

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES CODE OF PRACTICE – GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE  
(DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, BULLYING AND VICTIMISATION)**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 University College Birmingham is committed to a working and studying environment that is free of unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation. Personal harassment can seriously damage working and studying conditions for staff and students at UCB. Any incidents of discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation will be regarded as grounds for disciplinary action which may include dismissal or expulsion.
- 1.2 UCB's Equal Opportunities, Race Equality, Gender Equality and Disability Equality policies recognise the serious nature of discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation, on any grounds. UCB expects a standard of behaviour that upholds the dignity and respect of the individual in work or study.
- 1.3 Disciplinary procedures confirm the action which may result from behaviour unacceptable to UCB's community.

**2. AIMS OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE**

- 2.1 The aim of the Code of Practice is to help create a positive environment for all students and staff of UCB. The Mission Statement of UCB outlines the importance of creating an environment in which all staff and students are able to achieve their full potential in terms of opportunities and achievement. To achieve this end, it is equally important that staff and students experience a working environment that is free from discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation. No individual or group should fear unfair treatment arising from his or her age, culture, disability, gender, race, religion or belief or no belief, sexual orientation, transsexual and transgender.

**3. GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH PERSONAL HARASSMENT, BULLYING AND VICTIMISATION**

- 3.1 If you feel that you are being subjected to personal harassment in any form, do not feel that it is your fault or that you have to tolerate it. There are various steps that you and/or UCB can take to deal with harassment, both on an informal or formal level.
- 3.2 If a member of staff or student feels they are being harassed, he/she may find the following points useful. These may be put into operation before any formal complaint is made to a manager or a member of staff and may reduce embarrassment.
- 3.3 You should keep a written record of all relevant incidents, including dates and times, and the names of any witnesses, where possible, get witnesses to provide factual material for the case.

- 3.4 At any time you may seek a confidential meeting with the Equal Opportunities Co-ordinator, Personnel Manager or appropriate manager; if you wish, you may be accompanied to such an interview by an acknowledged staff or Trade Union Representative or work colleague of your choice. A student may, if they wish, be accompanied by a friend or student representative.
- 3.5 You may also at any time seek advice from one of the Equality Support Contacts (see point 5 below).

## **4. PROCEDURE**

### **4.1 Informal Action**

- 4.1.1 If you feel able, you should make it clear to the person causing the offence that such behaviour on that person's part is unacceptable to you. This may, in some instances, be sufficient to stop it.
- 4.1.2 Wherever possible, you should make it clear to the person causing offence, verbally and in writing if necessary, that the behaviour is unwelcome. A logical and non-abusive letter should be sent to the harasser, explaining what he/she is doing and why the harassment should stop.
- 4.1.3 If you feel unable to tackle the person concerned this does not constitute consent to the harassment nor will it prejudice any complaint you may bring.

### **4.2 Formal Action**

#### **Stage One**

- 4.2.1 There may be circumstances in which you may find it difficult to broach the subject with the person causing offence personally. If you do not wish to tackle the individual personally or if the behaviour continues following your personal action, you are advised to get in touch, if you have not already done so, with an Equality Support Contact. If you do not wish to involve an Equality Support Contact you could seek the support of a colleague or a trade union representative or Guild of Students or your student group representative.
- 4.2.2 In such cases, the initial approach may be made by a chosen representation: co-worker, the Manager, the Personnel Manager or a Trades Union representative, another student or the Guild of Students' representative. Both parties should keep a note of the details of the approach.
- 4.2.3 Any of the people mentioned could advise you on a course of action, including referral to an external agency, or take the matter up on your behalf. Any discussion will be confidential and further action involving you will not normally be taken without your express permission.

### **4.3 Stage 2**

4.3.1 If the problem has not been resolved following informal action, you are advised to seek a confidential interview with your supervisor, your head of school/unit/department or any other member of management you feel able to approach. You may wish to be accompanied at such an interview by an Equality Support Contact colleague or staff representative/ student representative and this wish will be respected. The purpose of the interview will be to discuss the nature of the problem and arrive at a solution which is acceptable to all parties.

#### **4.4 Stage 3**

4.4.1 Following your interview you may wish to invoke the appropriate Grievance Procedure as stated within the staff and student handbooks, should this be the case it should be reported to the immediate Manager (or the level above if the complaint relates to this manager's conduct), the Equal Opportunities Co-ordinator or a member of senior management. The appropriate Grievance Procedure, as set out in UCB's staff and students' handbooks, will be initiated.

4.4.2 The individual must make a formal complaint under the grievance procedure.

4.4.3 You can use UCB's formal grievance procedure at any time if you so wish.

### **5. EQUALITY SUPPORT CONTACT SCHEME**

5.1 The aim of this scheme is to provide a network of Equality Support Contacts throughout UCB. Their role is to give you confidential support and provide you with information and advice on the options open to you. The Equality Support Contacts have all been trained to handle harassment issues. Further details of this scheme and a list of Equality Support Contacts will be published through appropriate media within the institution.

### **6. FOOTNOTE**

#### **6.1 Reference to Legislation**

Any words or actions which incite negative attitudes and behaviour towards race or gender or on other grounds such as disability or sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, transsexual and transgender reassignment - insulting language, a provocative speech or piece of writing - are an offence under a range of different legislation. These are outlined in the supplementary information document dealing with issues of discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation. The legislation is also briefly explained within the document entitled Legislation, Directives, Definitions and Obligations.

#### **6.2 Reference to Supplementary Papers**

6.2.1 Supplement 1: Information to the code of practice for grievance associated with discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation.

6.2.2 Supplement 2: Dealing with complaints under the code of practice for grievance associated with discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation.

6.2.3 Supplement 3: Equality Support Contact Scheme

**Equal Opportunities Committee**  
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**Contact Point for Information**

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