



A Guideline to Dignity at Brunel

“Dignity is the state of being worthy of honour and respect.”



What is Harassment?

Harassment is any form of unwanted and unwelcome behaviour which may range from mildly unpleasant remarks to physical violence.

Harassment on the grounds of:

Sexuality can be defined as physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature which is unwanted and offensive to the recipient.

Race can be defined as hostile or offensive behaviour based on a person's race, colour or appearance, ethnic

group, nationality or citizenship.

Disability can be defined as behaviour which is offensive or hostile towards a disabled person and undermines dignity and self-respect.

Sexual Orientation can be defined as behaviour

which is hostile or offensive towards people because of their sexuality, sexual preferences, gender or lifestyle.

Age can be defined as behaviour which is hostile or offensive towards people because of their age.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is persistent unwelcome behaviour, mostly using unwarranted or invalid criticism, nit-picking, fault-finding, exclusion, isolation, being singled out and treated differently, being humiliated, being threatened etc.

What is Victimisation?

A person is victimised when they suffer unfavourable treatment because they have in good faith, made a complaint under the Dignity at Study policy, acted as a witness or accompanied a complainant to a hearing.

Everyone at Brunel University has a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Equally staff, students and visitors of the University have a right to operate within an environment free from harassment and bullying.

What is Discrimination?

Discrimination is when someone is treated unfairly on the basis of prejudice.

Direct discrimination is when a person is treated less favourably than another because of their racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, age or sexual orientation.

Indirect discrimination is when an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would disadvantage people on the grounds of racial ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation unless the practice can be objectively justified by a legitimate aim.

Vicarious liability – The University may be liable for any act of discrimination carried out by staff or student in the name of the University, with or without the knowledge or approval of the University.

What are the possible effects of being bullied and harassed?

Being bullied or harassed can have some serious effects. Bullying and harassment can undermine physical and mental health, and can often result in poor work performance and low academic achievement. They can cause a range of symptoms, including:

- ❖ Depression
- ❖ Self-doubt and loss of confidence
- ❖ Sleeplessness
- ❖ Loss of appetite
- ❖ Inability to relax or switch off from work and study.

How you experience bullying and harassment is unique to you – and the result is not always what was intended by the person who seems to be bullying you. It's up to you to decide if you are being bullied or harassed because you find the behaviour unacceptable. It can also be distressing if you see someone else on the receiving end of bullying behaviour.

What should I do if I am being bullied or harassed?

The most appropriate approach for you to take depends on what you're comfortable with, and your circumstances. First, you need to recognise that you may feel self doubt, anxiety or a lack of confidence, which can make you feel confused about your situation.

Persistent bullying or harassment can make you feel as if you are at fault after all, or you may find it hard to decide if your situation is bad enough to take action. So take some initial steps to help you clarify the situation.

1. Talk to other people

It's often helpful to talk informally to someone – friends, family, trusted colleagues, your course supervisor or personal tutor, or your University counselling service.

2. Make a note

It's vital to keep a written record of incidents. This can be therapeutic for you, and help clarify exactly what's happening so you can do something

about it. If you decide later on to make a formal complaint, this diary of events will also provide vital evidence.

You should include things like:

- ❖ Date and time of incident
- ❖ Location
- ❖ Nature of incident
- ❖ Your response
- ❖ Your feelings at the time
- ❖ The names of any witnesses

- ❖ Whether you took any action, and what it was

3. Decide to take action

The fact remains that until you do something about it, it's unlikely that the bully or harasser will stop. It's much better for your wellbeing if you take action, and to help others in the future by showing that bullying won't be tolerated.

Why am I being bullied or harassed?

There are no simple explanations for why one person is bullied, or why someone bullies. Personalities play a strong part, and the place in which it occurs can increase the incidence if problems aren't swiftly and properly dealt with.

What can I do?

Informal Stage:

It is advisable to resolve bullying and harassment issues in an informal manner. Where possible, the University will make every effort to resolve the situation informally.

As already stated, if it is at all possible it is important to express clearly to the person causing the offence that such behaviour is unacceptable. However, should you feel unable to confront such a person directly or the offensive behaviour does not stop, then there are a variety of support measures available.

In order to find out what support is available to you, contact the:

Student Equality and Diversity Manager

Email: eomanager@brunel.ac.uk
Telephone: 01895 265782

Or

Advice and Representation Centre (Hamilton Centre)

Email: advice@brunel.ac.uk
Telephone: 01895 269169

Formal Stage:

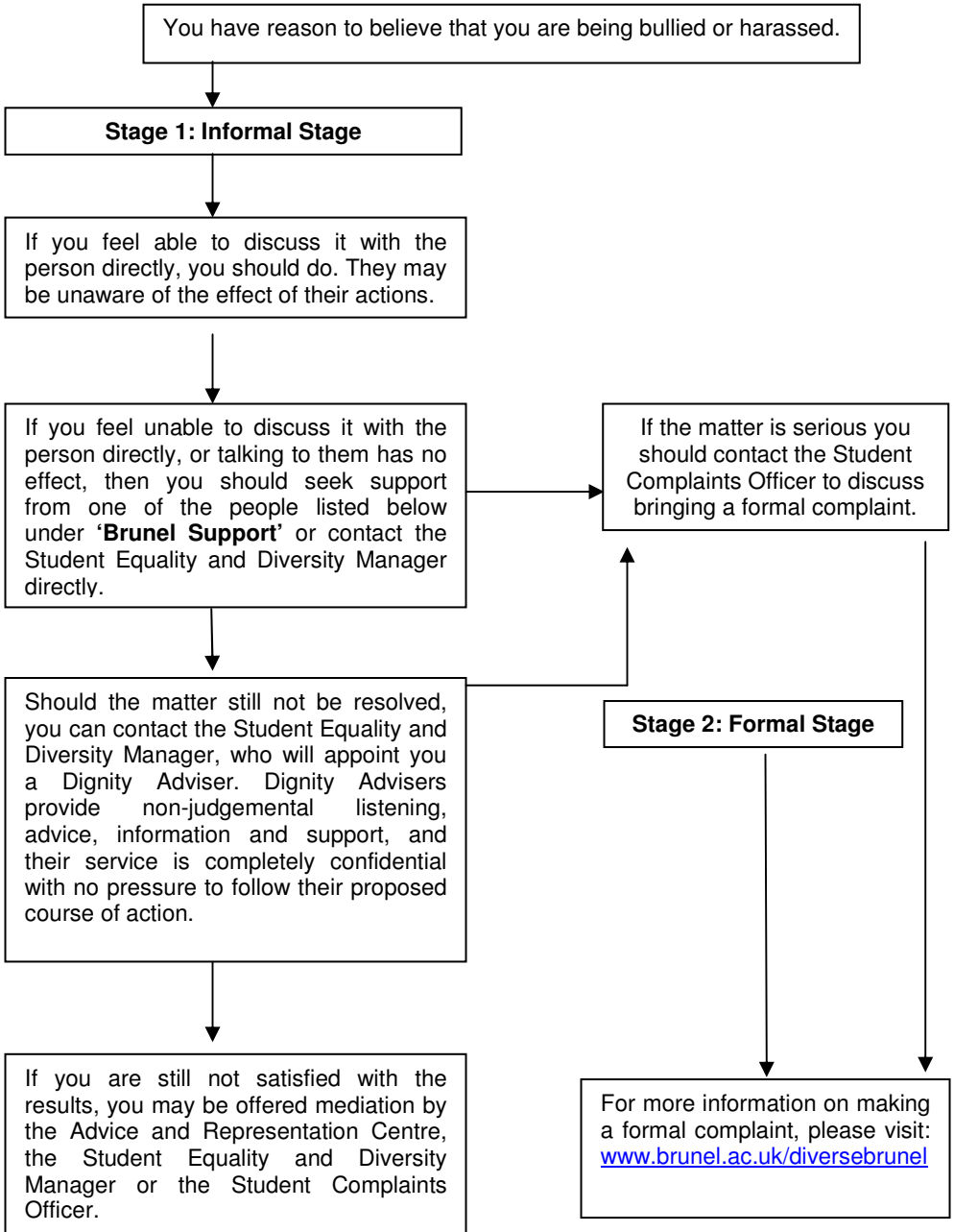
In the event that your complaint cannot be resolved informally, the University's Dignity at Study Policy provides for a formal resolution.

All formal complaints should be logged via the University's Complaints Officer. Brunel's Complaints Procedure and more information on student appeals and complaints can be found by visiting:

www.brunel.ac.uk/registry/appeals/home.shtml

What to do if you are being bullied or harassed

It is normally advisable to resolve complaints and issues in an informal manner where possible.



The University's 'Dignity at Study' Policy:

For further details about Brunel's 'Dignity at Study' policy, please visit:

www.brunel.ac.uk/diversebrunel

Student Dignity Advisors

Student Dignity Advisors work in accordance with Brunel University's Dignity at Study Policy and where possible aim to facilitate informal resolution in case of bullying, harassment and discrimination. Student Dignity Advisors will listen to students who believe they are being harassed, to clarify the options open to them and to assist them in resolving the matter informally where possible. The Student Equality and Diversity Manager will assign you a Student Dignity Advisor.

In an event that an informal resolution cannot be sought and the formal stage is initiated, Student Dignity Advisors will not be able to represent individual students at the formal stage of the process.

Students who require representation or further support during the formal stages should approach the Union of Brunel Students for advice, by:

Email: advice@brunel.ac.uk

Telephone: 01895 269169

Following Up

The Student Equality and Diversity Office will maintain formal records on cases relating to bullying, harassment and discrimination. This will be done in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Where appropriate, local service managers / Heads of Schools or their assigned person, may seek professional advice relating to bullying, harassment and discrimination from the Student Equality and Diversity Office.

The Student Equality and Diversity Office will follow up with all students who have reported that they have experienced bullying, harassment or discrimination within 3 months of resolution of the complaint. The aim of this is to ensure that such student's situation has improved, and they are now enjoying a better student experience.

What support is available to me?

Brunel Support

Disability and Dyslexia Service

Room 354 – Michael Sterling
01895 265213
disability@brunel.ac.uk

G.P. or Medical Centre

01895 266904 (for enquiries)
01895 234426 (for appointments)

Student Equality & Diversity Manager

Room 307 – Wilfred Brown
01895 265782
eomanager@brunel.ac.uk

Accommodation Office

01895 267900
Accom-uxb@brunel.ac.uk

Brunel International

01895 265519
International.helpdesk@brunel.ac.uk

Counselling Service

Reception opposite Medical Centre
Brunel-counselling@brunel.ac.uk

Personal Tutor / Supervisor

To find out who your Personal Tutor /
Supervisor is, please contact your
School administration

Chaplaincy

The Meeting House
01895 266459

Student Centre

01895 268268
Studentcentre@brunel.ac.uk

Advice & Representation Centre

Based in Students' Union in Hamilton
Centre
01895 269169
advice@brunel.ac.uk

External Support

Hillingdon Hospital

Pield Heath Road, UB8 3NN.
01895 238282
NHS Direct – 0845 4647

Racial Harassment

2N/06 Civic Centre, High Street, UB8
1UW
01895 277370
racialharassmentteam@hillingdon.gov.uk

Local Police

1 Warwick Place, UB8 1PG
01895 251212
Emergencies – 999

Mental Health Crisis Team

Mental Health Unit, Hillingdon Hospital
01895 272626
bvenn@hillingdon.gov.uk

Domestic Violence

2E/09 Civic Centre
01895 250381
0374 506563 (Hillingdon helpline)
housingadvice@hillingdon.gov.uk

Brunel Security Office

Adjacent to Wilfred Brown
01895 266943
01895 255786

What if I am accused of bullying and harassment?

If a colleague or tutor speaks to you informally about your behaviour, it may be that you are unaware of the effect your behaviour is having on another student of the University. Even if you think your intentions are well meaning, if someone is hurt by your actions they have the right to communicate that to you and ask you to stop.

- ❖ You may be asked to consider the possibility that you are at fault.
- ❖ Try not to be defensive and make counter-accusations.
- ❖ Often a simple discussion can resolve the problem, and identify more effective ways of communicating which are not threatening.
- ❖ You could ask a colleague you both trust to facilitate a discussion between the two of you to help resolve things.

What if you witness someone being bullied?

If you see someone in distress, you should try and help. Offer to support to them if they choose to speak up – but remember, it's their decision.

In serious cases you may wish to report, in confidence, what you have witnessed to a responsible person, stating how it has affected you.

Vicarious Liability

The University may be liable for any act of discrimination carried out by staff or student in the name of the University, with or without the knowledge of approval of the University.

Please note...

Malicious and Frivolous Complaints

In an event that a malicious or frivolous complaint is made against a member of staff, student or an associate of the University, the complaints will be rejected at the earliest stage. Students submitting malicious complaints may be subjected to action under Senate Regulation 6.

What the law says!

Did you know that bullying and harassment is a crime? If found guilty, the perpetrator can face a jail sentence of up to six months or a fine. The victims of bullying and harassment crimes can be awarded damages and a restraining order backed by the power of arrest.

Those who are prosecuted may jeopardise their future careers, as employers are unlikely to hire those with a criminal record.

There are various Acts put in place by the government to ensure that individuals are protected from bullying and harassment, and that those who commit such offences can be prosecuted.

Protection from Harassment Act 1997

The Act says that it is unlawful to cause harassment, alarm or distress by a course of conduct and states that 'a person must not pursue a course of conduct - (a) which amounts to harassment of another, and (b) which he knows or ought to know amounts to harassment of the other.'

If someone is harassed they could decide to take action for damages using the Protection from Harassment Act. An individual will need to establish the fact that harassment occurred and the damage it caused.

A person guilty of an offence under this section is liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months, or a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale, or both. The Police have powers to issue restraining orders under this legislation.

Criminal Justice & Public Order Act 1994

This defines a criminal offence of intentional harassment, which covers all forms of harassment, including sexual. A person is guilty of an offence if, with intent to cause a person harassment, alarm or distress, s/he:-

- ❖ uses threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour, or disorderly behaviour; or
- ❖ displays any writing, sign or other visible representation which is threatening, abusive or insulting, thereby causing that or another person harassment, alarm or distress.

Malicious Communications Act 1998

A particularly unpleasant form of harassment is that involving malicious communications either through the post, the telephone, Fax, by cyber-stalking through the internet or, an increasing problem, by the use of Text or SMS messages sent to mobile phones.

Under this legislation it is an offence to send an indecent, offensive or threatening letter, electronic communication or other article to another person and under section 43 Telecommunications Act 1984 it is a similar offence to send a telephone message which is indecent offensive or threatening. Both offences are punishable with up to six months imprisonment and/or a fine.