

Dignity and Respect Policy:

Bullying and harassment between students or students and staff

Contents

In an emergency.....	4
Summary of policy.....	4
Summary of significant changes since last version.....	5
Introduction	6
What to do if you wish to make an allegation.....	7
The Open University Student Charter Values	7
Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at The Open University	8
Safe Space Reporting	8
Policies superseded by this document.....	8
Related Documentation	9
Part 1 Dignity and Respect Policy	9
1.1 Policy statement	9
1.2 Scope	10
1.3 Definitions.....	10
1.4 Rights and responsibilities	11
Part 2 Procedures for students and staff	12
2.1 Introduction.....	12
2.2 Dignity and Respect Policy informal and formal procedures for students (both current and former).....	14

Version number: 1.1	Approved by: Delegate of Director, Academic Services
Effective from: September 2022	Date for review: March 2023

2.3	Dignity and Respect Policy informal and formal procedures for staff.....	16
2.4	Timescales	18
2.5	Confidentiality	18
2.6	Group allegations	18
2.7	If you witness harassment	19
2.8	Accompaniment at meetings.....	19
Part 3	What The Open University will do in response to an allegation of bullying or harassment.....	20
3.1	Open University response to informal allegations	20
3.2	Open University response to formal allegations	21
Part 4	Records	22
4.1	Record of action	22
4.2	Victimisation	22
4.3	Appeals	22
Appendix	23
Appendix 1: Contacts / Disciplinary or Executive Authorities	23
Summary of significant changes since last version.....		27
July 2017.....		27
January 2020		27
March 2021		28
Further clarification.....		29
Alternative format of the Dignity and Respect Policy		29

Version number: 1.1	Approved by: Delegate of Director, Academic Services
Effective from: September 2022	Date for review: March 2023

Version number: 1.1	Approved by: Delegate of Director, Academic Services
Effective from: September 2022	Date for review: March 2023

In an emergency

If you are concerned that a child, young person, or vulnerable adult is in possible IMMEDIATE danger - including risk of suicide, please contact the Emergency Services by telephoning 999 or 112 from outside the UK.

If the individual is under 18 you must then email details about the incident to Safeguarding-Referrals@open.ac.uk. If you cannot send an email, call Tel +44(0) 1908 858284, and leave a message and the Safeguarding Referrals Team will contact you during standard business hours.

Summary of policy

- The Open University is committed to creating and maintaining a thriving environment for our students and staff, free from bullying and harassment, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.
- The Dignity and Respect Policy has been written to support students and staff experiencing any form of bullying and harassment within Open University contexts and aims to ensure that any concerns raised will be dealt with seriously, appropriately and fairly. Specifically, the policy applies to:
 - all students (current and former) experiencing bullying and harassment by a fellow student or staff member.
 - members of staff experiencing bullying and harassment by a current or former student.
- Part 1 of the document sets out The Open University's policy regarding bullying and harassment, including the types of behaviour which may be considered unacceptable and where and when they may happen. It also outlines the rights and responsibilities of students and staff.

Version number: 1.1	Approved by: Delegate of Director, Academic Services
Effective from: September 2022	Date for review: March 2023

- Part 2 explains the procedure to follow if you experience or witness incidents of bullying and harassment and wish to report this to the University. It also details how The Open University will respond to reports of bullying and harassment.
 - Support is available to students and staff using this policy. Sources of support are provided in Section 2.1.
-

Summary of significant changes since last version

- a) Replacement of reference to Together all to new provider Talk Campus

Version number: 1.1	Approved by: Delegate of Director, Academic Services
Effective from: September 2022	Date for review: March 2023

Introduction

This policy can be used to help deal with any form of bullying and harassment in Open University contexts between:

- i) students experiencing bullying and harassment (all students, regardless of whether or not they are a current student, (including former students), who feel bullied and harassed);
- ii) staff who experience bullying and harassment by a current or former student occurring on approved premises/locations including designated online spaces, face to face events, research supervision sessions and during contact.

Note that there is a separate Bullying and Harassment Policy and Code to help deal with bullying or harassment of staff by students available on the [People Services intranet](#).

All allegations of bullying or harassment are treated seriously and thoroughly investigated. Disciplinary action may be taken in cases where bullying and harassment have been proved. Action in this regard is outlined in the [Code of Practice for Student Discipline](#) and the Bullying and Harassment Policy for internal staff.

Equally, The Open University can take disciplinary action against anyone proved to have made a malicious allegation under this [Code of Practice for Student Discipline](#).

Cases of alleged serious criminal offences, such as physical and sexual assault, should be reported by the individual to the police. In such cases, The Open University will take no action under the [Code of Practice for Student Discipline](#) (other than suspension, if considered necessary, under the appropriate disciplinary process) until the outcome of any criminal investigation is known. However, The Open University will offer appropriate support at work or in their studies to protect the person making the allegation in the meantime. Until an allegation is proven or otherwise it may also be necessary to support the person being accused.

Version number: 1.1	Approved by: Delegate of Director, Academic Services
Effective from: September 2022	Date for review: March 2023

What to do if you wish to make an allegation

There are various ways in which individuals can deal with bullying or harassment. The aim should be to deal with this informally and as soon as possible unless the issue is considered serious or informal actions have not resolved the matter.

- If you wish to report an incident as a student, please contact the Student Casework Office by emailing: sco-admin@open.ac.uk.
- If you wish to report an incident as a member of staff, please contact People Services by emailing: people-hub@open.ac.uk.

Part 1 of this document sets out the policy and Part 2 covers the procedures for making an allegation about bullying and harassment, and how these claims may be handled.

The Open University Student Charter Values

This document specifically aligns with the following Open University Student Charter Values:

1. We treat each other with courtesy and respect, respecting the rights of individuals to hold different beliefs and views and to express them appropriately.
2. We value diversity and challenge inequalities, and we are stronger for doing so.
7. We act ethically and transparently, providing and making use of fair and open means to deal with our concerns and grievances, learning from them.
8. We challenge bullying and harassment and are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of all members of our University community.
9. As students, we share the responsibility for learning and make a commitment to study and research using the resources and support services available, upholding the highest standards of academic integrity.
10. As staff, we each play our role in enabling high-quality learning and advancing knowledge and understanding through research and scholarly activity, ensuring every student is supported.

Version number: 1.1	Approved by: Delegate of Director, Academic Services
Effective from: September 2022	Date for review: March 2023

Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at The Open University

Policies are inclusive of all Open University Students, Learners, Enquirers and Alumni, regardless of age, civil status, dependency or caring status, care experience, disability, family status, gender, gender identity, gender reassignment, marital status, marriage and civil partnerships, membership of the Traveller community, political opinion, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, socio-economic background, sex, sexual orientation or trades union membership status.

Safe Space Reporting

The Open University is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive environment in which everyone feels safe and is treated with dignity and respect. Unlawful discrimination of any kind across The Open University will not be tolerated. Safe Space Reporting is available through [an online tool](#) through which staff, students, learners and visitors are encouraged to report incidents of assault, bullying, harassment, hate crime, or sexual harassment. It also provides information about what you can do if these incidents happen to you, or to someone you know, and where you can find support.

Policies superseded by this document

- [Dignity and Respect Policy \(March 2021\)](#)

Version number: 1.1	Approved by: Delegate of Director, Academic Services
Effective from: September 2022	Date for review: March 2023

Related Documentation

Refer to the following documentation in conjunction with this document:

- [Code of Practice for Student Discipline](#)
- [Bullying and Harassment Policy](#) (for internal Staff)
- [Equality Act 2010](#) in England, Scotland, Wales
- [Disability Discrimination Act 1995](#) for Northern Ireland

Part 1 Dignity and Respect Policy

1.1 Policy statement

The Open University aims to maintain a learning environment in which all members of its community treat each other with dignity and respect and in accordance with the Open University's [Student Charter](#). The Open University attracts a diverse population and it is important to recognise and respect this.

Students and staff are encouraged to report any incidents that contravene this policy. You can choose to do this anonymously, which will allow us to investigate if there are multiple instances in one area, or you can provide detailed information about the incident so The Open University can take necessary action, in confidence.

This policy summarises information for employees on their employment rights, and the responsibilities of line managers in bullying and harassment situations. Details for employees and line managers are available in the [Bullying and Harassment Policy](#) and the [Bullying and Harassment Code](#) available on the [People Services](#) intranet.

Version number: 1.1	Approved by: Delegate of Director, Academic Services
Effective from: September 2022	Date for review: March 2023

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to:

- All Open University students who feel bullied and harassed, regardless of whether they are a current student or a former student;
- Members of staff including Associate Lecturers, consultants or service providers who feel that they have been bullied or harassed by students or former students.

1.3 Definitions

- Harassment on any of the following grounds, also referred to as protected characteristics in some legislation, is unlawful. The Open University has broadened these to include: age, caring for dependants, disability, experience of being in care, gender reassignment (including gender, gender expression, gender identity), marital or civil partnership status, membership of the Traveller community, political opinion, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, trades union membership status, and type of employment contract, such as part-time or fixed-term (for Open University employees only). We believe that harassment is unacceptable, even if it does not fall within any of these categories.
- Bullying is unacceptable and unwanted behaviour, usually repeated over time, which causes a person to feel offended, intimidated, fearful or humiliated and that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. Power imbalances could be social or group power, power due to role, physical strength, or access to embarrassing information.
- Victimisation entails threatening or detrimental treatment of an individual who has lodged or proposes to make an allegation.

Some behaviour can cause offence unintentionally; one minor incident is unlikely to constitute bullying or harassment. However, a series of incidents is likely to, particularly where an individual has expressed dislike of such behaviour and/or asked for it to stop. Threatened or actual violence or promises of special treatment in return for sexual favour are examples where one incident could constitute bullying or harassment.

Version number: 1.1	Approved by: Delegate of Director, Academic Services
Effective from: September 2022	Date for review: March 2023

Examples of repeated bullying behaviours may include:

- Verbal or written abuse in emails or other forms of electronic communication, spreading rumours, using offensive language.
- Unreasonable pranks or practical jokes.
- Encouraging others to participate in bullying behaviour.
- Excluding an individual where it is not reasonable to do so.
- Invading an individual's personal space by, for example, repeated text messaging, emailing, and phoning.
- Claim of Power – to influence any student's academic career for better or worse (whether such claim is true or false).

Where/when can it happen?

- Communication (with tutor/supervisor/University staff /students).
- Official Open University online spaces (e.g. module forums).
- Social media spaces and non-Open University hosted forums.
- Residential school (in person/online).
- Open University Student Association events.
- On Open University premises.

1.4 Rights and responsibilities

The Open University will communicate this policy fully to ensure that staff and students understand their rights and responsibilities. The Open University will also monitor incidents of harassment and bullying and the effectiveness of this policy and procedures.

Staff and students have an important role to play in creating an environment where everyone is enabled to achieve their full potential; where mutual respect is the norm; and where harassment is unacceptable.

Version number: 1.1	Approved by: Delegate of Director, Academic Services
Effective from: September 2022	Date for review: March 2023

In particular, Open University staff are expected to promote a culture free from unacceptable behaviour. Bullying and harassment are contrary to the [Equality Act 2010](#) for England, Scotland and Wales and to the [Disability Discrimination Act 1995](#) for Northern Ireland. Discrimination has no place at The Open University. Our staff have the right to work and our students the right to study in an environment that is free from bullying and harassment, which gives them the dignity and respect to which they are entitled.

Part 2 Procedures for students and staff

2.1 Introduction

These procedures provide a framework for dealing with allegations in order to help resolve problems quickly and informally wherever possible.

Any student, or any member of staff, who experiences bullying or harassment by a student or group of students (either current or former) will have the support of The Open University’s management, and The Open University Students Association in putting a stop to it.

Support is available to manage incidents of alleged bullying and harassment for both those bringing forward the complaint and those who are alleged to have behaved offensively.

Students registered for study have a number of options for support. They include:

- Student Support Team – details are available on your StudentHome profile.
- The Open University Student Association (OUSA)
- [Talk Campus](#) – A safe, anonymous, online space offering free, confidential, health and wellbeing support 24 hours a day.
- [Open University Report & Support](#)

Version number: 1.1	Approved by: Delegate of Director, Academic Services
Effective from: September 2022	Date for review: March 2023

Staff have a number of options for support. They include

- Line manager – who can provide advice on the process and/or deal with allegations on an informal basis (or where applicable on a formal basis). You should contact your line manager to discuss the matter of bullying/harassment from a student. If you are at a Residential School, (either face to face or online) you should contact the School Director.
- Trade Union representative – who can advise and accompany their members to meetings which may result from an allegation under this procedure.
- People Services – who will provide advice on sources of help as appropriate including signposting to the [Employee Assistance Programme](#) (EAP).
- Open University Report & Support - [an online tool](#) through which staff, students, learners and visitors are encouraged to report incidents of assault, bullying, harassment, hate crime, or sexual harassment. It also provides information about what you can do if these incidents happen to you, or to someone you know, and where you can find support.

Version number: 1.1	Approved by: Delegate of Director, Academic Services
Effective from: September 2022	Date for review: March 2023

2.2 Dignity and Respect Policy informal and formal procedures for students (both current and former)

If you feel that you have experienced bullying or harassment by a student or staff member:

Informal procedure

- Try to keep a record of all incidents including when, where, and whether anyone else was there. Such records will be useful if it becomes necessary to take formal action.
- Pursue one or more of the following options:
 - Contact the person who is bullying or harassing you and ask them to stop. In some cases, the person may be unaware that their behaviour is inappropriate or objectionable, or it may be that their words or actions have been misinterpreted. In such cases, the misunderstanding needs to be cleared up speedily. Even where the behaviour was intentional, a swift and clear indication that it is inappropriate may be enough to stop it. You should keep a copy of the contact in case further action is necessary.
 - Ask another student or a member of staff to go with you to speak to the person, or if they might be prepared to take the matter up on your behalf.
 - Ask for advice, for example, from an appropriate member of staff.
 - If the behaviour you allege has taken place stops (Note: If not resolved go to Formal procedure below) there is no need for further action but do keep a record. Where the behaviour continues, or becomes more serious in nature, you may consider a more formal approach if necessary.

Version number: 1.1	Approved by: Delegate of Director, Academic Services
Effective from: September 2022	Date for review: March 2023

Formal procedure

If your allegation cannot be resolved informally, or if you believe informal action to be inappropriate (for instance if the alleged behaviour is serious or persistent), contact the appropriate disciplinary authority (see Appendix 1). Formal allegations should usually be made in writing explaining the situation to the appropriate email address Student Casework Office for students (sco-admin@open.ac.uk) or People Services for staff (People-hub@open.ac.uk) or use of the Safe Space reporting [online tool](#) through which staff, students, learners and visitors are encouraged to report incidents of assault, bullying, harassment, hate crime, or sexual harassment. The appropriate University officer (see Appendix 1) will investigate and decide whether to take further action according to the relevant disciplinary procedure.

The investigation may include asking you and anyone stated to have knowledge of the circumstances to attend an interview or to submit a signed statement.

In the case of sexual harassment, where the student bringing the allegation expresses a preference for any interview with them to be conducted by a person of a particular gender, this will be accommodated wherever it is practicable.

Based on interviews and statements received, The Open University will decide whether further action should be taken.

The matter may be pursued following the [Code of Practice for Student Discipline](#) or the [Bullying and Harassment Policy](#) for internal staff.

If a formal allegation is upheld, sanctions can be imposed under the appropriate disciplinary code.

- If you wish to report an incident as a student, please contact the Student Casework Office by emailing: sco-admin@open.ac.uk.
- If you wish to report an incident as a member of staff, please contact People Services by emailing: People-Hub@open.ac.uk.

In cases of alleged serious criminal offences, such as physical and sexual assault, or if you consider yourself to be in immediate harm, we encourage you to contact the Police on 999 immediately.

Version number: 1.1	Approved by: Delegate of Director, Academic Services
Effective from: September 2022	Date for review: March 2023

2.3 Dignity and Respect Policy informal and formal procedures for staff

If you feel that you have experienced bullying or harassment by a student:

Informal procedure

- Try to keep a record of all incidents so that you are clear about what happened, when, where, and whether anyone else was there. Such records will be particularly useful if it becomes necessary to take more formal action.
- Pursue one or more of the following options:
 - As soon as possible, speak to the student who is bullying or harassing you, and ask for it to stop. They may be unaware that their behaviour is inappropriate or objectionable, or it may be that their words or actions have been misinterpreted. In such cases the misunderstanding needs to be cleared up speedily.
 - Speak to your team leader or line manager and request they take the matter up on your behalf. Or you can seek advice from a trade union representative or work colleague to go with you to speak to the student (this may be via video call/conference call).
 - Write to the student against whom you have an allegation, being specific about what offends you and asking for the behaviour to stop. You should keep a copy of the letter in case further action is necessary.
 - Ask a member of staff if they are prepared to take up the matter on your behalf.
(Note: If informal action has not resolved the matter, you may wish to consider formal action, please go to Formal procedure below).
 - If the behaviour you allege has taken place stops, no further action is necessary.

Version number: 1.1	Approved by: Delegate of Director, Academic Services
Effective from: September 2022	Date for review: March 2023

Formal procedure

- If your allegation cannot be resolved informally, or if you believe informal action to be inappropriate (for instance if the alleged behaviour is serious or persistent), you should submit your concerns in writing to your line manager or a more senior manager if your line manager has tried to resolve the allegation at an informal level.
- Use of the Safe Space reporting online tool through which staff, students, learners and visitors are encouraged to report incidents of assault, bullying, harassment, hate crime or sexual harassment.
- You may want to contact People Services and/or a trade union representative for advice.
- The manager should refer to the appropriate disciplinary authority for investigation of the issue as quickly as possible and a timescale for dealing with the allegation should be agreed.
- Based on interviews and statements received, The Open University will decide whether or not further action should be taken.
- The matter may be pursued following the [Code of Practice for Student Discipline](#) for Students or the [Bullying and Harassment Policy](#) for internal Staff.
- If a formal allegation is upheld, sanctions can be imposed under the appropriate disciplinary code.

In cases of alleged serious criminal offences, such as physical and sexual assault, or if you consider yourself to be in immediate harm, we encourage you to contact the Police by phoning 999 immediately.

Version number: 1.1	Approved by: Delegate of Director, Academic Services
Effective from: September 2022	Date for review: March 2023

2.4 Timescales

It is in everyone's interests that all allegations of bullying or harassment are dealt with as quickly as possible upon receiving a report of bullying or harassment. A timescale for dealing with each allegation will be agreed and the parties involved will be kept fully informed of this.

2.5 Confidentiality

As a general principle, confidentiality should be agreed and maintained. However, where a manager or member of People Services believes there to be an unacceptable risk to the person making the allegation, or to another person, or to The Open University, action will need to be taken, and absolute confidentiality cannot be maintained. Information will only be given to those who need to know.

The decision as to whether an allegation should be progressed will usually rest with the person making the allegation, except where there is an unacceptable risk. In such circumstances it will be necessary to act under this procedure whether or not the person making the allegation agrees. If such action is necessary, the person making the allegation will be notified and kept informed.

If the person making the allegation wishes to remain anonymous it may not be possible to take any action. Anonymous complaints will be considered if enough information is provided to make further enquiries. The Open University will seek to support all individuals in the resolution of problems quickly and informally wherever possible. There is a need to balance individual confidentiality with the nature of risk.

2.6 Group allegations

If several people are experiencing bullying or harassment from the same source, and complain as a group, individual statements should be made to the appropriate email address: Student Casework Office for students (sco-admin@open.ac.uk) or People Services for staff (people-hub@open.ac.uk). If a claim is made against several people, individual responses to allegations will be needed. Outcomes of allegations will be advised individually and not to the group.

Version number: 1.1	Approved by: Delegate of Director, Academic Services
Effective from: September 2022	Date for review: March 2023

2.7 If you witness harassment

You have a right to learn and work in an environment free from bullying and harassment. If you witness bullying or harassment you can complain on your own account.

2.8 Accompaniment at meetings

A student may be accompanied to meetings which may result from an allegation under these procedures. In the case of a staff member, a trade union representative or a friend or colleague may accompany the individual to meetings. The same right to be accompanied applies to students or staff who are called as a witness, and those who are accused of the bullying or harassment.

Bullying and Harassment by former students of The Open University to existing members of staff

In cases where individuals who are former students allegedly bully or harass existing staff then the following action should be taken:

- The existing member of staff should ask the former student to stop bullying and harassing them using the most appropriate communication.
- If the bullying and harassment does not stop, then the matter may be referred to their line manager who may raise the issue with a more senior manager to decide whether further action could or should be taken.
- Each case would be looked at individually and the role of The Open University would be to support the member of staff in taking appropriate action, rather than acting on behalf of the member of staff.
- Should the member of staff wish for continued support from The Open University, they may be required to look at other external options to stop the bullying and harassment, such as an injunction or civil/criminal proceedings.

Version number: 1.1	Approved by: Delegate of Director, Academic Services
Effective from: September 2022	Date for review: March 2023

Part 3 What The Open University will do in response to an allegation of bullying or harassment

Whilst an allegation is under investigation, The Open University will make temporary arrangements to protect the person making the allegation, which may include:

- Arranging for a move to a different tutor group / cluster, if they are in the same group as the person against whom the allegation is made.
- Arranging for a move to a different group at a residential school, including online residential schools, if appropriate.

If the allegation is upheld, The Open University will consider which temporary steps need to be made permanent, and what other steps should be taken, to protect the person making the allegation.

3.1 Open University response to informal allegations

If a member of staff is asked to take informal action, the following steps will be taken:

- The member of staff will contact the person against whom the allegation has been made as soon as possible, explaining the nature of the allegation, and who has made it. The person will be given the opportunity to respond (any written allegation or written response will be made available to both parties). If they acknowledge that the inappropriate behaviour has taken place, the situation will be monitored to ensure no reoccurrence. They will also be given a copy of this policy and advised of the procedure that would be followed if a formal allegation were to be made, or if there were to be a reoccurrence of the inappropriate behaviour.

Version number: 1.1	Approved by: Delegate of Director, Academic Services
Effective from: September 2022	Date for review: March 2023

- If, after separate discussions with the parties involved, there are differing views and perceptions of the situation, the member of staff may arrange to meet both parties together. Where this meeting does not lead to clarification or reconciliation, and the matter remains unresolved, the member of staff may consult any witnesses to clarify the situation. Where the member of staff decides that there is substance to the allegation the alleged person will be asked to ensure no future reoccurrence, and the situation will be monitored. Support and guidance will be offered as appropriate.

3.2 Open University response to formal allegations

The appropriate University officer (see Appendix) will investigate all formal allegations of bullying and harassment to decide on further action in accordance with the relevant disciplinary procedure. The investigation may include attendance at an interview or to submit a signed statement.

In the case of sexual harassment, where the person bringing the allegation expresses a preference for any interview with them to be conducted by a person of a particular gender, this will be accommodated wherever it is practicable.

On the basis of interviews and statements received, the appropriate University officer will decide whether further action should be taken. The disciplinary procedures under which further action can be taken are designed so that The Open University can fulfil its obligations:

- To the person lodging the allegation – to take the matter seriously, to investigate the allegation thoroughly and, if it is proved, to take swift and effective action to prevent a recurrence.
- To the person against whom the allegation is made – to investigate impartially, to make sure that the person has the opportunity to be represented, and to give a clear account of the allegation so that a case can be stated and witnesses can be called or cross-examined.

At any time during formal procedures, action may be taken by the line manager (for example, a move to another tutorial group) to support academic progress of the person lodging the allegation.

Version number: 1.1	Approved by: Delegate of Director, Academic Services
Effective from: September 2022	Date for review: March 2023

Part 4 Records

4.1 Record of action

Where action is taken under this code, records will be held as follows for students or staff:

- All disciplinary offences and penalties imposed by the Central Disciplinary Committee or Disciplinary Authorities will be recorded on the student's or staff electronic record and kept for as long as that record is held.
- Where an allegation is found to have no substance, no record will be kept unless the individual against whom the allegation has been made asks for a record to be made.
- Where it is accepted by the person against whom the allegation has been made that there is substance to the allegation, a record will be kept.
- Where it is determined by the relevant disciplinary authority that there is substance to the allegation, a record will be kept.
- Where it is not possible to decide whether there is any substance to the allegation, a record of correspondence relating to the allegation, the action taken to review the allegation, and any statements from the person who lodged the allegation and the alleged perpetrator, will be kept.
- Records for bullying and harassment investigations will be held as evidence should any further action be taken.

4.2 Victimisation

Victimisation or retaliation as a result of action being taken under this code is unacceptable and may lead to disciplinary action.

4.3 Appeals

Any student who considers that they have been unfairly treated in terms of this policy can write to the [Student Casework Office](#) and request that their case be referred to the Director of Academic Services. All staff appeals must be made to People Services by emailing people-hub@open.ac.uk.

Version number: 1.1	Approved by: Delegate of Director, Academic Services
Effective from: September 2022	Date for review: March 2023

Appendix

Appendix 1: Contacts / Disciplinary or Executive Authorities

An allegation against the person listed as the informal contact should be made direct to the appropriate Disciplinary Authority. If an allegation is against the Disciplinary Authority the contact for advice/informal action will, if necessary, request the Director, Academic Services to take action in their place.

If the person reporting the allegation is not satisfied with the response received from the appropriate Disciplinary Authority then they can consider taking the matter to the [Student Casework Office](#) (for students) or the [University Secretary](#) (for staff).

- **Residential Schools:** If an allegation has not been resolved by the end of the school, the Director of Operations will assume responsibility for passing information to the student's National/Depute Director/(Assistant Director, Academic Services) and, if more than one National/Depute Director/Assistant Director is involved, fulfilling a co-ordinating role, if required.
- **Examinations:** If an allegation has not been resolved at the end of the examination, the Director of Assessment, Credit and Qualifications will assume responsibility for passing information to the student's National Director/ (Assistant Director, Academic Services) and, if more than one National/Depute Director/Assistant Director is involved, fulfilling a co-ordinating role, if required.

Version number: 1.1	Approved by: Delegate of Director, Academic Services
Effective from: September 2022	Date for review: March 2023

Table 1: Disciplinary or Executive Authorities contact for Students

Activity covered	Contact for advice/informal action	Disciplinary or Executive Authority for students
All activities engaged in by research students	Head of Research Degrees Team	Chair of the Research Degrees Committee
Electronic conferences moderated by members of OU staff	Conference moderator	Director of Learning and Teaching Innovation (LTI) (reporting to student's National/Depute Director/Assistant Director, Academic Services)
Electronic conferences moderated by OU Students Association	Conference moderator	President of OU Students Association. (reporting through LTI to the student's National/ Depute Director/Assistant Director, Academic Services)
Examinations	Invigilator	Senior invigilator reporting to the student's National/Depute Director/Assistant Director, Academic Services
Relationships with tutors	Tutor's line manager	Student's National/Depute Director/Assistant Director, Academic Services (National/Depute Director (for national centres in Scotland, Ireland and Wales) and Assistant Director, Academic Services (for England)
Residential schools	Residential school learning adviser	School Director reporting to student's National Director/Assistant Director, Academic Services

Version number: 1.0	Approved by: Delegate of Director, Academic Services
Effective from: March 2022	Date for review: March 2023

Tutorials, day schools and similar events	Tutor's line manager	Most senior member of OU staff present at the event (reporting to student's National Director/Assistant Director, Academic Services)
OU Students Association events	Most senior OU Students Association officer present at the event or OU Students Association President	OU Students Association President (reporting to the student's National/Depute Director/Assistant Director, Academic Services)
Social media spaces and unofficial Open University-related social media groups	Student Support Team	Student Casework Office

Version number: 1.0	Approved by: Delegate of Director, Academic Services
Effective from: March 2022	Date for review: March 2023

Table 2: Disciplinary or Executive Authorities contact for Staff

Activity covered	Contact for advice/informal action	Disciplinary or Executive Authority for staff
All activities engaged in by research students	Line manager	Head of Unit
Electronic conferences moderated by members of OU staff	Conference moderator	Head of Unit
Electronic conferences moderated by OU Students Association	Conference moderator	OU Students Association President
Examinations	Invigilator	Assessment, Credit and Qualifications (ACQ)
Relationships with tutors	Senior line manager	Head of Unit
Residential schools	School Director	Director of ACTS or nominee
Social media spaces and unofficial Open University-related social media groups	Social Media Engagement Team	Head of Unit/Student Casework Office
Tutorials, day schools and similar events	Line manager	Head of Unit
OU Students Association events	Most senior OU Students Association officer present at the event or OU Students Association President	OU Students Association President

Version number: 1.0	Approved by: Delegate of Director, Academic Services
Effective from: March 2022	Date for review: March 2023

Summary of significant changes since last version

July 2017

1. Policy title changed from Student Code for Dealing with Bullying and Harassment to Dignity and Respect Policy: Bullying and harassment between students or students and staff.
2. Introduction amended to include students, including elected officers and other representatives of the OU Students Association, regardless of whether or not they are a current student, who feel bullied and harassed, and staff.
3. Section 2.2: Suggested sources of support for students amended.
4. Section 2.10: Inclusion of Bullying and Harassment by former students of the University to existing members of staff.
5. Appendix 1: Contacts / Disciplinary or Executive Authorities contains separate tables of contacts for students and staff.
6. Appendix 2: Summary of 2.2 Dignity and Respect Policy informal and formal procedures for students flowcharts added.

January 2020

1. Section 1.3: Inclusion of social media spaces and non-OU hosted forums.
2. Section 1.3: Removal of reference to reporting to social network platform owners in the event of cyber bullying on external social network environments.
3. Appendix 1: Contacts / Disciplinary or Executive Authorities
Table 1: Inclusion of social media spaces and non-OU hosted forums.
4. Appendix 1: Contacts / Disciplinary or Executive Authorities
Table 2: Inclusion of social media spaces and non-OU hosted forums.

Version number: 1.0	Approved by: Delegate of Director, Academic Services
Effective from: March 2022	Date for review: March 2023

March 2021

1. Appendix 1: Contacts / Disciplinary or Executive Authorities
Table 1 - Disciplinary or Executive Authorities for students regarding 'Social media spaces and unofficial Open University related social media groups' changed to the Student Casework Office.
2. Appendix 1: Contacts / Disciplinary or Executive Authorities
Table 2 - Disciplinary or Executive Authorities for staff regarding 'Social media spaces and unofficial Open University related social media groups' changed to the Head of Unit/Student Casework Office.

November 2021

1. Policy wording reduced and repetition removed
2. Addition of 'claim of power' definition Section 1.3
3. Definitions of harassment and bullying strengthened Section 1.3
4. Clarity over email address for staff and students to share concerns with
5. Removal of flow charts which are no longer correct
6. Section 4.4 'Monitoring' removed

Version number: 1.0	Approved by: Delegate of Director, Academic Services
Effective from: March 2022	Date for review: March 2023

Further clarification

If you have any queries around the content provided within this document and how to interpret it, please contact the following:

For staff - People Services via People-hub@open.ac.uk

For students – your Student Support Team via StudentHome. Current students can also contact your Student Support Team through the ‘Contact Us’ option on the Help Centre.

Postgraduate research students should contact the Graduate School via research-degrees-office@open.ac.uk.

If you have any comments about this policy document and how it might be improved, please submit these to SPR-Policy-Team@open.ac.uk.

Alternative format of the Dignity and Respect Policy

If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact the following:

For staff - People Services via People-hub@open.ac.uk

For students - The Student Support Team via <http://www.open.ac.uk/contact/> (phone +44 (0)300 303 5303), or your dedicated Student Support Team via StudentHome if you are a current Open University student. Postgraduate research students should contact the Graduate School via research-degrees-office@open.ac.uk

Version number: 1.0	Approved by: Delegate of Director, Academic Services
Effective from: March 2022	Date for review: March 2023