

Annex 9 - Policy on Dignity and Respect (Students)

1 Scope and Purpose of the Policy

- 1.1 This policy relates to all Students of DMU. Every Student is expected to treat Staff, Students and visitors to DMU with dignity and respect. DMU has a firm commitment to equality and diversity, and it does not tolerate discrimination, harassment, or victimisation as defined in the Equality Act 2010, in addition, DMU will not tolerate bullying or any other behaviour that violates the dignity of any member of the DMU community by another.
- 1.2 DMU is a diverse community and believes that every Student has a right to work and study in an environment which encourages good relationships. DMU is committed to deterring hate, discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation. The University's commitment to cultural diversity is expressed in its mission and vision statements.
- 1.3 The purpose of this policy is to promote the development of a working and studying environment in which these actions are known to be unacceptable and where individuals have the confidence to report these, should they arise, in the knowledge that their concerns will be dealt with appropriately and fairly. The policy outlines procedures to be followed if a Student or prospective Student feels they are being discriminated against, harassed, bullied, victimised or have had their dignity violated during their engagement with DMU.
- 1.4 This policy works alongside the following separate university policies and regulations for students including but not limited to:
 - General Regulations and Procedures Affecting Students
 - No Space for Hate (Students)
 - Student Social Media Policy
 - Sexual Misconduct Policy
- 1.5 Separate policies on Codes of Conduct and Dignity at Work exist for Staff.
- 1.6 All Students are reminded of the relevant clauses in the Disciplinary Code within Chapter 2 of the Student Regulations, in particular paragraph 5.3.3:

Abusive, threatening, coercive, manipulative or aggravating behaviour which in the reasonable opinion of the designated senior member of Staff or relevant Authorised Officer constitutes harassment, violent, indecent, disorderly, threatening, abusive or offensive behaviour or language including that relating to protected characteristics (verbal or written – including social media websites) to any Student, employee of the

University or the De Montfort Students' Union or any visitor to the University or any member of the local community.

- 1.7 This policy also covers behaviour **that may be considered complicity or retaliation. For example, this is when a person** knowingly helps, promotes, or encourages any form of discrimination, harassment, victimisation, bullying or acts in way that support others violates individuals' dignity. **Retaliation** may constitute any words or actions, including intimidation, threats, or coercion, made in response to disclosures or reports made under this Policy, by any individual including both the Responding Party and the Reporting Party, as well as witnesses, friends, or relatives.
- 1.8 Every Student is personally responsible under the Equality Act 2010 for their own actions. Therefore, in cases of unlawful hate, discrimination, harassment, bullying, or victimisation the University is required to consider Students as third-party players and may refer such incidences to the relevant authorities. DMU is required to protect its Staff, Students, Staff, contractors and visitors from unlawful hate, discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation. Students who are found to have committed these offences will be referred to the University's disciplinary policies and procedures.
- 1.9 The Student at Risk Committee (SAR) within Student and Academic Services (SAAS) sits regularly to review cases of Students deemed to be at risk to themselves or of posing a risk to others.

2 Definitions

- 2.1 This policy extends to behaviour that is considered to be discrimination, harassment victimisation and bullying or any other behaviour that violates the dignity of an individual/s. Full explanations and examples of behaviour that fall into these definitions can be found in the No Space for Hate policy. <https://www.dmu.ac.uk/documents/dmu-students/academic-support-office/policies/nsfh-policy-2020.pdf>
- 2.2 **Discrimination** - is behaviour or a policy or procedure which intentionally or unintentionally has the effect of treating individuals or groups of people less favourably than other groups because of their actual or perceived characteristics, or because they associate with people with certain characteristics.

- 2.3 **Harassment** is a course of action (not an isolated action) that amounts to unwanted conduct, directed at a specific person or group, that is intimidating, hostile, humiliating, or offensive, whether or not that was intended.
- 2.4 **Sexual Harassment** is when someone behaves in a way which makes you or others feel distressed, intimidated or offended and the behaviour is of a sexual nature. Behaviour that does not involve physical contact can also be sexual harassment. If contact or violence is involved the offence becomes sexual assault or violence.. The main factor in incidences of sexual harassment and violence is a lack of active consent. For more information please refer to the [Sexual Misconduct Policy](#).
- 2.5 **Victimisation** is when a person receives less favourable treatment, or abuse, because they have reported discrimination or supported someone else to do so.
- 2.6 **Bullying** is offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, or an abuse or misuse of power, which undermines, humiliates, denigrates or injures the recipient. Bullying is a pattern of repeated and persistent behaviour rather than isolated instances.
- 2.7 The University recognises that there are potentially additional types of behaviour that will constitute a breach of this Policy and which will therefore need to be considered under the relevant internal disciplinary regulations.

3 Reporting and Responding

- 3.1 The over-riding principles in dealing with allegations or concerns of hate, discrimination, harassment, bullying, violation of dignity and victimisation are that they must be taken seriously, considered carefully and addressed speedily and where possible, in confidence.
- 3.2 DMU will endeavour to ensure that any Student raising a concern under this policy is not victimised as a result. The University cannot guarantee the behaviour of another person, but will commit to take action if victimisation occurs.
- 3.3 Any Student who feels that they are the subject of, or have witnessed, hate, discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation, either by a fellow Student, a member of Staff or anyone else may contact security@dmu.ac.uk to make a report or may access further guidance from the NSFH website here: [No Space for Hate \(dmu.ac.uk\)](#).

- 3.4 Any Student who considers themselves to have been the subject of hate, discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation has the right to be listened to, to be given informed advice on how the matter may be resolved, and to be given support to do so.
- 3.5 Support being offered to Students is not contingent on a formal report being made. Students may wish to report the incident to the police, more information on how Leicestershire Police deal with cases of hate crime can be found here: <https://www.leics.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/hco/hate-crime/>
- 3.6 Students may only wish the University to investigate the incident as a breach of the University regulations. In this instance the University Security team will appoint a trained, impartial investigator to make further enquiries. The security team will also conduct a risk assessment and take further immediate action if required.
- 3.7 A student may not wish to pursue any further action and will be offered support for welfare and academic concerns:
- Support to access specialist support for example through Victim First
 - Support to access extensions, deferrals or interruptions if appropriate
 - Support to access specialist teams such as the Wellbeing Team or the Disability Team

All action is bespoke to the reporting student's situation and undertaken with the consent of the student.

By exception the University may refer the case to the Police if the risk is deemed to warrant it, e.g. a safeguarding concern.

- 3.8 Incidents of hate, discrimination, bullying, harassment, violation of dignity or victimisation may also be reported, out of hours, directly to:
- The Security Team. The team is available 24 hours a day and can be telephoned on 0116 2577642 or emailed in strict confidence securitytl@dmu.ac.uk.
 - Alternatively incidents can be reported anonymously via the [anonymous reporting form](#).

- Incidents and/or emergencies can also be reported to the police.
- 3.9 A disclosure involves an individual choosing to tell anyone who is part of the University community about their experience of hate, discrimination, bullying or harassment.
- 3.10 A report is the official sharing of information with a Staff member of the University regarding an incident of hate, discrimination, bullying or harassment experienced by that individual, for the purposes of initiating an investigation process by the University.
- 3.11 Personal information shared during such a disclosure will be handled in line with the University's responsibilities under the appropriate data protection legislation, including the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018 and any subsequent legislation.
- 3.12 Any investigation undertaken by the University will be on the 'Balance of Probabilities' and is conducted as a separate process to the University Complaints Procedure as defined in the Glossary to these Regulations.
- 3.13 The Student may also make a report to the Police, whose investigation would take precedent over internal processes. A risk assessment will be made by the University Security Team who will determine whether intermediate action is required whilst the police investigate.
- 3.14 Vexatious and malicious reporting will not be tolerated by the university. This would include the creation of persistent, unwarranted reports made under this Policy and reporting where the individual knows that there is a lack of basis in fact to the report.

5 Investigating a Formal Report

- 5.1 On receipt of a formal report, where the alleged perpetrator is another student, the Student Appeals and Conduct Officer (or nominee) and the Head of Security (or nominee) will process the case according to DMU's Disciplinary Code and Procedure as described in the General Regulations.
- 5.2 Where the alleged perpetrator is a member of Staff, the Student Appeals and Conduct Officer (or nominee) will refer the case to the University's People and Organisational Development Directorate to conduct the investigation.

- 5.3 Formal reports about a Dean or Pro Vice Chancellor should be referred to the Vice Chancellor. A report about the Vice Chancellor should be addressed to the Chair of Governors.
- 5.4 Formal reports about a Director should be made to the Executive Director of People and Organisational Development. A complaint about the Executive Director of People and Organisational Development should be made to the Chief Operating Officer.
- 5.5 Further information about types of behaviour that would contravene the Dignity and Respect Policy, and University Disciplinary Code can be found in the Sexual Misconduct Policy and the No Space for Hate Policy.

6 Monitoring of the Policy

- 6.1 The Executive Director of Student and Academic Services will keep the implementation of this policy under review and will monitor its use through the Academic Support Office.

7 Personal Relationships at Work

- 7.1 DMU also has a Code of Conduct on personal relationships at work, which applies in circumstances where personal and professional relationships overlap. [The Code can be found on the People and Organisational Development website](#)