

Respect Policy for Students and Staff



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Approved by: Academic Board & HASU Board of Trustees (EIA approved 17th March 2021)
Review due: Spring 2024

RESPECT POLICY

1. What is the purpose of this policy?

Our aim is to take all necessary steps to ensure our community is free of harassment, violence, exploitation and intimidation, and that through our actions collectively and individually we nurture an environment of respectfulness, positive relationships and experiences. This policy complements our Equality and Diversity Policy, which ensures our legal compliance with the Equality Act 2010, by promoting a respectful community environment that promotes best practice.

We understand that sometimes individuals will behave in a way that undermines our community values. These disrespectful behaviours jeopardise the mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing of those affected and risks the safety and reputation of our University community. We also recognise the impact that these negative behaviours can have on individuals, ranging from mild, to moderate, to severe, as well as the effect on family and friends. Therefore, we adopt a whole-university approach that promotes: personal responsibility, proactive interventions at an early stage to minimise the risk of situations escalating, and dealing with behaviours in in-person and virtual spaces, including all social media. All students and staff have a part to play in developing this positive and inclusive environment, which celebrates difference, challenges prejudice and nurtures a campus culture to be proud of.

Our Respect Commitment

Our community expects that:

- All interpersonal and professional relationships and interactions will be grounded in mutual respect and open communication.
- Incidents of harassment, violence or bullying are unacceptable and may also constitute a direct infringement of the law. Therefore, we promote a culture in which incidents that threaten a positive student or staff experience are reported, and inappropriate behaviours actively challenged and addressed.
- Bystander intervention, the act of intervening when another individual needs help or when unacceptable behaviour is witnessed, will be encouraged and promoted to ensure a positive, safe environment for all members of our community.
- We will respond promptly and sensitively to both informal concerns and formal complaints. Where appropriate, disciplinary action will be taken through the relevant disciplinary policy (see section 5) and some cases may be referred to the Police and other law-enforcement agencies. All parties will be properly supported during investigations relating to complaints and disciplinary processes.

2. Who is this policy for?

All staff and students who are part of the University community, including our Students' Union.

It covers the following behaviours in person, in written form and in virtual spaces (including social media):

- Discrimination or Harassment covered by the Equality Act 2010 and related case law, on the grounds of:
 - Age
 - Gender reassignment
 - Sex
 - Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins)
 - Disability
 - Religion or philosophical belief (examples included at Annex A, such as ethical dietary choices)
 - Sexual orientation
 - Marriage and Civil Partnership
 - Pregnancy and Maternity

- Sexual, racial or other forms of violence
- Bullying, including actions to humiliate, isolate, attack or denigrate a person's lifestyle or dietary choices.
- Disruptive and antisocial behaviour on campus in social, teaching and other spaces (such as the Bamford Library).

Key definitions and examples are provided at **Annex A**.

3. Who is responsible and what are our responsibilities?

As members of the University community demonstrating respect and integrity in our interactions with individuals and groups, we will:

- Identify and challenge unacceptable behaviour when it occurs, even if it is not directed at ourselves (i.e. Bystander Intervention).
- Address and resolve matters ourselves, where reasonably possible, in a positive and constructive way.
- Raise more serious concerns with relevant University staff and participate positively in approaches to resolve them.
- Modify our own behaviour and language should we become aware that we have behaved unacceptably in relation to this policy, even if no complaint has been made.
- Respect individuals who raise feedback, irrespective of their role or relationship to us.
- Actively contribute to promoting a culture of dignity and respect.
- Collaborate and work collectively to:
 - Foster a positive culture for working, studying and living together, which permits freedom of thought, belief and expression, within a framework of mutual respect and tolerance.
 - Ensure all staff and students are treated with openness, respect and dignity at all times.
 - Make staff and students feel safe, listened to, and heard, when raising concerns about behaviour.
 - Handle complaints and allegations seriously and with discretion, in line with the appropriate policy, and with support for all parties involved.
 - Ensure malicious or vexatious allegations are investigated and resolved in line with relevant disciplinary procedures.

4. How can we take Positive Action?

Creating a Connected Community: Promote a connected community through opportunities for networking and wider participation in order to foster a broader understanding of, and respect for, differences. Encourage and promote activities and groups which enhance the student/staff experience such as Mature Student Network, Global Café, Planet Harper and student societies which promote positive connection and common interest.

Creating Calendar of Culture: In partnership with the Students' Union and our students, promote a calendar of cultural events which encourage and represent a diverse community of students and staff, and engage in local activities and events which enhance our relationship with local community groups.

Through Education and Training: Deliver a range of education opportunities, awareness campaigns and workshops, including but not limited to:

- Student Welcome Week induction/reinduction promoting the University's values and culture of respect to students, with a particular focus on encouraging an understanding of both sexual consent and the importance of bystander intervention in tackling examples of negative behaviours.
- Student Wardens, Ambassadors, Clubs and Societies Executive skills training and ongoing mentoring.

- Staff induction and other training: to instil our values and help staff members handle disclosures and referrals for support, and to ensure that all staff and students understand how to report concerns with confidence and intervene as an active bystander.
- Educational opportunities within the curriculum that are designed for all, to hear and expose students to different perspectives and world views not fitting with their own, and to ensure that staff draw upon a range of counter views in their teaching.
- Extra-curricular activities offered to reinforce expectations and to address topical issues such as bullying and harassment and to critique and debate controversial issues.
- Educational measures may also be considered to educate and rehabilitate, when matters of misconduct are considered by a discipline committee and where reporting individuals are comfortable with proposed outcomes.
- Promotion of the work of Agrespect and other organisations, which actively promote and support diversity in the industries with which the University works.

Provision of Individual Support: Immediate and ongoing care and support for all parties involved in cases. Referrals to wellbeing, counselling and medical services; safety planning; academic and workplace adjustments; self-care resources; advocacy; navigating resources. Staff and Students have access to the Employee / Student Assistance Programmes for 24/7 over the telephone support.

Assistance with reporting and complaints: Those with concerns will be given assistance in making an informed decision about next steps, should an individual choose to report a concern to authorities within the University, or to the Police. All incidents will be reported using the Incident Reporting Form. We are committed to developing tools for easy reporting of concerns.

Currently, individuals can report general concerns to Student Services studentservices@harper-adams.ac.uk, Humanresources@harper-adams.ac.uk, or studentsunion@harper-adams.ac.uk

Provision of information: Provide up-to-date community resource information and appropriate signposting to external services.

Proactive Monitoring and Accountability: The University’s Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee (LTSEC) and Students’ Union Board of Trustees will engage with its community to monitor and review its performance in relation to promoting dignity and respect and the effectiveness of this policy and procedures.

5. Relationship with other policies

This Policy operates within the context of the following:

Action relating to:	Is Dealt with via:	Possible External referrals:
Complaints by one or more student dissatisfied with the standard of service, action or lack of action by, or on behalf of, the University.	Student Complaints Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police (possible criminal actions) • External organisations (e.g. social media companies in cases where we have evidence of breaches of their own policies)
Complaints by one or more staff members dissatisfied with the standard of service, action or lack of action by, or on behalf of, the University.	Staff Grievance Procedure	
Concerns or complaints about the behaviour of a student or group of students raised by a student, including vexatious and malicious complaints.	Student Disciplinary Policy	
Concerns or complaints about the behaviour of a student or group of students, in Students’ Union	Students’ Union Discipline Policy -	

facilities and social settings, raised by a student, including vexatious and malicious complaints.	<i>under development</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Authority Designated Officer/Family Connect or other relevant Agency (for safeguarding issues) Prevent Sexual Assault Referral Centre (The Glade)
Concerns or complaints about the behaviour of a staff member, or group of staff, including vexatious and malicious complaints.	Student Complaints Procedure Staff Disciplinary Procedure Dignity at Work Policy	
The exercise of freedom of speech, balanced debate and events involving external speakers.	Freedom of Speech, Academic Freedom and External Speakers Policy	
Concerns about institutional misconduct that may suggest wrongdoing, constitute criminal activity or a breach of a legal duty.	Whistleblowing Procedure	
Proposed changes to university-wide practices, policies and procedures.	Equality and Diversity Policy	N/A

Annex A – Definitions and Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour

The definitions below provide indicative examples and do not restrict the University from considering any matters that it deems may constitute one or more of the unacceptable behaviours described.

Definitions	Examples
<p>Harassment: covers a range of behaviours, subjects an individual or a group in-person or virtually (e.g. via social media) to unwelcome attention, intimidation, humiliation, ridicule, offence or a reduced feeling of self-worth. Unacceptable behaviour can range from violence and bullying to more subtle behaviour such as ignoring an individual at work. It is unwanted by the recipient and continues after an objection is made, although a single incident may be serious enough to constitute harassment and justify a complaint. Harassment can also have a specific meaning under certain laws, for instance, if harassment is related to sex, sexual orientation, race, religion and belief, age, gender reassignment, disability or pregnancy and maternity, it may be unlawful discrimination and may also constitute a criminal offence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derogatory name-calling or ridicule, including sharing of derogatory images based on racial differences; • Verbal abuse and threats of physical attack, for example, related to a person’s sexuality; • Display of racially offensive material or graffiti; • Sharing of derogatory images including posting on social media; • Derogatory actions, statements, jokes, taunts or references to an individual's ethnic origin, customs, dress, diet, culture or religion; • Examples of Sexual harassment include (but are not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Uninvited and unwelcome physical contact; ▪ Sexual innuendo and use of sexually centred expletives; ▪ Unwelcome advances, attention, invitations or propositions; ▪ Unwelcome or lewd references to a person's physical features, figure or dress; ▪ Suggestive and unwelcome comments, looks, attitudes or jokes; ▪ Taking, sharing or distributing sexual or sexualised images without consent.
<p>Violent behaviour (including Sexual Violence): use of physical force or violence to inflict harm to others, to endanger the health or safety of another person or property, or restrict the freedom of action or movement of another person. Violent behaviour also includes the <i>threat</i> of violence, as an expressed or implied threat to interfere with an individual's health and/or safety, and/or property, which causes a reasonable apprehension or fear that such harm or injury is about to occur such as stalking, prolonged or frequent shouting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwelcome physical contact; • Slapping, punching, striking, pushing, or otherwise physically attacking a person; • Throwing, punching, or otherwise handling objects in an aggressive manner; • Any sexual activity without consent. Consent requires the capacity to make a choice (including age and understanding) and being able to make that choice freely without constraint (including without intoxication, coercion or under the influence of drugs).
<p>Bullying: offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistently ignoring, excluding or patronising a class-mate or colleague; • Giving someone an unrealistic workload and/or failing to give them all instructions needed to complete a task; • Posting derogatory or offensive images of an individual or to represent the individual on social media.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaving objects in a person’s space (bedroom or office for example) to intimidate or cause offence, such as leaving meat or road kill in someone else’s space where that person is an ethical vegan.
<p>Discrimination: When an individual, or group of people, is treated less favourably than others based on a protected characteristic, as defined in the Equality Act 2010:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ age; (in a particular age group) ○ disability; (a mental or physical long-term impairment that has an adverse effect on day-to-day activities) ○ race, colour or nationality, ethnic / national origin; ○ religion or philosophical belief (any religion, or lack of religion; any philosophical belief that is similar to a religious belief, genuinely held and worthy of respect. This could include beliefs such as environmentalism, veganism or sanctity of life¹, but is unlikely to include support for a political party); ○ sex; ○ sexual orientation; ○ gender reassignment; ○ marriage or civil partnership; ○ pregnancy and maternity. <p>Direct discrimination: When an individual, or group of people, is treated less favourably than others based on a protected characteristic</p> <p>Direct discrimination by association: is treating someone less favourably than another person because they are associated with a person who has a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Direct discrimination by perception: is treating one person less favourably than someone else because you incorrectly believe they have a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Indirect discrimination: is a situation in which an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice puts an individual, who has a particular protected characteristic, at a disadvantage compared with other people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not offering a place on a course or not employing someone because they hold a protected characteristic (e.g. because they are disabled). • Not offering a place on a course or not employing someone because they are a carer of a disabled child or dependent. • Not offering a student placement or not promoting a staff member because you think they are homosexual, when actually they are not. • Insisting on a minimum height requirement for a job where height is not relevant to carry out the role. Such a requirement may, for example, discriminate disproportionately against women as they are generally shorter than men.

¹ As identified through specific examples of case law.

<p>Victimisation: Less favourable treatment of a person because they have, in good faith, made allegations of Harassment, intend to make such an allegation or have assisted or supported a person in bringing an allegation. Victimisation is unlawful and will be treated as a form of Harassment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labelling an individual a ‘troublemaker’ and/or refusing to advance them academically or professionally; • Refusing to provide a reference once the working or learning relationship has ended, or to treat them in any way less favourably as a result of their actions.
<p>Vexatious reporting: creation of persistent, unwarranted reports of misconduct (including Sexual Violence), or a refusal to accept any reasonable decisions arising from the application of the accompanying procedure to this Policy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeatedly complaining about another student or staff member.
<p>Malicious reporting occurs when an individual makes a report knowing that it lacks any evidence or basis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accusing another student of defacing their property when they know no evidence exists.
<p>Complicity is any act that knowingly helps, promotes, or encourages any form of Sexual Violence, Violent behaviour, Racism, Bullying or Harassment, and misconduct by other individuals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misuse of social media, for example, reposting derogatory images uploaded by another student or staff member.
<p>Retaliation: constitutes any words or actions, including intimidation, threats, or coercion, made <i>in response to</i> disclosures or reports of misconduct, by any individual including both the Accused Party and the Reporting Party, as well as witnesses, friends, or relatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating offensive images, for example, by adapting an image of another students or staff member because they have complained about behaviour towards them due to their dietary preferences or due to their disability, or race.