

## Dignity at Work and Study Policy – Additional Guidance Document

### Guidance for Managers – Informal Resolution

The University takes allegations of harassment or bullying seriously, and as such we want to have a supportive working environment for all staff and students. This guidance note is for managers to support informal resolutions of harassment or bullying, and should be read in conjunction with the University's [Dignity at Work and Study Policy](#), which outlines examples of inappropriate behaviours ([appendix B](#)).

Additionally the [University's Code of Unacceptable Behaviour](#) provides examples of aggressive/abusive behaviour, unreasonable demands and undue persistence and disruptive behaviour. This Code usually applies to students, but can also cover staff.

If a staff member has raised a grievance – this should be investigated under the formal [Grievance Procedure](#). Additionally, some examples of harassment or bullying may be of such a serious nature (such as violence), they should be investigated under a formal process straight away. If you need any advice about this, please speak to your local [HR team](#).

#### Manager's responsibility

It is important to stress as a line manager, you have a responsibility to take any allegation of harassment or bullying seriously. This may come from the individual, a witness, or indeed may be something you have witnessed yourself.

As a line manager you should be sensitive and objective when investigating the alleged complaint, you should:

- listen carefully and sympathetically;
- acquire a detailed account of the situation through sensitive questioning. This will include a description of any incidents which have taken place, the context in which these have occurred, the response of the complainant to these incidents and the general culture of the workplace;
- clarify any issues which are unclear and summarise the major points raised;
- try to be objective about what you hear – remember you have only heard one interpretation of events;
- do not make assumptions about people's motives (either those of the person reporting harassment or those of the alleged harasser);
- work through the routes to solutions and discuss the options for how to proceed;
- don't be afraid to take time to think through the alternatives;
- give the person time to think through the options;
- help the person to identify appropriate sources of support;
- take advice when needed, even if this is on an anonymous basis (e.g. HR/EDU);
- assist the person to choose a course of action with which they feel comfortable rather than telling them what action they should take.

It is imperative to find out what resolution the individual is seeking. Often this is for the inappropriate behaviour to cease, or for an apology to be given, but may include other resolutions which require further management consideration.

#### Approaching the alleged harasser

The most powerful resolutions stem from a meeting with the individual and the alleged harasser. As a line manager it is important you explain the importance of dialogue with the alleged harasser and outline supportive options to facilitate this, these may include:

- The individual approaches the alleged harasser (this can be face to face or via email/letter) to highlight their inappropriate behaviour, and request their resolution. This can be done with external support, such as a member of the [Respect Advisers Network](#).
- As the line manager, you facilitate a meeting between the individual and alleged harasser.

If you are required to facilitate a meeting between the two parties you should;

- Arrange an appropriate venue, this is often away from usual place of work;
- highlight to both parties this is an informal process;
- ensure both have ample opportunity to speak and address allegations in a calm and sensitive manner;
- ask the individual to outline their proposed resolution, and facilitate a discussion about this;
- ask both parties to agree a resolution.

As the line manager, you should write up a short note of the meeting, detailing the agreed resolution and send it to both parties to confirm this is a correct record.

### **Support during the process/for the individual**

It is important you explain to the individual where they can receive support, this includes:

- [Respect Advisers Network](#)
- [Human Resources](#)
- [Equality and Diversity Unit](#)
- [Staff Counselling](#) (Employee Assistance Programme)
- Trades Union
- [Chaplaincy](#)