



Personal Harassment Policy

The Primary Care Training Centre is committed to providing a learning environment free of unlawful discrimination and improper harassment. Sexual, racial and other forms of personal harassment can seriously worsen study and social conditions and affect the general quality of life for all members of the Training Centre, as well as the direct victims. Any allegation of personal harassment will therefore be regarded extremely seriously and will be investigated and, if appropriate, may be grounds for disciplinary action.

All members of the Training Centre, staff, tutors and students, are responsible for helping to ensure that individuals do not suffer sexual, racial or any other form of harassment, and that they are encouraged and supported in any legitimate complaint. Any difficulty in defining what constitutes harassment should not deter anyone from complaining of behaviour which causes them distress, nor should they be deterred by embarrassment, intimidation or fear of publicity. The sensitivity of harassment complaints and the desire for confidentiality will be respected by the Training Centre.

Threats, abuse or insults which are actually intended to cause harassment, alarm or distress constitute a criminal offence. This is so whether or not they are racially or sexually motivated, and whether the victim's response is one of fear or of counter-aggression. But less extreme behaviour can be equally insidious and upsetting and will be viewed seriously by the Training Centre.

Introduction

1. Harassment or victimisation on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, marital status, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion, belief, disability or age is unacceptable.
2. Personal harassment takes many forms ranging from tasteless jokes and abusive remarks to pestering for sexual favours, threatening behaviour and actual physical abuse. Whatever form it takes, personal harassment is always taken seriously and is totally unacceptable.
3. We recognise that personal harassment can exist in the workplace, as well as outside, and that this can seriously affect students' lives by interfering with their performance or by creating a stressful, intimidating and unpleasant study environment.

A) Policy

1. We deplore all forms of personal harassment and seek to ensure that the study environment is sympathetic to all our students.
2. We have published these procedures to inform students of the type of behaviour that is unacceptable and provide students who are the victims of personal harassment with a means of redress.

3. We recognise that we have a duty to implement this policy and all students are expected to comply with it.

B) Examples of Personal Harassment

Personal harassment takes many forms and students may not always realise that their behaviour constitutes harassment. Personal harassment is unwanted behaviour by one student towards another and examples of harassment include:

- a) insensitive jokes and pranks;
- b) lewd or abusive comments about appearance;
- c) deliberate exclusion from conversations;
- d) displaying abusive or offensive writing or material;
- e) unwelcome touching; and
- f) abusive, threatening or insulting words or behaviour.

These examples are not exhaustive and disciplinary action at the appropriate level will be taken against students committing any form of personal harassment.

C) Complaining about Personal Harassment

1. Informal Complaint

We recognise that complaints of personal harassment, and particularly of sexual harassment, can sometimes be of a sensitive or intimate nature. In these circumstances you are encouraged to raise the issue with your tutor or a member of the Training Centre staff as a confidential helper.

If you are the victim of minor harassment you should make it clear to the harasser on an informal basis that their behaviour is unwelcome and ask the harasser to stop. If you feel unable to do this verbally then you should hand a written request to the harasser, and your confidential helper can assist you in this.

2. Formal Complaint

Where the informal approach fails or if the harassment is more serious, you should bring the matter to the attention of the Training Centre as a formal written complaint and again your confidential helper can assist you in this. If possible, you should keep notes of the harassment so that the written complaint can include:

- a) the name of the alleged harasser;
- b) the nature of the alleged harassment;
- c) the date and times when the alleged harassment occurred;
- d) the names of any witnesses; and
- e) any action already taken by you to stop the alleged harassment.

On receipt of a formal complaint we will take action to separate you from the alleged harasser to enable an uninterrupted investigation to take place. This may involve a temporary transfer of the alleged harasser to another work area until the matter has been resolved.

The person dealing with the complaint will invite you to attend a meeting, at a reasonable time and location, to discuss the matter and carry out a thorough investigation. You have the right to

be accompanied at such a meeting by your confidential helper or another colleague of your choice and you must take all reasonable steps to attend. Those involved in the investigation will be expected to act in confidence and any breach of confidence will be a disciplinary matter.

On conclusion of the investigation, a draft report of the findings and the investigator's proposed decision will be sent, in writing, to you and the alleged harasser.

If you or the alleged harasser are dissatisfied with the draft report or the proposed decision this should be raised with the investigator within five working days of receiving the draft. Any points of concern will be considered by the investigator before a final report is sent, in writing, to you and the alleged harasser.

D) General Notes

1. If the report concludes that the allegation is well founded, the harasser will be liable to disciplinary action which may include dismissal from that particular or any other courses they may be enrolled on with the training centre. A student who receives a formal warning or is dismissed from a course for harassment may appeal by writing to the Training Centre.
2. If you bring a complaint of harassment you will not be victimised for having brought the complaint. However, if the report concludes that the complaint is both untrue and has been brought with malicious intent, disciplinary action will be taken against you.