

## **GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYEES ACCUSED OF INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR SUCH AS HARASSMENT, BULLYING OR VICTIMISATION**

- If you are approached informally by an employee about your behaviour, do not dismiss the complaint. Remember that all people find different things acceptable and everyone has the right to decide what behaviour is acceptable to them and to have their feelings respected by others. You may have offended them without intending to and a simple apology may resolve the matter.
- If you are accused of harassment or bullying, you may wish to contact your line manager who can refer you to someone in Human Resources not involved in the particular case. Alternatively, or in addition, the Trade Unions, Dignity Disclosure Officers and/or [Workplace Options](#) (through the confidential counselling telephone helpline) can offer support.
- Those who are the subject of a complaint will be treated with respect. Confidence will be maintained but there are limits to confidentiality in that the complaint, any witness statements and the investigator's report will be seen by those who have to be involved.
- If you believe the accusation to be unfounded, you should say so and participate in the proceedings, so that the situation can be resolved informally or formally. You should also participate in mediation if this is identified as a possible appropriate solution and you have agreed to this.
- If the evidence suggests that the complaint was made vexatiously or maliciously, disciplinary action may be taken against the employee who has raised the complaint.
- During the formal procedure, both you and the employee who has raised the complaint / grievance, may wish to be accompanied at formal meetings by a workplace colleague or a trade union representative (not acting in a legal capacity).
- During the investigation, consideration may be given as to whether you and the employee who has raised the complaint should be separated during the investigation process and how best this may be facilitated. For example, one party could work from a different site or a different office. The issue of relocation will be handled with due regard to individual views and feelings. Where separation is not possible or considered appropriate, and you and the employee who has raised the complaint continue to work together, the manager will set out the expectations in relation to professional conduct.
- If a complaint is not upheld, you should expect your line manager to take action to help you and the employee who raised the complaint to rebuild and maintain reasonable working relationships between you. You must cooperate with this action and must not treat an employee who has made a complaint against you, or anyone who has supported them in making the complaint or given evidence, less favourably.
- If a complaint is upheld, subject to the relevant University procedure, a disciplinary sanction may be imposed up to and including dismissal without notice (if your conduct is found to amount to gross misconduct).
- In addition, or as an alternative to a disciplinary sanction, training, guidance or counselling may be offered to support you to understand how your behaviour affected the employee who raised the complaint.