

Sexual Harassment Policy v1 300425 CT

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V1.1	New policy



LIVERPOOL
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SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

Aim

Liverpool Hope University aims to foster an environment in which we treat each other with dignity and respect. These principles outline the university's approach to preventing and addressing sexual harassment.

1. **Respect and Tolerance:** We will foster an environment in which we treat each other with dignity and respect and does not tolerate any form of sexual harassment
2. **Transparency and Accountability:** Create and maintain a culture of transparency where staff feel empowered to raise concerns knowing that they will be taken seriously
3. **Proactive Prevention:** We will take positive and proactive reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of staff in the course of their employment
4. **Committed to Addressing Reports:** We will treat all complaints of sexual harassment seriously and is committed to handling all reports sensitively, objectively, efficiently and in a timely manner
5. **Training and Awareness:** We will ensure that appropriate, specific, and clear training is in place
6. **Support:** We will provide appropriate support for those who experience sexual harassment
7. **Continuous Monitoring and Improvement:** We will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of actions to identify any trends that need to be addressed or investigated further

The University does not tolerate any form of sexual harassment. Such unacceptable behaviour must be identified early and effectively dealt with. Staff subjected to such behaviour are encouraged to bring this to the notice of the University as quickly as possible. Sexual harassment may be deemed acts of gross misconduct and, if proven, could lead to dismissal.

This policy applies to all members of the University including staff and third parties.

For guidance on bullying, harassment discrimination and victimisation, please refer to the Dignity at Work and Study Policy.

Related Policies

[Dignity at work and Study Policy](#)

[Professional Boundaries for the Staff and Student Relationships Policy](#)

[Staff Disciplinary Policy](#)

[Lone worker code of practice](#)

[Travel risk assessment](#)

[Safeguarding Policy](#)

Definitions and Scope

The Equality Act 2010 makes three types of harassment unlawful. These are:

- Harassment related to a relevant protected characteristic
- Sexual harassment
- Less favourable treatment of a worker because they submit to, or reject, sexual harassment or harassment related to sex or gender reassignment

The legal definitions of sexual harassment are set out in the Equality Act 2010.

Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

Employers are legally obliged to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of their workers in the course of their employment and by third parties.

Risk Assessment

The University has conducted a risk assessment to identify potential areas of concern regarding sexual harassment. This assessment ensures that appropriate measures are in place to mitigate risks and provide a safe environment for all staff. The risk assessment will be reviewed periodically to address emerging concerns and improve safeguarding measures.

Examples of Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment includes a wide range of behaviours including but not limited to:

- Sexual comments or jokes
- Displaying sexually graphic pictures, posters or photographs
- Suggestive looks, staring or leering
- Propositions and sexual advances
- Making promises in return for sexual favours
- Sexual gestures
- Intrusive questions about a person's private or sex life or a person discussing their own sex life
- Sexual posts or contact on social media
- Spreading sexually explicit emails or text messages
- Unwelcome touching, hugging, massaging or kissing

Sexual harassment can be perpetrated by individuals of the same or different sex.

Sexual conduct that is invited, mutual, or consensual is not considered harassment. However, previously welcomed behaviour can become unwanted.

Reporting Channels

The University takes all complaints of sexual harassment seriously and is committed to handling all reports sensitively, objectively, efficiently and in a timely manner. Throughout the investigation, the University will provide support to staff members involved.

Informal Resolution

Where appropriate, informal methods may help resolve concerns. Staff members may choose to:

- Address the individual directly, either in person or in writing, explaining how their conduct is unwelcome and requesting that it stop.
- Raise concerns with their line manager, Head of School, or Head of Department. If the staff member is a line manager, they should escalate concerns to their senior manager.
- Seek advice and guidance from their HR Manager.

Mediation

Mediation is a voluntary, confidential process that may help parties explore issues and concerns in a constructive manner. It can be used at any stage of the process, either as an alternative to informal resolution or after informal steps have been attempted. Mediation may also be considered at any point in a formal complaint, during which the formal process will be paused. Staff can contact their HR Manager for further information.

Formal Complaints

Any staff member who has experienced or is experiencing sexual harassment (including harassment by third parties) can report this to the University by using the [online reporting tool](#). The People Services webpages contain advice, guidance and support.

[Advice, support and guidance](#)

Sexual Violence Liaison Officer

The University offers a dedicated SVLO service, where trained staff provide specialist support to individuals who have experienced sexual violence, including both recent and historic cases.

Investigations into Complaints or Allegations

Complaints of sexual harassment involving staff will be investigated under the University's Disciplinary Policy. Investigations will be conducted by staff trained in handling allegations of sexual harassment.

For third-party complaints, the matter will be addressed with the individual who engaged the third party, in consultation with People Services.

While staff members have the right to decide how to proceed with a complaint, the University may have a duty to investigate in certain circumstances where it deems necessary.

Criminal Misconduct

Some forms of harassment may constitute criminal offences. Staff members are strongly encouraged to report such incidents to the police.

Confidentiality

All parties involved in a complaint (including any witnesses who may be interviewed as part of any investigation, or trade union representatives supporting any of the parties) are expected to maintain the confidentiality. Those involved in advising complainants should where possible seek the consent of the individual for the onward disclosure of relevant information to those with a clear need to know. Where such consent is not forthcoming, the person entrusted with the information should make it clear that in exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to disclose the information, taking into account of the duty to safeguard that may be owed to the individual and/or others.

Support and Advice

A range of support and advice services are available to staff within the University who have experienced, witnessed or been accused of sexual harassment. Appendix one outlines the range of support available.

Training

All staff are required to complete mandatory training on sexual harassment prevention.

Review

Data will be collected for the purposes of monitoring and to identify any trends and patterns.

APPENDIX ONE

Advice and support are available from the following:

Line Manager/Head of School or Department	Your line manager/Head of School or Department has responsibility for ensuring that complaints are resolved
HR Manager	Your HR Manager will provide advice and guidance on the various sources of help available to you. Details of the team can be found here .
Sexual Violence Liaison Officer (SVLO) service	The SVLO provides a proactive and advice service to any member of staff who has experienced sexual violence. This may include recent and non-recent cases of sexual violence email: svlo@hope.ac.uk .
Confidential Counselling Service	A confidential self-referral service is available to all staff. Leaflets are available from the People Services Office or by clicking on the link
Staff Equality and Diversity contact	Confidential support on equality matters Clare Talbot email: talbotc@hope.ac.uk
Trade Union representatives	Staff can seek support from their trade union. Recognised unions at Liverpool Hope University are UNISON (professional services staff) and UCU (academic staff)
The Chaplaincy Team	The Chaplaincy Team provides pastoral and spiritual support for staff from all faiths and none

APPENDIX TWO – EXTERNAL SOURCES OF SUPPORT

The Equality and Human Rights Commission have published guidance on employer's legal obligations to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of their workers.

[Sexual Harassment and Harassment at work: Technical Guidance](#)

[Equality Advisory Service](#)

[Rights of women](#)

[ACAS](#)