



Nottingham Trent
University

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Dignity and Respect Policy

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1. Introduction

1.1 Freedom of speech

Freedom of speech and expression is at the heart of what universities are for, where the freedom to express ideas and debate opinions within the law is a fundamental principle. The application of this document will therefore be undertaken in accordance with this principle. More information on the University's approach to Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom can be found in its [Code of Practice](#).

1.2 Context

Nottingham Trent University is a vibrant place to study and work, enriched by the diversity of perspectives, cultures and backgrounds brought by its students, staff, visitors and local communities.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of the Dignity and Respect Policy is to set out the University's commitment to an inclusive and positive environment, to articulate the University's expectations regarding behaviour and the consequences of not adhering to the Policy.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other NTU policies and procedures, as necessary, such as:

- [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#)
- [Student Code of Behaviour](#)
- [NTU Student Charter](#)
- [Staff Grievance Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Computer Use Regulations](#)
- [Staff Social Media Policy](#)
- [Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech](#)

1.4 Scope

The Policy applies to all students, staff and visitors to the University.

For students, the Policy is closely aligned to the Student Code of Behaviour. This Policy and the Student Code of Behaviour apply to all students of the University from enrolment through to completion of their programme of study at the

University. The NTU Student Charter sets out the University's commitments to ensuring that students are treated equally and respectfully, in line with the Student Code of Behaviour and in the spirit of equality and diversity.

The Policy also applies to students' conduct on and off the University's premises and during all University-related activities, whether they are living in or visiting student accommodation managed by the University or by UPP.

For staff, the Policy applies to all staff and those contracted to work at, or for, the University. This includes those with honorary contracts or 'Visitor' status and Visiting Professors and Fellows. It is applicable during working hours (and outside where behaviour may be damaging to the University or an NTU colleague e.g. at social events or conferences).

1.5 Legislative context

The Policy is in accordance with relevant equalities and employment related legislation, and in particular, with:

- Equality Act (2010)
- Employment Act (2008)
- Employment Relations Act (1999)
- Protection from Harassment Act (1997)
- Human Rights Act (1998)
- Data Protection Act (1998)
- Public Interest Disclosure Act (1998)

The Policy has undergone equality analysis to comply with the University's legislative responsibilities.

2. Policy statement

The University is committed to embedding equality and inclusion in all of its practices and aims to establish an inclusive culture, that celebrates diversity, is free from discrimination and based on the values of dignity and respect.

The University is firmly committed to sustaining an inspirational, inclusive learning and working environment characterised by respect and dignity, and free from unlawful discrimination, harassment and bullying.

The University believes that such a safe and positive environment will support the organisation in attracting and retaining the best students and staff and will provide the highest quality learning and working environment. It will also benefit both students and staff by supporting and enabling creativity and innovation.

The University believes that every member of its community has both the opportunity and the responsibility to contribute to such an environment.

The Policy provides a framework that clarifies how the University is going to maintain an inclusive and positive environment and how it will address breaches of the Policy.

3. General principles

The University seeks to sustain an inclusive and positive environment characterised by dignity, fairness, respect and courtesy. For the purpose of the Policy 'dignity' is defined as how people feel and think about their own self-esteem, self-worth and value.

All members of the University community should ensure that:

- They are familiar with and follow both this policy, and the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- They do not discriminate or harass others
- Their behaviour and performance meet acceptable standards outlined in this policy.

Respect and courtesy are the behaviours that demonstrate due regard for the feelings and rights of others, and in turn help create an environment where dignity can be preserved and enhanced.

All members of the University community have a right to be treated, and have an obligation to treat others, fairly and with respect and courtesy.

It makes clear that all members of the NTU community are responsible for contributing to an environment free from unacceptable behaviours such as intimidation, harassment, bullying and victimisation. Many of these unacceptable behaviours are covered by equalities legislation.

All are expected to act as reasonable and responsible members of the local community.

All members of the University community have the ability to contribute positively to the University environment and so to shape the student and staff experience.

All members of the University's community are expected to conduct themselves with honesty, integrity and, where appropriate, professionalism.

NTU is enriched by a diversity of perspectives, cultures and backgrounds. Given this diversity, students and staff need to be sensitive to the needs, beliefs and rights of others, and be aware of the impact of their own behaviours and attitudes on others.

The University will not tolerate harassment, bullying, victimisation and other unacceptable behaviours, including those that relate to the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation (these protected characteristics are detailed more fully in Appendix 2).

Unacceptable behaviours, as well as being potentially illegal and subject to criminal investigation, may lead to dismissal or exclusion from the University.

The Policy underpins the University's responsibility to addressing locally what has been identified at a sector level as 'laddism' or 'lad culture(s)', which can be defined as a set of behaviours centred around the notions of excessive drinking, overt sexualisation and aggression and is intrinsically linked with a pack mentality, which can often engage in sexism, misogyny, transphobia and homophobia. Both males and females can engage in 'lad culture(s)' and aligned behaviours.

'Lad culture(s)' permits and endorses behaviours that are restrictive and oppressive of all students. Some of these behaviours are also linked to sexual assault and violence.

The University's commitment to sustaining an inclusive environment characterised by dignity, respect and courtesy, needs to be balanced with its other commitments, such as

freedom of speech and expression (for further details see NTU's Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech).

Social media should not be used by students and staff in a way that breaches University policies or procedures (for further details see NTU's Computer Use Regulations and Staff Social Media Policy).

Students and staff must take responsibility for their online presence with an informed awareness of the potential risks and impact of social media.

Students and staff are personally responsible for their words and actions in an online environment and should remember, that, as social networking platforms are in the public domain, participants cannot be sure what is being viewed, shared or archived.

The University's equipment and systems must not be used to view, access, transmit, or download materials which are (or may be reasonably considered to be) obscene, indecent, sexist, racist, homophobic, xenophobic, pornographic, unlawfully discriminatory, or offensive.

If an internet post would breach any of the University's policies and procedures in another forum, it will also breach them in an online forum. Students and staff should not, therefore, engage in any conduct online that would not be acceptable. For example, making derogatory remarks, bullying, intimidating or harassing other users, using insults or posting content that is hateful, slanderous, threatening, discriminatory or pornographic.

When formal allegations are made regarding breaches of the Policy, the University undertakes to promptly respond to complaints and to treat them with due respect, appropriate confidentiality and fairness.

4. Breaches of policy

4.1 Informal resolution

If a student or member of staff feels that they are being subjected to bullying, harassment or other unacceptable behaviours identified in the Policy, they should, in the first instance, try to raise the matter informally by making the alleged perpetrator aware that they find their behaviour or action inappropriate and unacceptable and want it to stop. It is often the case that the alleged perpetrator is not aware of the impact of their behaviour. This can be done face to face or in writing, in which case a copy of the letter/email sent should be kept.

The individual should keep a record of events which have caused concern or distress and the effect they have had on them, to inform their discussion with the alleged perpetrator.

If the student or member of staff does not feel able to make a direct approach to the person concerned, this will not constitute consent to the alleged bullying or harassment, nor will it prejudice any formal complaint they may bring.

Students can seek support and advice from the [Nottingham Trent Students' Union Information and Advice Service](#).

Staff can seek support and advice from their line manager, their Human Resources Manager and/or trade union representatives.

The University offers a number of dispute resolution services, including the [Dignity and Respect Contact Service](#) which is open to both students and staff to discuss possible options for resolution.

It is expected that every effort to achieve a mutually agreed informal resolution to the complaint will be made by both parties, wherever possible; early and open intervention is actively encouraged.

4.2 Mediation

If an informal, direct approach has not worked or the individual does not feel able to pursue this alone, mediation may help to create open discussion and help the parties to communicate and develop an agreement for working together in the future. The University has its own internal [Mediation Service](#).

Mediation is a confidential and non-adversarial way of resolving issues and re-establishing working relationships that may have deteriorated or even broken down, by bringing in an impartial third party, the mediator. Mediation is entirely voluntary and can only proceed where both parties agree to it.

Students or staff can request access to an independent mediator via the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team, who will decide whether mediation is appropriate.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team will determine the level of mediation support to be provided and the timescales for resolution or alternatively, a move to the formal stage of the Procedure.

4.3 Formal Complaints

Most harassment/bullying complaints are resolved informally. Where resolution through informal processes has not been successful, either by: the actions of the complainant and/or the alleged perpetrator; the intervention of the mediator; or if the issue continues after an agreed resolution, the individual can pursue the matter via the formal stage of the relevant policy or procedure:

- For staff, complaints should be made via the [Grievance Policy and Procedure](#).
- For students, complaints should be made using the [Complaints Procedure for Students](#).

If a student or member of staff suffers harassment, bullying or other unacceptable treatment while working outside the University, such as work placement, secondment or consultancy work this should be brought to the attention of the University tutor or line manager as well as to the supervising manager at the external organisation. It is likely that in such circumstances, the policies and procedures of the external organisation will apply and will be the framework within which such behaviour will be addressed. The University will support its students and staff through this process in whatever way is considered appropriate.

5. Responsibilities

The University Executive Team is responsible for:

- Leading in maintaining and demonstrating a positive, open culture in which the behaviours of respect, courtesy and valuing diversity are promoted and inappropriate behaviour by managers, staff members, students or visitors is addressed in an effective and timely manner
- Ensuring that the University meets its statutory obligations in relation to the public sector equality duties.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team is responsible for:

- Providing training to ensure that managers and staff are aware of the Policy and are better able to promote the positive behaviours and eliminate the negative behaviours
- Monitoring and evaluating the Policy
- Maintaining a Dignity and Respect Contact Service and Mediation Service to support students and staff to resolve conflict in an informal and timely manner.

Managers and Academic Leads are responsible for:

- Setting and demonstrating appropriate standards of behaviour that support positive behaviours
- Addressing any incidents of bullying, harassment or any other unacceptable behaviours of which they are aware;
- Ensuring that students and staff are aware of the Policy and are signposted where necessary to help and advice available;
- Responding sensitively and supportively to any student or member of staff who makes an allegation relating to unacceptable behaviour; providing clear advice on the procedure and timescales to be adopted by those making complaints and those against whom a complaint is made; maintaining confidentiality in accordance with this policy.
- Managers have a responsibility to set a good example to students and staff, through their own behaviour and attitudes, especially in relation to upholding the principles, obligations and standards as set out in this policy.
- Where a manager is aware of inappropriate conduct or performance, it is their responsibility to take timely and constructive action, appropriate to the situation and compliant with policy and procedure, to address and resolve the issue.

Human Resources Managers are responsible for:

- Managing complaints under the Policy
- Advising managers and members of staff on the operation of the Policy
- Monitoring the use of the Procedure to ensure that it is applied consistently across the University.

Students and Members of staff are responsible for:

- Acting appropriately in line with the Policy, ensuring that their behaviour towards colleagues, students and visitors is respectful and not offensive
- Being sensitive to differences in culture and attitudes, showing respect for others' feelings and reactions and adapting their behaviour, where appropriate
- Discouraging bullying and harassment by being clear that such behaviour is unacceptable, and where possible, challenging this behaviour in an appropriate manner
- Raising any alleged incidents of bullying or harassment which they have witnessed with a course tutor, an appropriate manager, Human Resources Manager or the Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

Dignity and Respect Contacts are responsible for:

- Offering information about procedures to staff who feel they are being bullied or harassed
- Offering information about procedures to staff accused of bullying or harassment
- Undertaking appropriate training to fulfil the above functions
- Maintaining objectivity and refraining from offering opinions, value judgements or advocacy to members of staff seeking advice.

6. Document governance

6.1 Responsibility

Policy owner: Director of Human Resources

6.2 Version control and change history

Version number	Approval date	Approved by	Amendment
1.0	January 2016	Vice Chancellor; University, Executive Team, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group	
3.0	January 2024		Freedom of speech text

6.3 Document Review

The Policy will be reviewed by the Director of Human Resources in association with the trade unions, employee representatives (where appropriate) and managers in response to statutory changes, changes in University procedures

or structures or as a result of the monitoring of the application of the Policy. In any event, the Policy will be reviewed every two years.

Appendix 1: Equality Act 2010 Definitions and Examples

Word/term	Definition
Bullying	<p>Bullying is defined as offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, or an abuse or misuse of power that undermines, humiliates, denigrates or injures the recipient.</p> <p>Bullying may or may not be deliberate.</p> <p>Bullying can happen face to face, by email, telephone, written or through social media.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using abusive language • Continually ignoring or excluding an individual • Intimidation through physical or other threats • Shouting at or humiliating an individual either in front of others or in private. <p>For students this may look like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humiliating or being offensive about another student on social media or other electronic means • Creating a hostile or intimidating living environment in shared accommodation • Not respecting the contributions that other students can make to academic discussions and group work. <p>For staff this may look like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unreasonably removing areas of responsibility • Undermining a member of staff by unreasonable overload and/or constant criticism • Preventing an individual from progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or learning and development opportunities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using power differential to the detriment of others, for example, on the basis of age, length of service, academic reputation or hours worked.
Harassment	<p>Harassment occurs when an individual is subjected to unwanted, unsolicited and unwelcome behaviour that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive atmosphere. This also applies to people who are not the subjects of the behaviour, but who may be offended by it.</p> <p>It may be related to age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation, marital or parental status, pregnancy or maternity, political belief, trade union membership, class or because of any aspect of personal identity and may be persistent or an isolated incident. The key is that the actions or comments are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unwelcome sexual advances which may include lewd comments, unwanted flirtations, invasion of personal space, unwanted physical contact or requests for sexual favours Verbal or written comments of an offensive nature, spreading malicious rumours Displaying or circulating sexually suggestive material or otherwise offensive material Insulting, ridiculing or subjecting a person to any other detriment because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation, marital or parental status, pregnancy or maternity, political belief, trade union membership, class or because of any aspect of personal identity Criminal acts such as indecent exposure, physical attack or sexual assault. Not respecting other students' choices, for example, about socialising, consumption of alcohol and diet. <p>These lists are not exhaustive and are intended to act as a guide to illustrate types of unacceptable behaviour.</p>
Victimisation	<p>Section 27 of the Equality Act 2010 defines victimisation as less favourable treatment of someone because they have made or</p>

	<p>might make a complaint about discrimination under one of the above Protected Group categories.</p> <p>An employee is not protected from victimisation if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint.</p>
Discrimination	<p>Discrimination is:</p> <p>Unlawful discrimination takes place when an individual or a group of people is treated less favourably than others based on a protected characteristic such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity (including treating a woman less favourably because she is breastfeeding), race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation and in relation to direct discrimination only.</p> <p>For more detailed information about the different types of discrimination please see the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.</p>

Appendix 2: Equality Act 2010 Prohibited Behaviours

Protected Characteristic	Equality Act 2010
Age	The Act protects people of all ages. However, different treatment because of age is not unlawful direct or indirect discrimination if you can justify it, i.e. if you can demonstrate that it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Age is the only protected characteristic that allows employers to justify direct discrimination.
Disability	Under the Act, a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
Gender Reassignment	The Act provides protection for transsexual people. A transsexual person is someone who proposes to, starts or has completed a process to change his or

	<p>her gender. The Act no longer requires a person to be under medical supervision to be protected – so a woman who decides to live as a man but does not undergo any medical procedures would be covered. Where transsexual people are absent from work or study because they propose to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment, it is discrimination to treat them less favourably than they would be treated if they were absent because they were ill or injured.</p>
Marriage and Civil Partnership	<p>The Act protects employees who are married or in a civil partnership against discrimination. Single people are not protected.</p>
Pregnancy and Maternity	<p>A woman is protected against discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity during the period of her pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which she is entitled.</p>
Race	<p>For the purposes of the Act ‘race’ includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins.</p>
Religion or Belief	<p>In the Equality Act, religion includes any religion. It also includes a lack of religion, in other words employees or jobseekers are protected if they do not follow a certain religion or have no religion at all. Additionally, a religion must have a clear structure and belief system. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief or a lack of such belief. To be protected, a belief must satisfy various criteria, including that it is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour. Denominations or sects within a religion can be considered a protected religion or religious belief. Discrimination because of religion or belief can occur even where both the discriminator and recipient are of the same religion or belief.</p>
Sex	<p>Both men and women are protected under the Act.</p>
Sexual Orientation	<p>The Act protects bisexual, gay, heterosexual and lesbian people.</p>

