1. INTRODUCTION

As part of the University of Liverpool, the English Language Centre follows the University’s policies and procedures relating to bullying and harassment. You can get a copy of the University’s full policy, which is called “Dignity at Work and Study Policy”, by asking the Human Resources Department for it. Their contact details can be found at:

http://www.liv.ac.uk/hr/contactus/

A summary of this policy can be found below, and we hope this will make it easier for people whose first language is not English to understand these policies and procedures. However, this departmental policy is designed only as an aid to understanding, and the University policies and procedures will always be applied.

2. BACKGROUND

The University wants to be an organisation which provides a positive, professional and safe environment where everyone is respected. Because of this, the University will take action against anyone who bullies or harasses someone else. This will also be true if the person doing this is in a position of authority.

The University believes that all members of the University community are responsible for behaving professionally, courteously and respectfully towards each other.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power which is experienced as undermining, humiliating or which injures the recipient.

Examples of bullying may include:

- Verbal or physical threats and intimidation
- Unjustified persistent negative comments or criticisms
- Humiliating someone in front of others
- Offensive or abusive personal remarks
- Threatening or abusive comments made by email or through internet forums
- Setting unreasonable and unattainable targets
- Making someone feel unwanted and excluded from a group
- Criticising only one person when there is a common problem
- Making false allegations
- Shouting at people in order to get things done
- Ageist, Homophobic, Racist, Sexist or other such behaviour.

The list above contains examples only. Bullying can also take other forms.
WHAT IS HARASSMENT?

Harassment is:

- unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal behaviour which may violate a person’s dignity or create an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment which interferes with that person’s learning, working or social environment
- the display of any writing, sign or other visible object which is threatening, abusive or insulting, and which is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress
- sexual harassment

Below are some examples of different types of behaviour which could be considered to be harassment. However, often harassment is specific to a particular person, so this list only contains examples. Harassment can also take other forms.

**Verbal harassment:**
- Offensive remarks
- Personal comments
- Inappropriate humour
- Unwelcome sexual advances
- Unwanted comments on dress
- Gossiping
- Intrusive questioning about a person’s marital status, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, religion, culture or disability
- Frequently disturbing someone either in person or with unwanted telephone calls, emails or texts at home or at work

**Non-verbal harassment could include exposure to:**
- The circulation of offensive or sensitive photographs
- Offensive literature
- Graffiti
- Inappropriate pictures on display
- Whistling or other sexually suggestive gestures

This includes exposure to offensive material through the use of all forms of equipment – the telephone, voicemail, e-mail, photocopiers, screen savers, on-line environments, PCs and videos.

**Physical harassment:**
- Touching
- Patting
- Brushing up against another person
- Standing so close to someone that they feel uncomfortable

Behaviour may be considered harassment whether or not the person behaving in that way intends to offend. Someone may say something as a “joke”, but this may offend another person. Different people find different things acceptable. Everyone has the right to decide what behaviour is acceptable to him or her and to have his or her feelings respected by others.

Behaviour which any reasonable person would realise is likely to offend may be harassment, even if the offended person has not made it clear in advance that behaviour of this type is not acceptable to him or her,
e.g. sexual touching. In other cases it may not be clear in advance that the behaviour may be unwelcome or that it could offend a particular person, e.g. asking someone for a private drink after work. In these cases, the first time such behaviour causes offence, it may not be harassment but it will become harassment if the behaviour continues after the person involved has made it clear that such behaviour is unacceptable to him or her. A single incident can be harassment if it is very serious.

All bullying and harassment is misconduct and will be dealt with under the University’s disciplinary policies.

For students, this can be found at:

http://www.liv.ac.uk/student-administration/student-administration-centre/policies-procedures/conduct-discipline/

For staff, this can be found at:


If you do not have access to the staff intranet, then you may request a copy of the staff disciplinary policy from the Human Resources Department. Their contact details can be found at:

http://www.liv.ac.uk/hr/contactus/

This is a public document and can be requested by both staff and students.

Sometimes harassment can also be illegal, especially if it breaks the Equality Act 2010. Under this law it is illegal to discriminate against someone because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religious belief & non belief, sex and sexual orientation, either directly or indirectly. You can find definitions of these terms in appendix A of the University’s Diversity and Equality of Opportunity Policy. You can get a copy of this policy by contacting the Human Resources Department. Their contact details can be found at:

http://www.liv.ac.uk/hr/contactus/

All students, visitors and workers at the University have the right not be harassed.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of staff and students are set out below.

3.1 STUDENTS

All students should:

- be prompt, efficient, effective and courteous in your dealings with the University, its staff and your fellow students.
- help to create and maintain an atmosphere where people can learn and an environment which encourages equality of treatment.
- use the facilities and resources of the University, whether in departments or centrally, with respect and consideration for all other users.
- take personal responsibility for promoting a safe, secure and healthy environment and the careful use of limited resources.
- follow all University regulations and codes of practice.
3.2 THE UNIVERSITY

Students can expect the University to:

- be prompt, efficient, effective and courteous in its dealings with students.
- provide equal treatment to all regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation.
- seek to provide an atmosphere where people can learn and which is free from harassment and discrimination.
- do everything reasonable to provide a safe, secure and healthy environment.

4. TO MAKE A COMPLAINT ABOUT BULLYING OR HARASSMENT

4.1 STUDENTS

If you do not want to make a formal complaint, you should first of all talk to your group tutor, who may be able to help you.

If you do want to make a formal complaint, you should follow the complaints procedure outlined in the University Liverpool English Language Centre document, “Suggestions, Compliments and Complaints”, which can be found on our website by following the link here:

http://www.liv.ac.uk/english-language-centre/faqs/

If you are still not happy after this, then you should follow the instructions contained in section 8.0 of the University’s Dignity at Work and Study Policy, which you can get from the Human Resources Department by contacting them using the detail on this webpage:

http://www.liv.ac.uk/hr/contactus/

4.2 STAFF

Staff should follow the procedure set out in section 8.0 of the University’s Dignity at Work and Study Policy, which can be accessed at the following link: