



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.

However, the decision to go to the police remains entirely yours, and we can support you whether or not you decide to pursue that course of action.

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.

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

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 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, if they are found to be in breach of this contract.

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 may decide to 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. You should be aware that you must inform the University if you are charged or convicted of particular criminal offenses while you are a matriculated student at the University. Our advisers can offer advice as to which criminal offenses need to be disclosed.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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.

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, and this in turn 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. You can tell us about harassment anonymously here:

eusa.ed.ac.uk/adviceplace/harassmentandcomplaints/harassmentreporting/. You can find this link on the harassment section of our website.

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

USEFUL CONTACTS

Police Scotland

Urgent **999**

Non urgent **101**

scotland.police.uk

Student Counselling Service

+44 (0)131 650 4170

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)

Edinburgh Global

+44 (0) 131 650 4296

global.ed.ac.uk/

33 Buccleuch Place Edinburgh EH8 9JS

Victim Support Edinburgh

0131 668 2556

victimsupport.edinburgh@victimssupportsco.org.uk

5 Nicolson Square

Edinburgh

EH8 9BH

Monday to Friday 9.30am-3.30pm

The Samaritans

08457 90 90 90

jo@samaritans.org

24 hours a day

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