

Glasgow University Union

Policy on Harassment and Bullying

October 2023

1. Introduction

- a. All members of and visitors to Glasgow University Union (GUU) have a right to socialise, as well as employees the right to work, in an environment free from harassment and bullying. Harassment and bullying may contravene civil law, criminal law or both. Even if civil or criminal law has not been contravened, harassment and bullying are fundamentally incompatible with the standards of conduct required in GUU and will not be tolerated. GUU expects all its members and visitors to treat each other with respect, courtesy and consideration.

2. What is Harassment?

- a. A person subjects another to harassment by engaging in unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating that other person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for another person.
3. Harassment can be related to one or more of the following protected characteristics or be of a sexual nature.

a. Race	f. Sexual orientation
b. Marriage and civil partnership	g. Religion or belief
c. Pregnancy and maternity	h. Age
d. Sex	i. Disability
e. Gender reassignment	

4. As harassment can have devastating consequences for the individual concerned it is not tolerated at the GUU and all members of GUU have a responsibility to report harassment if it involves other members, visitors, or employees of the GUU.
5. The following are typical examples of harassment:
- a. Verbal or physical threats or abuse, including derogatory or stereotypical statements or remarks.
 - b. Innuendo, mockery, lewd language, sexist or racist jokes or remarks.
 - c. Personal comments about a person's physical appearance or character, which cause embarrassment or distress.
 - d. The use of offensive language in describing someone with a disability or making fun of someone with a disability.
 - e. Displaying or circulating racially offensive or sexually suggestive or offensive material.
 - f. Making or sending unwanted, sexually suggestive, hostile or personally intrusive phone calls, e-mails, texts, faxes, letters or other forms of electronic communications.

- g. Leering, rude gestures, touching, grabbing, patting or other unnecessary bodily contact such as brushing up against others.
- h. Unwarranted, intrusive or persistent questioning about a person's relationship status, personal life, sexual interests or orientation, or similar questions about a person's racial or ethnic origin, including their culture or religion.
- i. Online harassment or abuse
- j. Unwelcome attention, such as pestering, overly familiar behaviour, or other unwelcome verbal or physical attention.

6. What is Bullying?

- a. Bullying is the abuse of power or position to threaten, abuse, intimidate, insult or criticise; to humiliate and undermine a person so that their confidence and self-esteem is damaged. It may happen in public, in private, or online and may range from overt forms such as shouting to more subtle forms such as marginalising and ignoring a person. It may arise from the personal style of the bully and attacks may be irrational, unpredictable and unfair.
7. The following are typical examples of bullying:
- a. Violence
 - b. Shouting and sarcasm with malicious intent
 - c. Constant destructive criticism
 - d. Behaviour that is ignoring, patronising or ostracising.
8. In some circumstances, harassing behaviour can amount to a criminal offence. For example, touching, grabbing, patting or other unnecessary bodily contact might amount to the offence of sexual assault (under section 3 of the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009), while unwanted and sexually suggestive communications might amount to the offence of communicating indecently (section 7 of the same Act). A number of the other examples listed above could also result in police involvement and even prosecution. Conviction for any offence is a serious matter which can have damaging consequences for any person's future career. In particular, conviction for a sexual offence would result in the individual concerned being subject to the sexual offences notification procedure (commonly referred to as being placed on the sex offenders' register), with all the consequences this entails.

None of the above behaviours will be tolerated in GUU. They will constitute grounds for complaint and possible disciplinary action.

If you witness, or experience grounds for complaint, please refer to the Complaints Procedure.

For immediate assistance, please speak to a Duty Board member or a member of staff.