



Dignity at Work Policy

ELT manager	Principal & Chief Executive		
Responsible officer	Head of HR & Organisational Development		
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Date review approved by BoM	December 2021		
Next Review Date	November 2024		
Equality impact assessment	Complete		
Further information (where relevant)	This policy replaces (Prevention of) Bullying and Harassment Policy		
Reviewer	Date	Review Action/Impact	BoM
V Ferguson	May 2018	Sexual Harassment Clause added due to publication of EHRC report	Approved
V Ferguson	May 2021	Minor changes in sections 6,7 & 8	

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1 Context

West Highland College UHI (the college) aims to sustain a culture which promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion for all and to ensure a positive working environment of well-being, reward and recognition, dignity and respect.

Underpinning these strategic aims is the college's People Strategy which sets out our ambition to ensure that the college is a great place to work by creating a positive, collaborative, safe and healthy working environment and to foster a culture of dignity and respect.

2 Purpose

The aim of the Dignity at Work Policy is to support and sustain a positive working environment for all staff, students and visitors free from any form of unacceptable behaviour. The college is committed to providing a safe environment for all its employees, free from discrimination on any ground and free from harassment at work including sexual harassment. This policy highlights options available to staff if they believe they are subject to bullying, harassment or other unacceptable behaviour and sets out the responsibilities for managing and supporting staff when concerns are raised under the Dignity at Work Policy.

The college will operate a zero-tolerance policy for any form of harassment in the workplace. The college will treat all incidents seriously and promptly investigate all allegations of harassment. Any person found to have harassed another will face disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from employment. All complaints of harassment will be taken seriously and treated with respect and in confidence. No one will be victimised for making such a complaint.

The Dignity at Work Policy does not form part of and is not intended to vary the contract of employment or worker's contract. It may be amended from time to time, as necessary.

3 Scope

The principles of this policy apply to all staff, and visitors to the College (including those attending public events, customers, contractors and suppliers).

This policy will apply when issues of inappropriate behaviour, bullying or harassment arise.

4 Policy

The College is committed to protecting the dignity of staff, students and visitors and all members of the College community in their work and their interactions with others. This policy details this commitment and explains what actions can be taken if its principles are not observed. It applies when issues of inappropriate behaviour, bullying or harassment arise.

The staff Grievance procedure will be used to deal with other employment concerns.

All staff within the college community are encouraged/expected to:

- expected to treat each other with respect, courtesy and consideration at all times
- expected to behave professionally and have the right to expect professional behaviour from others
- to work together to promote a harmonious work environment and to eliminate discrimination and harassment
- encouraged to make every effort to resolve dignity at work problems informally in the first instance. This is often the most effective method of dealing with inappropriate behaviour, including bullying and harassment
- to bring any suspected breach of this policy to the attention of their line manager or Human Resources Department

Dignity at Work may involve equalities issues and UK discrimination law provides specific protection against discrimination, harassment and victimisation on a variety of grounds. The College takes its responsibilities in these areas very seriously. The Equality and Diversity Policy provides more detailed information on these aspects of the law.

In situations where a complaint relates to several issues the College reserves the right to decide how it should be best dealt with under the procedures available. Prior to making a final decision however, the HR Manager will liaise with the complainant to explore the options and explain the rationale for the proposed way of dealing with the situation.

Members of College staff who have a complaint against a student should raise the matter with their line manager and the Head of Student Support.

When a criminal offence may have been committed, the Dignity at Work Procedure may not be appropriate. These cases include, but are not limited to, serious assault or threat of serious assault. Staff members may wish to seek advice from the HR Department and/or approach the Police directly.

5 Definitions

Bullying and harassment are defined by the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) as the following:

Bullying may be characterised as:

- Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

Harassment as defined in the Equality Act 2010 is:

- Unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

Definition of sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature which makes a person feel offended, humiliated and/or intimidated. It includes situations where a person is asked to engage in sexual activity as a condition of that person's employment, as well as situations which create an environment which is hostile, intimidating or humiliating for the recipient.

Bullying/harassment may be verbal, psychological, or physical, in person or via a virtual platform, or through other methods of contact.

However, behaviour that is considered bullying by one person may be considered firm management by another. Therefore, the test of reasonableness must also be applied, i.e. a reasonable person in possession of the same information would regard it as bullying or harassment.

Examples of what may constitute harassment and bullying are provided in Appendix A. This is not an exhaustive list.

6 Responsibilities

The College's Board of Management - has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the college complies with its statutory obligations in terms of meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

The Executive Leadership Team - is responsible for ensuring that the Dignity at Work Policy is fully implemented throughout the College.

The College Management Team, all Managers and Team Leaders - have a duty to ensure that the College's policies including the Dignity at Work Policy are implemented within their sphere of activities and responsibility.

Head of HR & Organisational Development – It is the responsibility of the Head of HR & Organisational Development to review and update this policy.

Managers - It is the responsibility of every manager to ensure that all his/her employees are aware of the policy as part of their induction.

All Staff - are responsible for:

- treating each other people with respect.
- bringing to the attention of their line manager or Human Resources Department any suspected breaches of this policy.
- working together to promote a harmonious work environment and to eliminate discrimination and harassment.

7 Review

This policy will be reviewed in 3 years or when circumstances change any part of it.

8 Related Policies/References

- Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity Policy
- Staff Discipline Policy and Procedure
- Staff Grievance Policy and Procedure
- ACAS Guidance on Bullying & Harassment
<http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1864>

APPENDIX A

Examples of bullying or harassment may include (although this is neither an exhaustive or exclusive list but is indicative of the types of behaviour):-

- persistent, excessive, unfair or unjustified criticism.
- public humiliation and/or insults.
- persistent undervaluing of a person's effort.
- constant ignoring of opinions.
- withholding information without justification so as to cause difficulty or embarrassment to an individual.
- unjustified, excessive monitoring and /or supervision.
- setting someone up to fail – for example setting an objective that cannot be achieved.
- aggressive communications.
- intimidating or threatening behaviour
- shouting or swearing at an individual.
- any physical contact which is unwanted.
- unwelcome sexual advances
- coercion, isolation or 'freezing-out'.
- display of offensive material, e.g., 'pin-ups'; offensive jokes.
- unwelcome remarks about a person's dress, appearance, disability, race or marital status (or other protected characteristic).
- personal insults.
- persistent criticism.
- unwelcome remarks about a person's dress, appearance, disability, race or marital status.
- personal insults.
- persistent criticism.
- setting impossible deadlines.

Examples of conduct or behaviour which constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

Physical conduct

- Unwelcome physical contact including patting, pinching, stroking, kissing, hugging,
- fondling, or inappropriate touching
- Physical violence, including sexual assault
- Physical contact, e.g., touching, pinching
- The use of job-related threats or rewards to solicit sexual favours

Verbal conduct

- Comments on a worker's appearance, age, private life, etc.
- Sexual comments, stories and jokes
- Sexual advances
- Repeated and unwanted social invitations for dates or physical intimacy
- Insults based on the sex of the worker
- Condescending or paternalistic remarks
- Sending sexually explicit messages (by phone or by email)

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WHC reserves the right to amend this policy at its discretion. The most up-to-date version can be downloaded from our website.

Non-verbal conduct

- Display of sexually explicit or suggestive material
- Sexually suggestive gestures
- Whistling
- Leering