:

- Dates and times of any incidents.
- A description of what happened and where
- Copies of any relevant communications between social media, texts, email etc.
- Details of any potential witnesses.
- Any attempts you have made to resolve the matter informally, if applicable.

7.7 Informal Procedure

7.8 Use of the informal procedure can sometimes mean that a solution is reached more speedily. It does not mean that your complaint will be viewed less seriously should a subsequent formal complaint be made. The aim of this procedure is to stop the unacceptable behaviour as quickly as possible and prevent reoccurrence. You are encouraged to act promptly and not to wait until the situation becomes intolerable and/or affects your personal well-being.

7.9 If you feel that you have experienced unacceptable behaviour, you may wish to ask the alleged offender to stop the behaviour which is causing

offence. You can ask a work colleague or a trade union representative to accompany you to such a meeting if you wish.

7.10 If you feel unable to approach the person directly, you may want to give a written request to the person concerned stating that you find their behaviour offensive and reminding them of their responsibilities under this policy.

7.11 If you feel unable to approach the person yourself, or attempts to do so do not resolve the issue, you should raise the matter with your immediate line manager in person or in writing (or the next level of management where the issue concerns the immediate line manager) with a view to resolving the matter informally. The manager should allow the employee to explain the issue and ask them how they would like to see the matter resolved. Where necessary the manager may need to explore the issue further by seeking advice from HR.

7.12 You, or your manager, may wish to take up the matter with the person's line manager, or other appropriate member of their faculty/department. This will be treated as an informal complaint unless you decide to make a formal complaint.

7.13 In order to resolve the situation the person against whom the complaint has been made may need to be made aware of the nature of the complaint, given the opportunity to respond, and given the option to be accompanied at any meetings by a trade union representative or work colleague.

7.14 Where the person against whom the complaint has been made indicates that they were unaware that their behaviour was unwelcome or offensive, agreed steps will be taken to put matters right and prevent a recurrence. This may include an explanation of what constitutes unacceptable behaviour, or interventions such as professional advice, training or conciliation (with assistance of a third party, e.g. Human Resources representative, Trade Union representative) to assist each party to understand the other person's point of view and re-establish good working relationships. Support from Occupational Health and other support services will be provided where needed.

7.15 Where the person admits to unacceptable behaviour, they will be asked to stop the behaviour and advised that if the behaviour persists formal action may be taken.

7.16 In the interests of re-establishing good working relationships, it is recommended that all parties affected by a situation should meet together to help to resolve issues. Such a meeting should be facilitated by a senior manager, a representative of HR or a mediator.

7.17 If someone has told you that your behaviour is unacceptable and has caused offence, see the guidance on 'What Should I do if my behaviour has upset or offended someone?' for advice ([link to it](#)).

All individuals involved at this stage must treat the issue seriously and confidentially.

Access to mediation will be offered at the informal stage to both parties.

8. Formal Procedure

8.1 The University encourages issues to be addressed through the informal procedure, wherever possible. The formal procedure can be used when:

- the informal procedure was ineffective
- there has been a serious instance of unacceptable behaviour that it would not be appropriate to deal with informally

8.2 To make a formal complaint you should write to your Dean or your Director specifying:

- the name of the person who has caused offence
- what has occurred
- when and where it occurred
- the name of any witnesses
- any steps you have taken to stop the unacceptable behaviour

Your written submission must include your record of complaints that you wish to raise (as per 7.6). If you require assistance to do this, you can speak to your line manager, a colleague or a Trade Union representative.

8.3 The Dean or Director will nominate an appropriate manager, who will normally be employed within a different department/faculty and be a neutral person (to both the complainant and the person complained about), to consider/investigate your complaint. The Dean or Director will provide a copy of the employee's written complaint to the manager who will be responsible for dealing with the complaint.

8.4 Should a formal investigation be required, the manager will conduct an investigation and establish the facts of the case. The person the complaint is against will be notified in writing of the complaint, that an investigation is being undertaken, and by whom. The manager should compile an

investigation report setting out the facts of the case and any mitigating circumstances. The manager must be clear as to whether the complaint is upheld or not upheld and recommend any relevant remedies, where required. In the event, that it is recommended that disciplinary action is required, the investigation report will be submitted to the Director of Organisation Development (or nominee) for consideration and a decision as to whether the matter should proceed to a hearing and if so, the level of hearing.

8.5 The Investigating Manager will be expected to keep both parties informed of their progress and provide an estimate of the date they will present their report. Advice will be provided to the Manager by the HR Department. In some circumstances a joint investigation will be required where both parties have raised concerns against each other.

The outcome of the investigation may be one or a combination of the following as recommended by the investigating manager:

- The complaint is not upheld
- There is insufficient evidence (with reasons)
- Evidence and/or nature of complaint justifies counselling, advice or mediation
- A decision that there is a case to answer (on the balance of probabilities) and that the matter should proceed to disciplinary hearing (the hearing and any subsequent appeal would be held in line with the University's Disciplinary Procedure). The investigation report completed under this policy will be used for the hearing. No further investigation is required.
- Mediation by trained mediators. Both parties must agree to participate for mediation to proceed.
- A decision to manage any competency/training issues.

8.6 Feedback

Following the outcome of the investigation, an appropriate de-brief for both parties (and any relevant witnesses if the manager feels it to be appropriate) on the outcome of the investigation should take place. No unauthorised confidential information will be shared and all individuals will have full respect for the confidentiality of any feedback provided.

This feedback will not include details of any decision(s) made at a disciplinary hearing if that is the course of action taken.

8.7 Appeal

If you consider the manager's decision not to have satisfactorily resolved the complaint you may wish to appeal against the outcome.

- If you wish to appeal you should do so in writing to the Director of Organisational Development (or nominee) within 10 working days of the date of the letter notifying you of the outcome.
- An appeal meeting will normally be arranged within 5 working days and held within 10 working days and the appeal will be considered by a manager not previously involved in the complaint.
- The appeal meeting will focus on the grounds for appeal. It will not normally be a detailed re-hearing of the original complaint and will not consider new evidence that was available at the time of the original hearing.
- You have a right to be accompanied to the appeal meeting by a work colleague or trade union representative. You should advise the University in advance of the meeting if you intend to take up this right.
- The outcome of the appeal will be communicated to you in writing, normally within 5 working days.
- The findings of the appeal are final and represent the end of the procedure. There is no additional right to raise the same matter under the Grievance Procedure, as this procedure complies with the University's Grievance Procedure.
- Appeals may only be submitted by current employees of the University.

8.8 Formal Complaint Against Student/s

You should make a formal complaint in writing to the Dean or Director of the department to which you belong. The Dean or Executive Director will refer the complaint to the relevant officer to be dealt with in accordance with '[The Regulations Governing Student Conduct](#)'.

8.9 Formal Complaints by or Against a Person External to the University

If you wish to make a complaint about a person external to the University, such as a visitor, customer or student's relative, you should report your complaint to your Dean or Director. The University is required to protect employees from any discrimination, harassment, victimisation, bullying and exclusion that takes place in the working environment so will take appropriate measures to reduce the chance of such an incident occurring again.

8.10 If a person external to the University makes a complaint about a student or member of staff, the complaint should be addressed to the Dean or Director. There is no right of appeal for members of the public and former employees, irrespective of whether the complaint was submitted during employment.

9. Confidentiality

9.1 If you make a complaint, confidentiality will be maintained between you and your manager / Dignity at Work Adviser / Trade Union Representative / Human Resources representative (or whomever you have chosen to discuss your complaint with) up until the point where action may be taken under the informal or formal procedure.

9.2 In exceptional circumstances, the University will observe requests for anonymity in dealing with cases of alleged unacceptable behaviour; however it must be understood that this may inhibit or prevent any investigation being taken under the Formal Procedure. This would be assessed on a case by case basis.

9.3 If you have made a formal complaint, you can be assured that any information divulged will be kept confidential within the system. In such cases, information will only be divulged to other parties on a strictly 'need to know' basis. Failure to maintain confidentiality by any person privy to the information will be deemed misconduct and dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.

9.4 The only exception to this rule of confidentiality is if the person with whom the complainant discusses the matter believes that there is an unacceptable risk to the complainant, another person or to the university (e.g. if there is a danger of violence or where the complaint identified a criminal act or illegal discrimination). In these circumstances, the university has a legal duty to take appropriate action and the Head of Human Resources should be notified immediately.

9.5 If you are clear about your options but decide not to take action where your manager / Dignity at Work Adviser / Human Resources Representative

believe that you should, your decision will be accepted unless there is an unacceptable risk (as outlined in 9.4). The manager / Dignity at Work Adviser / Human Resources Representative should record the complainant's wishes and write to the complainant confirming the situation and making it clear that the responsibility for taking no action lies with the complainant.

9.6 Dignity at Work Advisers can maintain brief anonymous records of the advice that they have provided on the Monitoring Form for Dignity at Work / Study Issues. Records should be passed to the University's Equality & Diversity Adviser who will ensure that they are retained securely for 7 years before being destroyed.

10. Relocation or Suspension

There may be instances where it is appropriate to remove you and the person you are complaining about from working with each other. The University will seek to relocate one or both of you in the first instance. Should this not be possible, it may be necessary to suspend one or both of you from duty on full pay while an investigation takes place. For example, where relationships have broken down; where there are risks to employees; in potential gross misconduct cases; or where there are reasonable grounds for concern that evidence could be tampered with, destroyed or witnesses pressurised before the meeting. This is not an exhaustive list but indicates the type of situation that may warrant suspension. The reason for the suspension will be given in writing. This action should be sanctioned in advance by the Director of Organisation Development (or nominee). This is a without prejudice action and does not constitute a disciplinary sanction.

11. Training, Awareness & Communication

11.1 All new staff will be made aware of this policy at induction.

11.2 All university staff will be made aware of this policy through the University's webpages, core brief and other communication methods. The policy will also be disseminated to staff through Deans and Directors in order to promote dignity at work.

11.3 Managers and Dignity at Work Advisers will receive training to enable them to deal with issues that may arise.

11.4 It is accepted that individuals may at times deal with upsetting and/or sensitive information. Colleagues are able to use the counselling service and/or Human Resources for support.

12. Monitoring

12.1 This policy will be monitored annually. An annual report will also be produced for HR Committee on staff and student equality related complaints. Monitoring will be anonymous and will not be reported on a faculty or departmental basis.

12.2 The policy will also be monitored through staff satisfaction surveys to assess whether it is effective in promoting dignity at work.

13. Non-Compliance With This Policy

13.1 Non-compliance with this policy will be dealt with under the [Disciplinary Procedure](#).

14. Links to Other Policies and Procedures

- [Dignity at Study Policy](#)
- [Disciplinary Procedure](#)
- [Grievance Procedure](#)
- [PREVENT protocol](#)

15. Appendix 1 – Definitions of Unacceptable Behaviour

The following definitions describe different types of ‘unacceptable behaviour’ although the list is by no means exhaustive.

1. Bullying

1.1 **Bullying** may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying does not need to relate to a protected characteristic (age, disability, gender identity or gender reassignment, race, religion / belief or non-belief, sex or sexual orientation).

1.2 Bullying can take many forms from physical attack to subtle conduct; it is behaviour that is unwanted by the recipient. It might also include behaviour that might unreasonably threaten a person’s job security or promotion prospects. It may be on-going, although a single incident can be serious enough to be classed as bullying.

1.3 Bullying can be carried out by managers, peers or less senior staff but often involves the misuse of power; this can be from a manager to a less senior member of staff or the misuse of any personal power, such as physical strength, personality or age. Bullying can be carried out by an individual, or a group of people.

1.4 Examples of bullying behaviour include but are not limited to:

- Production, distribution, display or discussion of material that may give rise to offence
- Using aggressive, threatening or intimidating language or behaviour
- Any derogatory or offensive behaviour related to a person’s political beliefs or trade union membership
- Inappropriate reference to a person’s appearance or character traits, invasion of privacy or practical jokes which cause physical or psychological distress
- Belittling or undermining an individual in front of others, including jokes that might cause distress
- Intentionally excluding or ignoring an individual - singling out a person because they are perceived not to ‘fit in’
- Withholding information, resources or training

- Deliberately undermining a competent worker by the unreasonable allocation of work or duties, setting unrealistic work deadlines
- Psychological intimidation
- Preventing individuals from career development and/or participation in training, without business or operational reasons.

Where managers set demanding targets and standards and request employees correct behaviours, this would not in itself constitute bullying. However, where a manager uses aggression and intimidation to manage their employees, this may constitute bullying.

2. Harassment and Discrimination

2.1 **Harassment** is unwanted conduct related to age, disability, gender identity or gender reassignment, race, religion / belief or non-belief, sex or sexual orientation and is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010.

2.2 **Discrimination** is treating someone less favourably than someone else *because* of a protected characteristic, treating someone less favourably because someone incorrectly *perceives* them to have a protected characteristic or treating someone less favourably because they are *associated* with a person who has a protected characteristic.

2.3 An employee can be subjected to harassment or discrimination because:

- They have a particular characteristic and are directly targeted – e.g. because of their gender, race, gender identity, sexual orientation or because they have a disability etc.
- They are associated with an individual who has a particular characteristic – e.g. their partner, child, parent is transgender.
- They are thought to hold a particular characteristic – e.g. to have a particular religious belief or be a particular sexual orientation. This includes if offensive or humiliating comments are targeted at someone even though they are known not to have a particular characteristic, for example, if they are subjected to homophobic abuse even if they are not gay.
- They have witnessed something that would fall under the definition of harassment which they find offensive, even if it was not directed at them.

2.4 Examples of Harassment and Discrimination related to Age

- Using ageist language or treating someone in an offensive way because of their age or perceived age.
- Regarding someone as 'too old' or 'too young' to deliver certain tasks.
- Refusing training, development or promotion opportunities to someone because of their age.

2.5 Examples of Harassment and Discrimination related to Disability

- Mimicking, mockery, excluding or patronising behaviour.
- Staring or asking invasive personal questions about someone's disability.
- Persistently using inappropriate terms.
- Moving a wheelchair or hiding an impairment aid.
- Refusal to work with a person due to a disability.

2.6 Examples of Harassment and Discrimination related to Gender Identity and Gender Reassignment

- Using offensive language or behaviour aimed at someone's gender identity or gender reassignment.
- Disclosing or threatening to disclose someone's previous gender or name.
- Refusing to refer to someone using their new name.
- Deliberately using the wrong pronouns when conversing with or about someone e.g. continuing to say 'he' and 'his' when the person has requested to be referred to as 'she' and 'her' or as 'they' and 'their'.
- Withholding the right to use facilities appropriate to person's expression of their gender identity.

Transferring an employee off customer facing duties against their wishes because they have expressed their intention to live as a different gender or have a non-binary or gender-fluid gender identity.

2.7 Examples of Harassment and Discrimination related to Race

- Use of racist words or derogatory language aimed at specific racial groups.
- Ridicule of cultural differences.

- Exclusion or refusal to work with someone because of their race, nationality or ethnicity.

2.8 Examples of Harassment and Discrimination related to Religion and /or Belief

- Using offensive comments relating to someone's religion.
- Making fun of clothes or jewellery worn for religious reasons.
- Pressurising others to take on the same religious beliefs.
- Unreasonably arranging meetings or events so that they exclude people on religious observance grounds.

2.9 Examples of Harassment and Discrimination related to Sexual Orientation

- Persistent questioning someone about their sexual orientation or gossiping or speculating about someone's sexual orientation.
- Using homophobic, or bi-phobic language or jokes.
- Disclosing someone's sexual orientation in the workplace without their prior approval.
- Denying a person an opportunity on the basis of their sexual orientation.

2.10 Examples of Harassment and Discrimination related to Sex and Sexual Harassment

- Sexual harassment can occur towards women by men, towards men by women or between members of the same sex.
- Unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favours.
- Displaying offensive posters or publications.
- Staring or leering.
- Sexually explicit jokes, language or innuendoes.
- Getting too close, deliberate body contact or unnecessary touching.
- Turning someone down for promotion after they have declined your advances or unfairly allocating them too much or too little work.

2.11 Examples of Harassment and Discrimination related to working patterns

- Persistently arranging team meetings and events on days when someone does not usually work.
- Not recognising the contribution of part time workers.

- Expecting part time staff to deliver a full time role / workload.
- Making comments about part time workers 'not pulling their weight' etc.

2.12 Discrimination, harassment, victimisation, bullying or exclusion through medium of electronic communication

Unacceptable behaviour may occur face to face, but may also occur in written communications, email, phone, text message, social media and through supervision methods. For example, emails written in an inappropriate manner, a bombardment of messages containing demands and deadlines and emails that copy others into the conversation with the intent of humiliation. When using electronic communication, it is important to:

- be polite and adhere to the same standards of behaviour as you would when writing a letter or speaking to someone face to face
- use humour with care; not everyone will appreciate it and emails can be easily misinterpreted
- consider that it is difficult to convey a tone of voice and that it is therefore much easier to offend people
- not use capital letters out of context as they can be considered shouting
- consider whether email is the most appropriate medium for the message you wish to deliver, or whether the matter is best dealt with in person.

3. Victimisation

Victimisation is where someone is treated differently because:

- they have previously made a complaint of harassment or discrimination or have helped another person make a complaint;
- they were a witness in such a complaint or are suspected of being about to be one.

16. Appendix 2 - Role Description of Dignity at Work Advisers

Role Title: Dignity at Work Advisers

Reports to: Head of HR, Equality & Diversity Adviser

Dignity Support Advisers are key to promoting a positive University environment in which people are treated fairly and with respect.

The role of Dignity at Work Adviser:

- To provide a first point of contact and listen to concerns in a non-judgemental way through face to face meetings, email or phone.
- To respond to requests as a matter of urgency
- Maintain confidentiality
- Provide information to individuals on the courses of action available to them if they believe they are being subjected to discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying.
- Identify allegations which may be beyond the remit of the role and refer these cases to other services as appropriate.
- Discuss options, provide information and a friendly supportive environment to individuals whose behaviour has been challenged as harassing or bullying (an Adviser will not be expected to support both parties of a dispute but will refer to another Adviser and other University services).
- Raise awareness of the Dignity at Work and Dignity at Study Policies and the support available for staff and students experiencing discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying.
- Attend training and network meetings.
- Ensure that they are aware of all relevant University policies and how they are implemented.

Skills and abilities which are essential to the role:

- Excellent interpersonal and listening skills
- A non-judgemental approach

- Ability to work autonomously, with appropriate regard for the health and safety of self and others
- Ability to maintain confidentiality
- Ability to deal calmly with potentially disturbing situations
- Ability to work with people from diverse backgrounds
- Ability to refer to other University services appropriately and sensitively

Skills which are desirable:

- Able to offer advice and support in Welsh

An Adviser is not expected to:

- To solve a problem on their own – support from the Equality & Diversity Adviser and / or other Dignity at Work Advisers is available
- Act as a counsellor - Dignity at Work Advisers are not counsellors, they will refer to the University's Occupational Health Service (for staff) and University Counselling Services. They will also be able to refer to the Mediation advisers.
- Give legal or other advice outside their area of expertise.
- To investigate

Purpose of the Dignity Support Advisers Network:

The development of a network of Dignity at Work / Study Advisers is intended to ensure that all staff and students have access to clear, informed, sensitive advice and support to address difficulties in the workplace and study environment. As well as providing support to individuals, Dignity at Work / Study Advisers will meet as a network at least once a year to discuss the role, discuss cases to identify any common concerns and contribute to the development of any dignity at work/study initiatives.

Appendix 3 - What should I do if my behaviour has upset or offended another person?

1. All staff and students have a responsibility to behave in a manner that does not cause offence to others. The University encourages anyone who feels that they are not being treated with respect, or are offended by another

person's behaviour, to raise this issue through an informal procedure and if the issue is not resolved to pursue the matter via the formal procedure.

2. Individuals are advised to raise issues with the person concerned in order to try to resolve differences at an early stage and so prevent situations from developing into formal complaints which can be difficult and stressful for all those involved. The University recognises that being told that your behaviour has caused offence can be upsetting and embarrassing. It is important that when a person has been offended (intentionally or otherwise) there is an opportunity for all of the individuals concerned to resolve the situation informally and discreetly at the earliest stage.

3. You may not have intended to offend anyone, but differences in attitude, background or culture can mean that what is perceived as unacceptable behaviour by one person may not seem so to another. Equality legislation and policies have developed rapidly over recent years and behaviour which might have been regarded as acceptable in the past may not be appropriate now. It is recognised that it can be stressful to be approached by a colleague or peer in this way, but talking about issues in an informal way can avoid difficulties escalating to a point where a formal complaint is made.

4. Try to listen to the concerns of the person who approaches you and think about how your behaviour was perceived. Try not to imply that the person has been oversensitive and seek to play down the incident – remember it will not have been easy for the person to speak to you about this. If you are unclear about the behaviour that has upset a person, ask them to provide an example. Apologise for the offence that was caused. You do not have to agree with the other person's point of view to say that you are sorry that an aspect of your behaviour upset them.

5. You may find it helpful to talk to someone about how you feel about what has happened, or to discuss how to ensure that you are still able to work effectively with the person who has approached you. There is a range of people you can talk to for advice:

- Line manager
- Human resources contact
- Dignity at Work Adviser
- Trade Union representative
- Counsellor

If you are approached by a third party

6. In some instances a person may speak to your line manager before speaking to you. A line manager will have a duty to investigate an issue and to find out your view of the situation. Any discussion with your line manager will be an informal process unless they explicitly inform you that it is part of a formal procedure.

7. The University also has a duty to protect its employees from malicious complaints and as such, appropriate action may be taken when it can be demonstrated that a complaint is made on a deliberately malicious basis.

Further help and support

8. Staff who are approached informally by others about their behaviour, or who are the subject of a formal complaint of discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying, are entitled and welcome to seek the advice of a Dignity at Work Adviser or any of the other services listed above.

9. If a formal complaint is made you will be advised of the procedures to be followed and your rights.

Document Information

Revision	Issue Date	Revision Description	Author	Approved by & date	Review Date
1.0	Mar 2009	First Issue	BB-W	Board of Governors 09/03/2009	
2.0	Nov 2011	Update to include reference to recent changes in legislation	Alison Preece	Equality and Diversity Steering Group 10/11/2011	
3.0	Dec 2015	Updated to create one USW policy and introduce procedure	Clare Payton-Stagg / Tracy Owen	HR Committee 16/11/15	Dec 2018
4.0	Dec 2016	Update Suspension/Relocation section	Tracy Owen	Legislative update	
5.0	Nov 2018	Included reference to the right to make a complaint in the Welsh Language	Rebecca Jones	Legislative update	Dec 2019
6.0	June 2019	Amended 3.1 to explicitly include protected characteristics and appendix to include bi-phobia	Coralie Slight	Legislative update	
7.0	March 2021	Updated to include delegation of powers for PSS Ltd managers	Tracy Owen	Board of Governors February 2021	December 2021