

Dignity and Respect Policy

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Document Version Control

Document Version	Committee	Committee Action	Date
	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee	Approved	23 February 2022
		Date in force	1 August 2022
	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee	Approved	8 February 2023
		Date in force	16 February 2023
	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee	Approved	19 February 2024
		Date in force	26 March 2024
	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee	Approved	8 July 2025
		Date in force	1 August 2025

The Dignity and Respect Policy will be reviewed annually by the Document Lead. Any significant changes beyond the scope of an annual review will require the approval of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

1. Introduction

We are committed to creating and sustaining a positive and mutually supportive environment where all students and staff are equally valued and respected, and encouraged to thrive. This commitment is at the very heart of our values, based as they are on mutual dignity and respect. We value diversity and freedom of speech and academic freedom (within the law) within our academic community and the huge range of experience and perspective that this brings. An appreciation of diversity and the equitable treatment of all are among our core values, underpinning our success as a community of scholars. For these reasons, we will not tolerate any form of bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct.

We recognise that failure to prevent or correctly manage any alleged cases of bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct would have serious repercussions for our institution in terms of:

- a negative student experience
- low student continuation rates
- student recruitment
- poor morale and poor employee relations
- loss of respect for managers and supervisors
- poor performance and lost productivity
- staff absences and resignations
- damage to company reputation
- tribunal and other court cases and payment of unlimited compensation.

This policy document¹ covers all Bloomsbury Institute staff² and students, and is designed to ensure an environment that promotes a culture of respect in which bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct are recognised as totally unacceptable behaviours. It also aims to reassure students and staff that allegations of bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct will be dealt with quickly and sensitively with no fear of reprisal. Detailed information on these areas is provided within our [Student Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) and our [Staff Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#)³.

2. Basic rights

We acknowledge the following basic rights for all members and prospective members of our community:

- to be treated with respect and dignity.
- to be treated fairly and without discrimination with regard to all procedures, assessments and choices.
- to receive support to attain their full potential.
- to disagree and present alternative views.

¹ The guidance is based, in part, on the CIPD Guide “Bullying at Work: Beyond Policies to a Culture of Respect” and the ECU Guidance “A Good Practice Guide for Higher Education Institutions on Dealing with Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace”.

² Staff includes our Non-Executive Directors and external academic advisors on any of our committees as well as any external consultants engaged in work commissioned by Bloomsbury Institute.

³ <https://www.bil.ac.uk/gem/section-3/>

- to challenge and be assertive.
- to be consulted on decisions that affect their work (for staff only).
- to have their contribution recognised.

However, with those rights come the following responsibilities which apply to all members and prospective members of our academic community:

- To treat others with dignity and respect.
- To challenge inappropriate behaviours in others.
- To respect the authority and decisions of others.
- To deal with conflict constructively.
- To recognise the needs of the business and others.
- To thank and recognise the efforts of others.

3. Basic behaviour expectations

There are a number of fundamental behaviours that are expected in the classroom and the workplace. Examples of these include the following:

- Arriving on time for classes and meetings and not leaving early.
- Arriving to classes and meetings having done any necessary preparation for the same.
- Being an inclusive group member through the use of English rather than any other language.
- Being an active listener, making comments or raising questions where appropriate.
- Avoiding distractions such as using mobile phones in a classroom or office or meeting room.
- Respecting the freedom of speech and academic freedom (within the law) of others.

4. Unacceptable behaviour

Bullying and harassment can often be hard to recognise as what one person might consider acceptable behaviour or firm management (either in the classroom or the workplace), might be deemed as completely unacceptable by another. The following are clear examples of unacceptable behaviour, but the list is not exhaustive:

- spreading malicious rumours, or insulting someone by word or behaviour
- sharing information that is critical about someone to others who do not need to know
- ridiculing or demeaning someone – picking on them or setting them up to fail
- exclusion or victimisation
- overbearing supervision or other misuse of power or position

- unwelcome sexual advances – touching, standing too close, display of offensive materials, asking for sexual favours, making decisions on the basis of sexual advances being accepted or rejected
- making offensive jokes or derogatory or stereotypical remarks, or mocking, mimicking or belittling a person's protected characteristic⁴
- intimidation e.g. threats of violence, misuse of power or position
- making threats or comments about job security without foundation
- deliberately undermining a competent worker by overloading and constant criticism, or the removal of responsibilities
- preventing individuals progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities
- preventing students from progressing by intentionally marking their work unfairly.

5. What is bullying, harassment and victimisation?

5.1 Bullying

Bullying is a form of harassment. "Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient"⁵. Examples of bullying can include but are not limited to:

- maliciously spreading gossip, rumours, or private information about someone
- mocking, undermining, or putting someone down in front of others
- isolating or ostracising someone
- scapegoating someone
- inappropriate and/or derogatory remarks about someone's performance
- deliberately undermining a competent student or staff member by overloading them or giving constant criticism
- overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision
- intimidating, threatening, shouting, or swearing at someone
- victimising someone or treating them unfairly

Bullying normally involves a persistent and repeated pattern of the above behaviours, making the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable, undermining their self-confidence and possibly causing them stress. Although unpleasant, being the target of a one-off incident of aggression or occasional aggressive behaviour is not normally defined as bullying unless the severity of the incident or incidents suggests otherwise.

⁴ The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.

⁵ There is no legal definition of bullying, but ACAS have provided this useful definition.

5.2 Harassment

Harassment is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as **unwanted** conduct related to a protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that environment. This behaviour (which does not need to be deliberate) may be persistent or occur as an isolated incident. In addition, you do not need to have previously objected to something for it to be unwanted. Harassment can also include repeated contact with a person that may cause distress, fear or intimidation.

At Bloomsbury Institute we would extend the above definition of harassment to hate crime which the Home Office defines as 'any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice towards someone based on a personal characteristic.'

There are five centrally monitored strands of hate crime and these are:

- race or ethnicity
- religion or beliefs
- sexual orientation
- disability
- transgender identity

A hate crime can include verbal abuse, intimidation, threats, harassment, assault and bullying, as well as damage to property. The perpetrator can also be a friend, carer or acquaintance who exploits their relationship with the victim for financial gain or some other criminal purpose. Examples of hate crime include Islamophobia and antisemitism⁶.

In some cases, behaviour which one individual may regard as acceptable may be unacceptable to another. However, the key point is that the actions or remarks are regarded as unacceptable by the recipient. It is therefore the effect on the individual that has to be taken into account and not the intention of the "harasser". That said, the perception of the complainant does not automatically mean that the complaint will be upheld; instead those responsible for managing or investigating the complaint must make a judgement as to whether the behaviour being reported can *reasonably* be regarded as harassment.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour from a bullying and harassment perspective can be found in our Student Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy and our Staff Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy.

5.3 Sexual harassment and sexual misconduct

Under the Equality Act 2010, sexual harassment is defined as unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of an individual, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Something can still be considered sexual harassment even if the alleged harasser did not mean for it to be. It also does not have to be intentionally directed at a specific person.

Sexual misconduct relates to all unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that is committed without consent or by force, intimidation, coercion or manipulation such as sexual assault, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and sexual intimidation. It therefore includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexual harassment (as defined by Section 26 (2) of the Equality Act 2010)

⁶ At Bloomsbury Institute we have adopted the [IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism](#).

- Unwanted conduct which creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment (as defined by the Equality Act 2010)
- Assault (as defined by the Sexual Offences Act 2003)
- Rape (as defined by the Sexual Offences Act 2003)
- Physical unwanted sexual advances (as set out by the Equality and Human Rights Commission: Sexual harassment and the law, 2017)
- Intimidation, or promising resources or benefits in return for sexual favours (as set out by the Equality and Human Rights Commission: Sexual harassment and the law, 2017)
- Distributing private and personal explicit images or video footage of an individual without their consent (as defined by the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015).

Sexual harassment and sexual misconduct or violence can happen to anyone - men, women and individuals of any gender or sexual orientation. In most cases, sexual violence is perpetrated by someone known and even trusted (like a friend, colleague, family member, partner or ex-partner), but it can also be perpetrated by a stranger.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour from a sexual harassment and sexual misconduct perspective can be found in our Student Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy and our Staff Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy.

5.4 Victimisation

Victimisation involves treating someone less favourably than other people because that individual has:

- made a claim of harassment or bullying
- suggested or complained that, in some other way, he/she has, or may have been, discriminated against, bullied or harassed or that the institution's [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#), [Student Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#), [Staff Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#)⁷ or any other relevant policy has, or may have, been breached in some way
- helped some other person who is making such a claim, perhaps by providing evidence or some other form of support to that other person

Victimisation is entirely unacceptable behaviour and, if not addressed, can also deter individuals from reporting acts of discrimination or harassment.

At Bloomsbury Institute, we will not tolerate any form of victimisation against someone who has raised a complaint, or supported a genuine complaint, or cooperated in an investigation, or challenged unacceptable behaviour, or in each case is believed to have or is believed to be likely to take such steps. If a formal complaint of victimisation is made about a student or staff member's behaviour it will be fully investigated and dealt with in accordance with the relevant student or staff disciplinary procedure.

5.5 Forms of bullying, harassment and victimisation

Bullying and harassment do not necessarily have to be face to face. They may take the form of images, written communications and telephone communications. They may increasingly have an electronic dimension through email or social media. Cyber-bullying, sexual harassment, Islamophobia and Transphobia are all forms of bullying and harassment.

⁷ Both of these policy documents are available from <https://www.bil.ac.uk/qem/policies/>

Bullying or harassment may be by an individual against an individual or involve groups of people where an individual might act in a bullying manner towards several colleagues. Similarly, a group of people may also be responsible for bullying behaviour.

It is important to realise that there is a distinction to be made between bullying and firm management. Not everything that causes students or staff to become upset is bullying. For example, firm management may involve setting demanding performance targets, but these must be transparent and appropriate to the person's job role and level of responsibility. When it is necessary for poor performance to be addressed, this should be done in a fair, supportive and constructive manner, using our appropriate appraisal, performance management or disciplinary procedures. To have our work criticised is not bullying and only becomes so if such criticism is unfair or overly harsh.

6. Responsibilities

We all have a responsibility to adhere to this Dignity and Respect Policy. In addition, anyone who witnesses harassment or bullying has a responsibility to take action (informal or formal) as we all have a duty of care to one another.

Students and staff are therefore encouraged to report inappropriate behaviours from staff or fellow students. They can either do so online (anonymously or as a named individual) or in person. Reports can also be made by others acting on behalf of students who have alleged and/or experienced an incident of inappropriate behaviour, or on behalf of witnesses, from third parties, for example third party reporting centres. Further information on reporting options and the support that is available can be found in our [Student Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) and our [Staff Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#)⁸.

7. Awareness raising and training

Our commitment to creating a climate of dignity and respect is at the heart of our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#), our Student [Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#), our Staff Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy as well as your Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom. With the exception of our Staff Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy, these policies are available to students and staff from our online [Quality and Enhancement Manual](#)⁹. The Staff Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy is available to staff from Breathe HR and, along with the other policy documents referenced above, are key corporate documents that all staff are required to read upon joining our institution.

All staff are also required to complete compulsory Equality and Diversity training as well as compulsory training on Bullying and Harassment, and training on Addressing Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Affecting Students in Higher Education. The Head of People and Development is responsible for monitoring completion of these courses. In addition, equality and diversity and the work of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC) is covered in staff inductions.

At a student level, the importance of respect and acceptance of diversity are reflected in our Student Charter, and covered in one of the Student Induction Lectures as well as in training sessions provided for our Peer Assisted Learning leaders. In addition, all new students are required to complete training around harassment and sexual misconduct. For returning students, the focus is on awareness raising at the start of each year.

⁸ <https://www.bil.ac.uk/qem/section-3/>

⁹ <https://www.bil.ac.uk/qem/policies/>

8. Responses to bullying and harassment

8.1 Students

Our Student Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy provides information and advice on a number of key areas that include the following:

- Definitions
- Reporting processes (online and in person)
- Our response to incidents including internal and external referrals, and informal and formal resolution
- Possible penalties
- Outcomes of
- Support including internal and external sources of support
- Anonymity
- Confidentiality
- Data Collection

8.2 Staff

Our Staff Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy provides information and advice on a number of key areas that include the following:

- Unacceptable and unlawful conduct
- Addressing unacceptable and unlawful conduct
- Information for those who are the subject of a complaint
- Unlawful discrimination and criminal offences
- Malicious or vexation complaints
- Confidentiality and disclosure
- Sources of support

9. Related policies and procedures

- Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom
- Email Acceptable Use Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Ethics Policy
- Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Staff Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy

- Staff Disciplinary Procedure
- Staff Grievance Procedures
- Student Complaints Policy and Procedures
- Student Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy

10. Review

The Dignity and Respect Policy will be reviewed annually by the Document Lead. Any significant changes beyond the scope of an annual review will require the approval of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

Appendix A: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee contact details

If you would like to raise in confidence any matter in relation to this policy with a member of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, please do so by contacting one of the following:

Name	Role	Email address
Antony Charles	Head of People and Development	antony.charles@bil.ac.uk
Maria Jackson	Chair of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee	maria.jackson@bil.ac.uk
Nadia Michail	Disability and Wellbeing Manager	nadia.michail@bil.ac.uk
Andrea Turculet	Assessment Executive	andreea.turculet@bil.ac.uk

However, for more detailed information on support and advice options, please refer to our [Student Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) and our [Staff Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#)¹⁰.

¹⁰ <https://www.bil.ac.uk/qem/section-3/>