



the advice place

# The Advice Place Guide to: Dealing with Harassment

Harassment and bullying are taken very seriously by the University, whether it is derogatory name calling, belittling remarks, ridicule, insults, verbal abuse, threats, unwanted personal attention or physical assaults.

Any behaviour which is humiliating, intimidating or hostile may be harassment. If you are distressed or unhappy, we recommend you come and speak with us in the Advice Place. Remember, there are no silly questions.

If you are concerned about something that has happened or is happening to you, there are several things you may want to consider. You can come and speak with an adviser at the Advice Place in confidence and we will discuss your options with you. Your wellbeing and safety are our primary concern; we will discuss what has happened to you in a private space.

In some circumstances (where we believe a crime has been committed) we will suggest involving the police- University procedures are not appropriate for dealing with criminal offences.

## Can you keep everything I say confidential?

All of our advice is confidential: we will not disclose anything you have discussed with us to anyone outside of the service; advisers may discuss cases amongst themselves to ensure we are doing everything we can to help you.

We will not acknowledge that you have met with us to anyone outside of the Advice Place without your consent.

There are some circumstances in which we will breach confidentiality: if we feel that you or anyone else is at risk of serious harm we will involve other appropriate parties (like the police, your GP etc). Where possible we will explain this to you before we do so.

In some situations we face a conflict of interest where one adviser may meet with two opposing parties. In this situation the adviser will breach confidentiality only to make the second party aware of why they cannot support them and will arrange an alternative adviser to see them.

## I feel that I have been harassed by a member of staff/ another student, what are my options?

The University has a complaints procedure which is the way to raise any issue about the conduct of any member of the University community. The complaints procedure has two stages. The first stage is that you seek frontline resolution; essentially what this means is that you will need to have made the perpetrator aware that you are not happy with their behaviour and you would like it to stop. There are a variety of ways you can do this; it can be daunting to do on your own, but we are happy to help.

Seeking frontline resolution does not mean you have to challenge the person directly unless you want to. In all cases the person who you are complaining about will be made aware that you are doing so.

In some cases the behaviour may have been a one-off but you may still wish to make a complaint; in this instance frontline resolution

**If you would like this in an alternative format such as large text, please ask a member of Advice Place staff.**



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Tel: 0131 650 9225 or 0800 206 2341 Email: [advice@eusa.ed.ac.uk](mailto:advice@eusa.ed.ac.uk)

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may not simply be about asking for the behaviour to stop. For example, you may want an apology and an assurance that it will not happen again. It may be possible to achieve this without complaining formally (though the option will remain open to you if you would like to do so). In all cases it is useful to think about what you need from the process.

If you are not happy with the outcome, you may wish to request a full investigation (see information below).

Students at the University are subject to the Code of Student Conduct, which includes requirements about how students must treat other students and staff. If a student breaches this Code, the University may take disciplinary action against them. Even if their behaviour does not breach the Code of Student Conduct, there is still scope for the University to assist you in resolving the issue.

All members of staff have a contract of employment with the University; as their employer the University can take disciplinary action against them.

## Complaint investigation

If you are not able to get a satisfactory resolution at the frontline, the second stage of the complaints procedure involves requesting a full investigation of your complaint. You will need to complete a complaint form to do this- we can help you with this.

It is useful to include any evidence you have of the conduct you are complaining about (for example copies of emails); however, it is not

your job to investigate and gather evidence. This form is then submitted to the University who will appoint an investigator.

The University will:

-acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days

-give you a full response to the complaint within 20 working days.

If the investigation will take longer than 20 working days, they will tell you, agree revised time limits with you and keep you updated on progress.

If you choose to make a complaint, we can attend meetings with you if you would like us to do so.

## I have been accused of harassment: can you help me?

We are here to support all students: if you find yourself subject to disciplinary action, we can explain the process to you, advise you and support you in meetings.

Once you are aware that an accusation has been made, we strongly recommend that you cease all contact with the person who has made a complaint.

If you are the subject of a criminal investigation, you will need to seek advice from a solicitor. We will support you in your dealings with the University.

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## Frequently asked questions

### When will I know the outcome of my complaint?

If you request a complaint investigation about the conduct of a staff member or another student, you should receive a response to your complaint within 20 working days. Be aware that this may not include full details of any disciplinary action taken against the other person (if any is taken). This information is confidential to the staff member or the other student and the University.

### Do I have to do or say anything about harassment?

The short answer is no: you may decide that you are not ready to do anything yet, or indeed ever. We will respect your wishes and support you in whatever you decide. However, it is worth bearing in mind that if someone is consistently harassing you, it is unlikely they will stop unless you address the issue.

### Can I change my mind once I have made a complaint?

Once you have made the University aware of the alleged misconduct of a staff member or student, you cannot withdraw this information. The University has a duty of care to all students, so it may need to continue to investigate in order to protect them. You will not be required to engage with the University's complaints procedure against your will. (If you make an unfounded and frivolous allegation, the University may choose to take disciplinary action against you.)

### Will it affect my visa?

Being the victim of harassment will have no effect on your immigration status; nor will reporting a crime to the police.

If you make a false accusation to the police, this may result in them bringing charges against you for wasting police time; this may affect your visa. If you have committed a crime and are charged by the police, this may also affect your visa. If you have any concerns about your visa, you need to speak to the International Office as soon as possible.

### Will making a complaint affect my marks?

Making a complaint will have no bearing on your academic progress.

### Can I make a complaint but ask them not to speak to the person concerned?

In nearly all cases it is necessary for the University to speak with the subject of the complaint in order to address the issue. We can help you to explain to the University how this can happen most comfortably for you.

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## Useful contacts

### Police Scotland

Urgent 999

Non urgent 101

[www.scotland.police.uk](http://www.scotland.police.uk)

### The Samaritans

08457 90 90 90

[jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

24 hours a day

### Student Counselling Service

+44 (0)131 650 4170

[Student.Counselling@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Student.Counselling@ed.ac.uk)

-Main Library (George Square) Monday - Friday  
9.00am - 4.45pm

Closed between 9 and 10.30am on  
Wednesdays

-Paterson's Land (Semesters only) Monday and  
Thursday 9am - 4pm Tuesday, Wednesday and  
Friday 9am - 4.45pm

-Weir Building, King's Buildings (Semester  
only) Tuesday 9am - 5pm Wednesday 11am -  
5pm

-Vacation opening hours (Main Library) Monday  
- Friday 9.00am - 4.45pm (closed for lunch 1 -  
2pm)

### International Office

+44 (0) 131 650 4296

[www.ed.ac.uk/schools-  
departments/international-office](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/international-office)

33 Buccleuch Place Edinburgh EH8 9JS

### Victim Support Edinburgh

0131 668 2556

[victimsupport.edinburgh@victimssupportsco.org.uk](mailto:victimsupport.edinburgh@victimssupportsco.org.uk)

5 Nicolson Square

Edinburgh

EH8 9BH

Monday to Friday 9.30am-3.30pm

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