

Dignity at Work and Study Guidance Note

Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour

The University expects everyone to treat others with dignity and respect. Below are examples of behaviour which are not acceptable within the University community.

Harassment

Examples of Harassment may include:

- Isolation, non-cooperation or exclusion from social activities for a reason related to a protected characteristic
- Unwanted physical contact including invasion of personal space and/or inappropriate touching
- Unwelcome sexual advances
- Threats for rejecting sexual advances, e.g. suggestions that refusing advances will adversely affect an employee's or student's employment, evaluation, advancement, assigned work, or any other condition of employment or study/development;
- Intrusion by pestering, spying, following, stalking etc.
- Making derogatory remarks, insults, offensive language, gossip and slander in spoken and written communication, including e-mails and social media
- Posting embarrassing or humiliating images or videos without consent
- Deception, intimidation, coercion, or blackmail
- Deliberate and continual mis-gendering of a colleague or student
- Giving unwanted nicknames related to a person's age, race or disability
- Making jokes or comments of a sexual or ethnic nature or about an individual's gender, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion or nationality
- The open display of pictures or objects with negative connotations in respect of any protected characteristic, even if not directed at any particular person, e.g. magazines, calendars or pin-ups.
- Microaggressions and Gaslighting

Bullying Behaviour

Examples of Bullying may include:

- Spreading of malicious rumours or insulting someone
- Ridiculing or demeaning someone or setting them up to fail
- Exclusion, isolation or non-cooperation at work e.g. withholding information, not talking to someone, not including someone in discussions or meetings, exclusions from social occasions
- Overbearing supervision or misuse of power or position, e.g. making threats or comments about job security or performance without foundation
- Deliberately undermining a colleague by setting an unrealistic volume of work and constantly criticising

- Preventing individuals progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities
- The use of obscene gestures or language

Discriminatory Behaviour

Examples of Discrimination may include:

- Blocking promotion or training opportunities specifically because someone has one of the protected characteristics e.g. a member of your department isn't put forward for training because they are "too old"
- An internal job applicant not being offered a vacant position because they are pregnant

Other Unacceptable Behaviour

Sometimes behaviour doesn't need to be harassing, bullying or discriminatory to affect the dignity of a colleague or fellow student. Take some time to think about what you are saying and whether it has the potential to cause offence. Examples of these types of comments include:

- Congratulating someone for doing well "despite having attended a 'bad' school"
- Passing judgement on the appropriateness of someone's clothing
- Passing judgement on someone's weight or appearance

This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

What Does Not Constitute Unacceptable Behaviour?

Examples of what **does not** constitute unacceptable or harassing behaviour:

Line Management

- A Manager/Lecturer providing clear and constructive feedback on performance
- A Manager/Lecturer acting in relation to a member of staff's or student's conduct and performance

Providing that the above is done in a fair, consistent and reasonable way, which is in line with related University policies, it should not constitute a breach of this policy.

The Charter for Responsible Debate

Debate, and looking at issues from all perspectives, is an everyday part of university life. This should be undertaken in a way which is respectful of everyone's views. Approaching debate in the manner promoted by the Young Academy of Scotland will help to ensure that behaviour cannot be construed as unacceptable. The Charter for Responsible Debate is based on the principle that debate and joint decision-making should be informed, respectful and inclusive. Using the principles of the Charter should ensure that people listen well to each other, even when they disagree, and find a way to work together to find common ground and a sense of shared purpose. This is key to improving the culture of debate in all areas of our lives: in person and on social media, locally, nationally and internationally. More information on the Charter for Responsible Debate can be found [here](#).