

Unacceptable Behaviour Policy (when communicating with staff)

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Author: Catherine Fenn

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The University is committed to providing a fair, consistent and accessible service for all students. However, we must also provide a safe working environment for our staff, and ensure that our work is undertaken in an efficient and effective manner. It is recognised that people may act out of character in times of trouble or distress, however, the University will not tolerate behaviour which is deemed to be unacceptable and action will be taken to protect staff.

2. Scope

- 2.1 The Unacceptable Behaviour Policy is primarily applicable, but not limited to the following policies and procedures: Student Complaints, Academic Appeals, Academic Misconduct, Disciplinary Procedures, Fitness to Practise Policy, Communication with Third Parties Policy.
- 2.2 The term 'student' also includes anyone who communicates with the University for or on behalf of one of its students [see **Communication with Third Parties Policy**]
- 2.3 The University's definition of 'unacceptable behaviour' might include, but is not necessarily restricted to, cases in which there is clear evidence that the student has behaved in one or more of the following inappropriate ways:
- Making unreasonable demands of case handlers, for example; requesting responses within an unreasonable timescale; insisting on seeing or speaking to a particular member of staff; continual phone calls, emails, or letters; repeatedly changing the substance of the complaint, or raising unrelated concerns;
 - Communicating with the University in an abusive, offensive, defamatory, aggressive, threatening, coercive or intimidating manner. The University considers that inflammatory statements and unsubstantiated allegations can amount to abusive actions or behaviour;
 - Submitting a case containing materially inaccurate or false information or evidence;
 - Insistence on pursuing non-meritorious complaints and/or unrealistic, unreasonable outcomes;
 - Persistent refusal to accept a decision once a procedure has been exhausted.
- 2.4 When a student's behaviour is considered to be unacceptable, as a first step, the University will normally tell the student why their behaviour is considered to be unacceptable and will ask them to desist.
- 2.5 Any decision regarding unacceptable behaviour made in relation to this policy will be communicated to the student in writing by the Student Appeals & Conduct Officer (or nominee) or the Faculty Associate Dean (Academic) (or nominee).
- 2.6 The University will try to ensure that any action taken is the minimum required to address the unacceptable actions or behaviour, taking into account any relevant personal circumstances of the student.
- 2.7 In cases where the complainant is a registered student, further unacceptable behaviour will

be deemed to be a breach of the University Disciplinary Code, General Regulations & Procedures Affecting Students Chapter 2, and disciplinary procedures will be instigated.

- 2.8 In cases where the complainant is a third party, the options the University is most likely to consider are:
- Requesting contact in a particular form
 - Requiring contact to take place with a named officer of the University
 - Requiring the tone and language of the correspondence to be respectful and moderate
 - Restricting telephone calls or emails to specified days and times
- 2.9 In exceptional circumstances the Student Appeals & Conduct Officer (or nominee) or the Faculty Associate Dean (Academic) (or nominee) may consider whether to terminate contact with the student and this may mean that consideration of the complaint is also terminated.
- 2.10 Should the student not agree with the restriction or wishes to object to a decision to terminate contact or to dismiss a complaint, they should contest the decision in writing to the Associate Chief Operating Officer and Executive Director of Student & Academic Services by emailing acasupportoffice@dmu.ac.uk within 10 working days of the date of the communication.
- 2.11 The Executive Director, or nominee, will consider the student's representations and, where the Executive Director considers the student's objection to be reasonable, they will write to confirm that the restriction is lifted or to confirm an alternative restriction, if appropriate.
- 2.12 Where the Executive Director considers the restriction to be unavoidable and reasonable, they will confirm the decision and issue the student with a Completion of Procedures letter within 28 days.
- 2.13 Where a student submits multiple complaints on substantially the same issue, the University reserves the right to treat the matter as a single complaint and to decline to respond to each separate subsequent complaint.
- 2.14 This policy should be read in conjunction with The General Regulations & Policies Affecting Students, in particular Chapters 2, 3,5,8 and 9.