

Harassment, Bullying and Victimisation Policy

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1 Policy statement

Imperial College London has committed to creating a respectful and collaborative working culture both within and outside of the workplace where it involves or affects the College in any way. Every person in the College community has a role to play in achieving this vision by respecting and valuing others and having a clear understanding of their responsibilities towards one another.

1. All members of staff have an obligation to familiarise themselves with, understand and comply with this policy and attend relevant training so that together we can work towards creating a positive working environment which is key to our future success.
2. The College has a zero-tolerance approach to harassment, bullying and/or victimisation. Zero-tolerance means any complaints must not be ignored and will be investigated. All incidents will be taken seriously and could provide grounds for disciplinary action that may lead to dismissal from the College. Furthermore, individuals who harass or bully may be subject to criminal and/or civil prosecution.
3. All individuals are personally liable for their actions, which in some instances could lead to criminal or civil action in the Courts under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, Equality Act 2010 or other relevant legislation, such as the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
4. If the bullying is based on a person's sex, race, disability, religion, age, gender reassignment or sexual orientation (**also known as a protected characteristic**), this is **harassment** which is unlawful. The College will also take seriously any bullying and harassment based on a person's gender identity and gender expression.

2 Scope

This policy applies to all members of the College community and relates to harassment, bullying and victimisation perpetrated by:

- a student against a member of staff;
- a member of staff against a student or a member of staff.

It applies to harassment, bullying and victimisation that may take place outside of the College premises or hours, e.g. social events, trips abroad or on social media.

Misconduct is not necessarily confined to the behaviour of senior staff towards more junior staff or staff towards students. It can take place between persons at the same level or involve staff or students behaving inappropriately towards more senior members of the College.

This policy does not cover incidents of sexual misconduct and sexual violence, as the College has a separate policy ([Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Violence Policy](#)).

3 Definitions and examples

For the purposes of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

Harassment is unwelcome behaviour which violates an individual's dignity and/or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment may be physical, written, verbal, non-verbal, online or via social media. It can be intentional or unintentional.

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, which may include an abuse or misuse of power, through means that threaten, undermine, humiliate, denigrate, take advantage of, or injure the recipient. Causing offence may be a deliberate act or it may not be. It is the impact on the individual which is the key consideration.

Unlike bullying, harassment is legally defined in the UK and included as a form of discrimination in the Equality Act (2010).

Sexual misconduct is any act of violence or harassment which is sexual in nature or any kind of unwanted, non-consensual sexual touching or harassment within or outside a relationship. This may include rape, sexual assault, sexual exploitation or groping. It also covers behaviours such as grooming, coercion, the promise of a reward for sexual access and sexual demands or threats. It often arises where there is an imbalance of power in a relationship and it violates the principle that the parties involved have given willing consent to the behaviours.

Harassment, bullying and sexual misconduct might be a series of different behaviours, repeated forms of the same unwanted behaviour or a one-off incident.

For more examples of bullying and harassment, please **see Appendix A**.

4 Signs of and impact of bullying, harassment and victimisation

Bullying, harassment and victimisation in the workplace can have a long-term effect on the wellbeing and morale of staff which in turn has a detrimental impact on departments and in turn the College as a whole. Managers and colleagues should look out for signs that fellow colleagues may be subjected to inappropriate behaviour.

4.1 Staff

Change in an individual's performance and behaviour, increased stress, trauma, more sickness absence than usual, loss of appetite, difficulty sleeping, palpitations, anxiety, depression, burnout, low self-esteem, difficulty concentrating, moodiness, irritability, suicidal thoughts, resignation, strained relationships and uneasy working

relationships, friction and factions. The impact on the individual may also have a knock-on impact on their families and home life.

4.2 Colleagues/bystanders & witnesses

Being an observer of bullying can be as stressful as being bullied. The main reason for bystanders and witnesses not coming forward is fear of becoming a victim of the bully themselves. They may leave College if they see that it is not acting to address issues.

4.3 College

High staff turnover (loss of talent and difficulty recruiting new talent), reduced productivity and profits, costs of potential litigation, costs of sickness absence, poor morale, negative culture and damage to reputation.

5 Responsibilities

5.1 Leaders and line managers

Faculty Deans, Heads of Departments/Divisions, and all other leaders and managers have a duty to familiarise themselves with this policy, and to make every effort to ensure that bullying and harassment does not occur, particularly in the areas of work for which they are responsible.

Leaders and managers should act as role models and adhere to [Imperial Expectations](#).

Bullying and harassment can be difficult to spot. The individual being subjected to the unreasonable behaviour or to the bullying and harassing behaviours may be too frightened to report it. The behaviours may be done in a subtle way or the individual may even think it is part of the 'culture' of the workplace and just normalise what they are being subjected to. If the individual is unwilling or too frightened to act there may be other ways to address the issue and this should be discussed with HR.

5.2 Members of staff and the student community

Staff are required to respect the age, beliefs, convictions, gender identity and sexual orientation of others and not behave in ways which cause offence, or which in any way could be harassment or bullying behaviour. Each member of staff and all students have a responsibility to ensure colleagues, clients, students, and visitors are treated with dignity and respect.

It is the responsibility of the College and everyone in its community to create a workplace culture where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and everyone is clear that this is what they can expect from each other.

6 Support available

Should a member of staff be experiencing bullying, harassment or victimisation there are several options available to them. It is advisable to talk to someone before taking any action either informally or formally. Should a member of staff be accused of bullying, harassment or victimisation, support is available too. **See Appendix B.**

[Report and Support – our online reporting tool](#)

Anonymous reporting enables us to build a picture of issues where people do not feel able to reveal personal information but would like the College to be aware something has taken place. Anonymous reports provide statistical information, which is used to monitor trends and to inform our work on tackling bullying, harassment, sexual misconduct and victimisation.

[Confidential Care – external counselling and support](#)

A free 24-hour confidential counselling and advice line is available to all Imperial College staff through the College's Employee Assistance Provider, Confidential Care (CiC). They can be contacted on 0800 085 4764 (see website for all contact details). They also have a number of helpful fact sheets that can be downloaded including information on bullying.

Confidential Care also provides a dedicated telephone advice line for managers and supervisors who need advice or would like to talk through how to approach a difficult situation in the role as a manager. The advice line is open 8am to 8pm Monday-Friday and can be reached via 0800 085 3805.

[Harassment Support Contacts](#)

The College has a number of trained Harassment Support Contacts (HSCs) whom staff can contact. The role of an HSC is to act as a sounding board by giving individuals an opportunity to talk through their concerns with a trained member of staff who will respect their privacy, discuss options and implications, and generally provide confidential and informal support.

Harassment Support Contacts are part of a confidential volunteer network and as such do not formally report to anyone. They have support from the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team at the College, and top-level endorsement from management who recognise the valuable contribution these roles make.

Any information shared with a HSC is confidential and, unless directed to do so, will not be shared with a third party. Seeking support from an HSC does not form any part of formal procedures. Because of its anonymous, confidential nature, it is often used prior to formal procedures being invoked.

HSCs cannot be called as witnesses for the person making the complaint under the formal process. The College will ensure, where possible, that members of staff can raise issues, should they wish, with a HSC of their own gender, age range, sexuality, religion, race, or with someone who is aware of disability issues.

You can contact the [Harassment Support Contacts](#) directly via phone or email.

Alternatively, members of staff are encouraged to get in touch with the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Centre](#), who can then arrange a referral to an appropriate HSC.

Human Resources

Members of staff can seek support and advice confidentially at any stage from Human Resources. In addition, HR will be able to talk through both the formal and informal processes with anyone experiencing difficulties. Members of staff who have been accused of harassment, bullying or victimisation will be provided with a HR representative not involved in the case to provide procedural guidance. Please see Appendix B.

Line managers

If appropriate, members of staff can seek support and advice from their line manager.

Mediators and dispute resolution support

Where issues concerning the individual are not harassment, sexual misconduct or bullying but rather conflict, mediation may be an option to help resolve differences and improve working relationships. Mediation is a confidential process where a neutral, non-judgemental third party brings the parties in conflict together in a safe environment to facilitate open and honest dialogue as a first step in helping the parties find mutually agreed solutions. This approach operates outside of any formal dispute or grievance procedures and is entered into voluntarily by both parties. It is best attempted before the situation escalates into a formal dispute. Exploring mediation options usually starts with informal discussions with HR Advisors or one of the accredited mediators within the College. For more information please see the link.

Occupational Health

If an individual feels their situation is having an impact on their health, they can contact the College's Occupational Health service to arrange a consultation with an Occupational Health Advisor.

Trade unions representation and support

During the informal stages of a grievance, trade unions representatives are available to provide support and at the formal stages of this procedure, members of staff are entitled to representation or assistance from a trade union representative or a work colleague. For more information on the role/support provided by representatives, please see the link.

7 Training and development

The College provides a comprehensive range of [training programmes](#) to support management and staff in dealing with issues concerning bullying and harassment these include:

- [Harassment – the management perspective](#) - designed to enable managers to feel confident about managing claims of harassment, bullying, or victimisation

- [Harassment – confronting inappropriate behaviour](#) - designed for anyone who wants to think about harassing or bullying behaviours, how it can affect performance and the overall working environment, how to tackle it head-on to prevent reoccurrence, and work to eliminate any form of discrimination in the team/department.

There are a number of other related training courses that may also help staff experiencing bullying and harassment including:

- Building Personal Resilience
- Stress Management
- Tackling Stress in Your Team
- Disability Equality Training
- Mental Health First Aid and Mental Health First Aid Lite
- Understanding: LGBTQ Perspective at Work
- Unconscious Bias
- Active Bystander Training

8 Related policies

8.1 [Personal Relationships](#)

8.2 [Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Violence Policy](#)

8.3 [Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure](#)

8.4 [Student Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures](#)

9 Monitoring the policy

Senior managers within HR will monitor the effectiveness of the policy. The range and number of cases will also be monitored so that action can be taken to address any issues of concern. All cases should be reported to your HR representative.

This document complies with the Equality Act 2010, the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, and the Prevention of Harassment Act 1997.

The College treats equality of opportunity seriously and has an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy that is applicable to staff in order to promote and ensure equality of opportunity. Implementation of this procedure must be clear and transparent and not subject to any unfair discriminatory practices.

Appendix A Identifying types of bullying

(Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) “Bullying at Work – Beyond Policies To A Culture of Respect”)

The nature of bullying can fall into several types:

Work-related bullying

Withholding information, having one’s responsibilities removed without justification, work overload, misrepresenting work as their own, setting impossible deadlines, unwarranted criticism, cyber bullying- using the internet and related technologies to harm another person in a deliberate and hostile manner

Predatory bullying

This type of bullying happens when the target is being used as an innocent victim to demonstrate the power the bully has over others. Here the bully feels they are unlikely to be punished for their bad behaviour and victims find it hard to understand what they have done to cause the problems.

Dispute-related bullying

This type of bullying develops out of a perceived slight or conflict that has got out of hand. One person believes that the other has wronged them so that the conflict escalates into a personal vendetta.

Escalating bullying

Generally, people see their own behaviours as positive and part of their personality and values. When negative behaviours are displayed by the individual this is put down to external circumstances. When one thinks of others’ negative behaviours this is put down to their personality and the positive behaviours are due to external circumstances. As each negative act happens one party will respond according to their interpretation of the intentions behind the other’s actions. Both come to believe the other is responsible for the breakdown of the relationship.

Delegated bullying

Sometime the person perceived to be doing the bullying is unaware of the role they are playing on behalf of someone else. This form of bullying can only take place if the information is provided to paint the intended victim in a poor light. It is common for the naïve bully to be accused of bullying despite the fact the real bully was the person’s manager who set the situation up.

Bystander bullying

It is not always the main target of the bullying who is most affected by the bully. The bully may create a situation where individuals are picked on while other people stand by and watch or even take part in the taunting. Bystanders can experience a high level of stress as a result of being unable to stand up to the workplace bully.

Merry go-round bullying

Another type of bystander bullying occurs where the bully selects various members of the team one at a time so that everyone is on edge as to whether or not it is their turn to be bullied.

Mobbing/ gang bullying

In the workplace mobbing involves gang bullying and the target can be a subordinate, team member or a manager.

Good guy/ bad guy bullying

Sometimes two or more individuals become involved in the bullying process. The good guy will apparently be friendly and concerned for the victim and find out about the impact of the poor behaviours. This is then passed on to the bad guy as further information on how to target the negative behaviour.

Subordinate bullying

Subordinate bullying can be subtle and unintentional, but the impact is disruptive. It can be undermining, publicly challenging, withholding information from, or failing to pass information to the manager. Subordinate bullying can be by an individual or by a group of subordinates.

Passive-aggressive bullying

People who use passive aggression as a way of undermining and manipulating others tend to focus on disadvantages in any suggestion or idea. However, instead of being open about their disagreements, they will resist undertaking any tasks allocated to them and covertly sabotage or undermine the efforts of their manager and others. Passive aggressive bullies resist undertaking routine social and occupational tasks and constantly complain about being misunderstood or unappreciated. They can demonstrate a wide range of emotions depending on what they want to achieve. To a peer or subordinate they may be sullen or argumentative. On the other hand, they may be charming to get the attention of their manager. They may emphasise their personal misfortunes, difficulties or needs as a way of manipulating others to provide them with help and support, or to deflect blame away from them.

General examples of bullying and harassing behaviour

Personal insults: Unwelcome remarks about a person's age, dress, appearance, race marital status, sexuality, disability, offensive or inappropriate comments about an individual's body.

Innuendos or gestures, openly hostile, insulting, abusive or embarrassing comments or criticism. Persistently demeaning, ridiculing, excluding or isolating someone. Starting or spreading rumours.

Threats to disclose, or disclosing private or personal information including photographs, comments, notes, publications or posts on social media. Posting comments that are derisory, disparaging, abusive, offensive or intimidating.

Deliberately addressing or referring to someone using a pronoun (for example, he or she) with which an individual does not identify.

Intimidation: Threats of physical violence or psychological intimidation, misuse of power or position (e.g. hinting at potential dismissal).

Unwanted physical contact, stalking*, spying, pestering, shouting, sarcasm or derogatory remarks, point finger and invading personal space.

Hate crime: Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim, or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on five protected characteristics: disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, and transgender identity

Racial harassment: An incident or a series of incidents intended or likely to intimidate, offend or harm an individual or group because of their ethnic origin, colour, race, religion or nationality. A racist incident is any incident that is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person (MacPherson Report 1999). Such behaviour may include:

- Derogatory name calling;
- Verbal threats, insults and racist jokes;
- Display of racially offensive material;
- Exclusion from normal workplace conversation or activities;
- Physical attack;
- Encouraging others to commit any such acts.

Antisemitism: Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.

Islamophobia: Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness.

Homophobic harassment: An incident or a series of incidents intended or likely to intimidate, offend or harm, targeted at people who are, or are perceived to be, gay, lesbian or bi. Such behaviour may include:

- Outing a person as lesbian, gay, or bi without their consent or spreading rumours;
- Homophobic banter or jokes;
- Excluding same-sex partners from social events;
- Intrusive questioning about someone's personal life.

Biphobic harassment: An incident or a series of incidents intended or likely to intimidate, offend or harm, targeted at people who are, or perceived to be, bi. Such behaviour may include:

- Comments that deny that bisexuality is a genuine sexual orientation;
- Remarks or jokes that promote negative stereotypes about bi people (e.g. that they are promiscuous or dishonest).

Transphobic harassment: An incident or a series of incidents intended or likely to intimidate, offend or harm, targeted at people who are, or are perceived to be, trans. Such behaviour may include:

- Refusing to address a trans person by their affirmed name and pronouns;
- Denying a trans person access to the appropriate single-sex facilities such as toilets or changing rooms;
- Outing a person as trans without their consent or spreading rumours;
- Transphobic comments or jokes;
- Intrusive questioning about someone's personal life.

Sexual harassment: Sexually explicit remarks, innuendos or banter, sexual insults, jokes, teasing or songs, wolf whistling, cat calling or making other offensive sexual noises.

Offensive comments about someone's dress, appearance or private life, including their sexuality or gender identity, unwanted or inappropriate physical contact including touching, pinching, groping or smacking.

Unwanted requests to engage in or discuss sexual activity, lifting or removing clothing without consent. Display or distribution of sexually explicit material, stalking*

IF YOU HAVE WITNESSED OR HAVE BEEN A TARGET OF SEXUAL HARRASSMENT OR SEXUAL MISCONDUCT PLEASE REFER TO THE COLLEGE'S [SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY](#).

Social exclusion: isolation, scapegoating, ignoring, ostracising

Victimisation: treating someone unfavourably because they have taken (or might be taking) action under the Equality Act or supporting somebody who is doing so such as giving evidence in someone else's grievance.

Victimisation includes but is not limited to:

- refusing reasonable requests such as unjustifiably blocking access to promotion;
- refusing access to training or continuing professional development;
- selecting a person for redundancy without proper justification;
- subjecting a person to unwarranted disciplinary action or performance management.

*Stalking is usually persistent and unwanted conduct of one or more kinds of behaviours described above. It can be physical or psychological and take place directly against a person, or by approaching a third party about a person.

The more common examples of stalking are following a person home, following a person around, between or to/from campus, sending or leaving unwanted and repeated messages, bullying on social media or making intrusive or unwanted visits.

Appendix B Guidance for those accused or harassment, bullying or victimisation

- If you are approached informally by a member of staff about your behaviour, do not dismiss the complaint. Remember that all people find different things acceptable and everyone has the right to decide what behaviour is acceptable to them and to have their feelings respected by others. You may have offended them without intending to and a simple apology may resolve the matter.
- If accused of harassment or bullying, you may wish to contact your Strategic HR Partner, who can refer you to someone in HR not involved in the particular case for you to talk to. Alternatively, or in addition, the Trade Unions and/or Confidential Care (CiC) can supply support.
- Those who are the subject of a complaint will be treated with respect. Confidence will be maintained but there are limits to confidentiality in that the complaint, any witness statements and the investigator's report will be seen by those who have to be involved.
- If you believe the accusation to be unfounded, you should say so and participate willingly in the proceedings, so that the situation can be resolved informally or formally. You should also be prepared to participate in mediation if this is identified as an appropriate solution.
- If the evidence suggests that the complaint was made vexatiously or maliciously, disciplinary action may be taken against the complainant (up to and including dismissal).
- During the formal procedure both you and the complainant may wish to be accompanied at meetings by a work colleague or a Trade Union representative. Under exceptional circumstances the manager and Human Resources representative will consider requests for accompaniment by a relative or friend, this individual must not be a legal representative.
- Wherever possible, the College will try to ensure that during investigations the relevant parties are not required to work together. If the allegation is of gross misconduct, you may be suspended on full pay during the investigation and until the disciplinary proceedings have been concluded.
- If a complaint is not upheld, you should expect your line manager to take action to restore reasonable working relationships between you and the complainant. You must not victimise a member of staff who has made a complaint in good faith against you or anyone who has supported them in making the complaint or given evidence in relation to such a complaint.
- If a complaint is upheld, a disciplinary sanction may be imposed up to and including dismissal without notice. If the complaint is upheld, but you are not dismissed, the College could decide to transfer you to another role.

- In addition, or as an alternative to a disciplinary sanction, guidance or counselling may be offered to support you to understand how your behaviour affected the complainant.
- Both you and the College can also be subject to prosecution under criminal as well as civil law. If found guilty you could be personally liable and have to pay compensation yourself.