

**Dignity at Work – Anti-Bullying,
Harassment and Victimisation Policy**

Version Control History

Version Number	Date of Change	Summary of Revisions Made
1	November 2012	Approved at CMT 28-Nov-12, but references to Staff Code of Conduct removed (SCF requested further consultation on this).
1.1	July 2016	Footer updated to reflect new template model. Role Title Changed: Vice Principal, Human Resources and Communications; Head of Quality.
1.2	January 2024	Updated to UHI Perth branding
1.3	April 2024	Updated footer template
1.4	November 2025	Removed reference to Perth College replaced with UHI Perth. Additional reference to victimisation. Updated definitions to ACAS definitions. Removal of repetition of examples and reordered. Removal of procedure. Removal of reference to recording of informal concerns. Reference to concerns to be addressed through Staff Complaints and Grievance procedure. Update to Lead Author, renamed policy to Dignity at Work.

Dignity at Work – Anti-Bullying, Harassment and Victimization Policy

1 Purpose

UHI Perth is committed to a culture of dignity and respect. Central to this is a belief in the right of all members of the UHI Perth community to experience dignity and respect in their work. Furthermore, to achieve an environment of mutual respect and ethical behaviour it is necessary to put into place policies for recognising and responding to any form of bullying, harassment, or victimisation and for such policies and mechanisms to be transparent, monitored, evaluated and acted upon. These beliefs have been encapsulated in our Dignity at Work – Anti-Bullying, Harassment and Victimization Policy.

2 Scope

This Policy covers all UHI Perth staff.

3 Definitions

3.1 Harassment: In discrimination law (Equality Act 2010) there are three types of harassment: harassment related to certain 'protected characteristics', sexual harassment and less favourable treatment as a result of harassment. Harassment and bullying are often confused, Bullying behaviour can be harassment if it meets these definitions. It is possible that serious harassment could also be a hate crime.

3.2 Harassment related to a protected characteristic: This is unwanted behaviour related to any of the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Harassment is unwanted behaviour that has either violated the persons dignity and/or created an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person. It can be harassment if the behaviour has one of these effects even if it was not intended and/or intended to have one of these effects even if it did not have that effect. Harassment may be repeated behaviour or a one-off incident and can be spoken or written word, imagery, graffiti, gestures, mimicry, jokes, pranks, physical behaviour that affects a person. It can still be against the law even if the person being harassed does not ask for it to stop. The law on harassment related to a protected characteristic applies in several situations: when an individual has a relevant protected characteristic; when they are harassed due to the perception that they possess a certain protected characteristic, even if they do not; when they are harassed because of their association with someone who has a protected characteristic; and when they witness harassment that violates their dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive working environment for them.

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- 3.3 **Sexual Harassment:** This is harassment which is unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature. This conduct need not be sexually motivated, only sexual in nature. To be sexual harassment, the unwanted behaviour must have either violated someone's dignity and/or created an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for someone. This type of harassment does not need to be related to a protected characteristic. For example, someone who thinks they have been sexually harassed does not need to show it was because of their sex or sexual orientation.
- 3.4 **Less favourable treatment as a result of harassment:** This type of harassment occurs when someone experiences less favourable treatment due to their response to previous harassment. It applies regardless of whether the person rejected or accepted the previous harassment. Harassment happens when the individual is treated less favourably than they would have been if they had not responded to the previous harassment in the way they did. The previous harassment must have been either sexual harassment, harassment related to sex, or harassment related to gender reassignment.
- 3.5 **Other kinds of harassment:** Under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, there exists a type of harassment distinct from the three types outlined in the Equality Act 2010. This form of harassment involves behaviour that causes alarm or distress but is not necessarily related to a protected characteristic. It includes stalking and can constitute a criminal act.
- 3.6 **Bullying:** Although there is no legal definition of bullying it can be described as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power that undermines, humiliates, or causes physical or emotional harm to someone. Bullying can manifest as a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident. It may occur face-to-face, on social media, through emails or calls, and can happen at work or in other work-related situations. Additionally, bullying is not always obvious or noticed by others.
- 3.7 **Victimisation:** The law defines victimisation as 'suffering a detriment' because you have done or intend to do a 'protected act'. A 'protected act' involves taking action related to discrimination law, such as making a complaint of discrimination or harassment, supporting someone else's complaint, gathering information that might lead to a complaint, acting as a witness in a complaint, or saying something or giving evidence that does not support someone else's complaint. The law also protects individuals from victimisation if someone else believes they have done or intend to do any of these actions. 'Detriment' means experiencing either being treated worse than before or having their situation made worse. The law only protects someone from victimisation if they have acted 'in good faith', meaning without malicious intent. Protection from victimisation does not apply to individuals who deliberately give false evidence or make false allegations of discrimination or harassment.

Further Details / Examples

Bullying, harassment or victimisation may be by an individual against an individual (perhaps by someone in a position of authority such as a manager)) or involve groups of people. It can also be 'upward' where one or a group of employees direct certain behaviours to someone more senior, for example a manager, and can include refusing to complete tasks, spreading rumours and showing continued disrespect, In all cases it may be obvious, or it may be subtle. Whatever form it takes, it is unwarranted and unwelcome behaviour to the person or people subjected to it or witnessing it.

It is possible someone might not know their behaviour is having an effect but it can still be bullying, harassment or victimisation even if they do not realise it or intend it. It is not the intention of the perpetrator that is key in deciding if bullying, harassment or victimisation has occurred, but whether the behaviour is unacceptable by reasonable normal standards and is unwelcome to the person or people subjected to it or witnessing it.

Bullying, harassment and victimisation can range from extremes such as physical violence to less obvious forms like ignoring or excluding someone, constantly criticising their work or spreading rumours. It can be delivered in a variety of ways, with or without witnesses, and be persistent behaviour over a period of time or a one-off act. Certain behaviour will be, by its nature and severity, unwelcome on even a single occasion.

Examples of bullying, harassment and victimisation behaviours include:

- Physical contact which is unwanted.
- Unwelcome remarks about a person's age, dress, appearance, race or marital status or any other protected characteristic.
- Jokes, offensive language, gossip, slander, sectarian songs and letters.
- Spreading malicious rumours.
- Sending emails/MS Teams messages that are rude, offensive or threatening.
- Posters, graffiti, obscene gestures, flags, bunting and emblems.
- Excluding someone from team social events.
- Putting humiliating, offensive or threatening comments or photos on social media.
- Pressure to participate in political/religious/staff groups.
- Intrusion by pestering, spying and stalking.
- Failure to safeguard confidential information.
- Shouting at and/or using abusive language towards an individual/group of individuals.
- Setting impossible deadlines.
- One off or persistent or personal criticism and insults.
- Copying or sharing correspondence that is critical about someone to others who do not need to know, for example cc'd in an email communication.
- Setting someone up to fail.
- Isolation or exclusion from work related communications and events.
- Unwelcome sexual advances – touching, standing too close
- The display of sexually offensive materials, asking for sexual favours, making decisions on the basis of sexual advances being accepted or rejected.

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- Making threats or comments about job security without foundation. Intentionally overwhelming an employee with excessive workload and persistent criticism.
- Intentionally blocking career progression, redeployment, recruitment or training opportunities.
- Being labelled a troublemaker
- Showing continued disrespect towards another individual or group of individuals
- Refusing to complete tasks as reasonably requested
- Constantly undermining someone's authority

The impact of bullying, harassment and victimisation may adversely affect the recipient's job performance, studies, undermine job security or prospects or create a threatening or intimidating work environment. It can also have a detrimental impact on the health and wellbeing of the person or persons subjected to these behaviours. It can also lead to aggressive and retaliatory attitudes and actions from those who experience these behaviours.

If you witness or experience bullying, harassment or victimisation it is important that you raise these concerns so that are addressed. More information can be found in the UHI Perth Staff Complaints and Grievance Procedure which outlines the steps that can be taken which include an informal and formal route to report any concerns you may have.

You can also speak to your line manager, another UHI Perth manager or a member of the HR team at any time if you require any further information on how to raise your concerns or wish to discuss matters confidentially. All information will remain confidential, and you can choose what to do. However not every situation will be suitable for informal resolution, and so if there is a concern that a person or persons is a risk of serious harm, or it is determined that there has been a serious breach of this policy, then UHI Perth may need to take appropriate action based on any information shared.

4 Key Principles

- 4.1 UHI Perth takes the issue of bullying, harassment and victimisation seriously and will take appropriate actions as is necessary which may include disciplinary action.
- 4.2 UHI Perth will publicise and promote this policy and train managers to advise and support staff who feel they are the subject of bullying, harassment or victimisation in any form.
- 4.3 In principle it is the intent to deal with and resolve issues of bullying, harassment and victimisation at the earliest opportunity. This may be informally or formally, (which will require to be investigated through the UHI Perth disciplinary or grievance procedures, and the outcomes reported to the Senior Leadership Team)

5 Responsibilities

- 5.1 It is the responsibility of the Depute Principal to review and update this policy.
- 5.2 The Risk and Project Officer is responsible for reviewing this document to ensure approval check of the policy and will arrange for the policy to be published.