



HULL UNIVERSITY UNION HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY

Harassment and bullying at work are unlawful, and both The Union and the alleged harasser or bully may be held liable for such unlawful actions. Harassment and bullying can reduce the effectiveness of the organisation by undermining the confidence of those affected, creating a threatening environment and increasing sickness absence and labour turnover. All members, guests, visitors and staff have the right to be in an environment free from intimidation. The Union shall uphold the principle of a sympathetic, safe and secure environment for all.

It is the policy of The Union not merely to act upon complaints of harassment or bullying, but also to seek to prevent problems from occurring. Likewise it is the duty of each club and society to ensure that its constitution and standing orders do not in any way allow for actions which may result in the harassment or bullying of others.

HARASSMENT AND BULLYING DEFINED

1. Harassment is viewed as discriminatory behaviour, whereby a person or group of people (which may, in the context of The Union, include a club or society) holds a particular prejudice and also has the power to act on that prejudice. Bullying, though non-discriminatory in nature, is still a serious abuse of power involving threatened or actual physical or verbal abuse.

Examples include:

- a. insensitive and derogatory jokes, statements and pranks where obviously intended.
- b. offensive comments about appearance
- c. unnecessary or unwanted body contact
- d. displays of offensive (such as sexist, racist, or homophobic) materials and literature
- e. speculation about an individual's private life and sexual activities (i.e idle gossip)
- f. threatened or actual violence, sexual or otherwise needs reporting
- g. threat of dismissal, loss of promotion, etc. for refusal of sexual favours

- h. behaviour that creates an uncomfortable or intimidating environment i.e exertion of authority without due cause.
- 2. The examples above are not exhaustive. With regard to employees items f. and g. are obvious examples of gross misconduct, punishable by summary dismissal, but other items may constitute gross misconduct depending upon the circumstances of the case in question. All complaints of harassment or bullying will be treated very seriously. It must be remembered in all cases that what is considered acceptable behaviour by one person may be totally unacceptable to the recipient or witness to that behaviour.

THE ENVIRONMENT

- 3. The Union prohibits the display of offensive material, for example pin ups and posters that are deemed to be derogatory, and will if necessary ensure that workplaces are inspected and offending material removed. The Union expects the Union Executive Committee, senior management, all heads of department and supervisors to ensure that this policy and procedure is adhered to always.
- 4. The Union recognises the sensitive nature of complaints of harassment and that an employee will not necessarily wish to discuss the matter with their head of department. The Union Executive Committee act as Harassment and Bullying Advisers and are available to discuss complaints and give advice as appropriate. All students are encouraged to use the University and Students Union Welfare Support Services to discuss complaints in private. In all cases, confidentiality will be maintained wherever possible.