

Dignity at work and study code of conduct

- *what we expect from our staff and students*

Introduction

At Anglia Ruskin University, we are committed to making sure that everyone in our community is treated with dignity, courtesy and respect. These principles are backed up by our [corporate values](#) of:

- a sense of belonging;
- academic ambition;
- innovation;
- supporting each other;
- honesty and openness; and
- concern for the environment.

Including these principles in our culture means staff and students can feel safe, valued and supported in their work and study. We consider any behaviour which does not meet these principles as ‘unacceptable behaviour’ which we will not put up with. This behaviour can have a negative effect on the individual, or group, who experiences it, those who witness it and our university. As a result, we all have a responsibility to challenge unacceptable behaviour. We will support staff and students who challenge this kind of behaviour whether they do so formally or informally. This will help us to keep to our duty of care to staff and students and other legal responsibilities.

We set out here what we mean by ‘unacceptable behaviour’ and our approach to tackling it. We also support this using our dignity at work and study guidelines for staff and students.

1. Aim

The aim is to make sure we have a culture where everyone in our community feels safe, valued and respected.

2. Who does this code of conduct cover?

It applies to all staff and students.

3. What do we mean by ‘unacceptable behaviour’?

3.1 **Unacceptable behaviour** is any behaviour or language which patronises, belittles or unfairly excludes a person or people. It includes **bullying**, **harassment**, **discrimination** and **victimisation** although this is not a full list and other types of behaviour may be included. It can be very serious, causing stress, ill health, low morale and low productivity. It may also have reputational and legal risks for us.

We have a duty to make sure that our staff, students and visitors are safe from harm. Unacceptable behaviour makes it difficult for us to keep to our duty and we will not accept it.

4. Definitions

4. 1 Bullying and harassment

These terms are often used in place of each other and definitions often include bullying as a form of harassment.

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour or an abuse or misuse of power which is meant to undermine, humiliate, or injure the person or people it is aimed at.

Cyber bullying is any form of bullying which takes place online (for example, by email or on social networking sites) or through mobile devices. It includes taking and sending images of individuals without their knowledge or permission.

Bullying and harassment is behaviour that makes someone feel intimidated or offended and won't be tolerated. Bullying itself isn't against the law but harassment is. This is when the unwanted behaviour is related to one of the following protected characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion and belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

4. 2 Discrimination can be direct or indirect.

- **Direct discrimination** happens when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have, or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic.
- **Indirect discrimination** can happen when there is a condition, rule, policy or practice that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic. However, it isn't classed as indirect discrimination if it can be shown that the condition, rule, policy or practice is reasonable.
- **Unfavourable treatment** based on pregnancy or maternity or disability is also a form of discrimination. It is treating a woman unfavourably because she is pregnant or is taking or wanting to take maternity leave, or treating a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected to their disability. We will also consider the same for paternity leave, parental leave or shared parental leave.

4. 3 Victimisation is treating a person badly because they have made a complaint or tried to claim or enforce a legal right.

5. Who has responsibilities for dignity at work and study?

5.1 All **staff and students** are personally responsible for treating everyone they come into contact within our community with dignity, courtesy and respect.

5.2 **Managers** are responsible for setting a good example by treating their staff with dignity, courtesy and respect. They must make staff aware of expected standards of behaviour.

5.2.1 Managers are also responsible for investigating complaints promptly in line with the grievance procedure.

5.2.2 A manager can start an investigation without someone making a complaint if they consider this code of conduct has been broken. This is in the interest of our duty of care and our obligations under health and safety, employment and equality law.

5.3 The **Director of Human Resources** is responsible for making sure that formal complaints made by **staff** are passed to an appropriate manager.

5.4 The **Secretary and Clerk** is responsible for making sure that formal complaints made by **students** are passed to the relevant Deputy Dean of Faculty or the appropriate Director of Support Services.

6. What can I do if I experience unacceptable behaviour?

6.1 Unacceptable behaviour can make you feel isolated, anxious and vulnerable. This can sometimes make it difficult for you to feel able to deal with the problem. If you are experiencing unacceptable behaviour, please get some support and advice early on. This could be from a family member, a friend, your trade union, the [Students' Union](#), [Student Services](#), [Employee Support Helpline](#), or one of our chaplains.

6.2 Witnessing unacceptable behaviour can also be distressing. If you witness unacceptable behaviour, please report it to a manager, HR Services, Student Services, the Office of the Secretary and Clerk, the Students' Union or the trade unions.

6.3 Dealing with complaints

We encourage you to make every effort to deal with complaints of unacceptable behaviour before the situation becomes so unbearable that you feel you have to leave your job or course, or it affects your wellbeing.

6.3.1 Informal resolution

You should try to sort out any complaints you have informally either by speaking to the person responsible or, if you feel unable to, writing to them explaining how their behaviour makes you feel and asking them to stop. The Students' Union or your trade union can help you with this.

6.3.2 Formal resolution

If you are unable to deal with the complaint informally, you can raise a formal complaint using:

- the **Staff Grievance Procedure** if you are a member of staff complaining about the behaviour of another member of staff or a student;
- the **Student Disciplinary Procedure** if you are a student complaining about the behaviour of another student; or
- the **Student Complaints Procedure** if you are a student complaining about the behaviour of a member of staff or discrimination.

We will investigate formal complaints of unacceptable behaviour sensitively and promptly.

7. How can you support me if I make a complaint?

7.1 We will support you if you make a complaint by:

- keeping the matter confidential when dealing with your complaint, although to deal with your complaint effectively we may need to speak to others to gather information;
- offering **counselling and advice** through the Counselling and Wellbeing Service in Student Services or the Employee Support Helpline; and
- making sure you do **not suffer victimisation** in your study or work.

8. What if a complaint is made against me?

8.1 We recognise it can be distressing to be accused of unacceptable behaviour. However, you should respond appropriately if someone raises a complaint about your behaviour. In most situations, if a person raises a complaint informally, an explanation, apology or an assurance that you will change your behaviour will be enough.

8.2 If a formal complaint is made against you, we will investigate it in line with the relevant procedures for staff and students outlined at 6.3.2. We expect you to co-operate with these processes.

9. Other people and organisations

9.1 We often come into contact with other people and organisations such as visitors, contractors or partners, for example, those who carry out maintenance work. Staff and students should treat these people with dignity, courtesy and respect. In turn, we expect them to treat our staff and students similarly.

9.2 If in the course of your work or studies with us you experience unacceptable behaviour from another person or organisation, you should make a complaint under the staff grievance procedure or the student complaints procedure.

10. Advice and guidance on procedures

10.1 **Staff** can get advice and guidance on the procedure from HR Services or their trade union. See Treating People with Dignity, Courtesy and Respect **Guidelines for Staff**.

10.2 **Students** can get advice and guidance on the procedure from their Dean of Faculty, Student Services, the Office of the Secretary and Clerk or the Students' Union. See Treating People with Dignity, Courtesy and Respect **Guidelines for Students**.

11. How we put this code of conduct into practice

11.1 We will raise awareness of this code throughout our university using a range of communications. We provide training for staff and Students' Union officers on the aims and principles set out here through our [Diversity in the Workplace e-learning course](#). We will make sure managers are able to deal effectively with complaints by including the aims and principles in our management development systems. This code is backed up by separate guidelines for staff and students.

12. Monitoring and review

12.1 Every three years, or earlier if necessary, the Equality and Diversity Group will monitor how we put this code of conduct into practice and the procedures related to it.

Approved by CMT 8 June 2015