



# Prevention of Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment Policy

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# 1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The University of Worcester (the "University") recognises that in other communities, incidents of Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment within the University community. Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment refer to a broad spectrum of behaviours as set out in more detail in Section 2. It is acknowledged that Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment can be experienced by any individual, regardless of their sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, relationship status, age, disability, faith, ethnicity, nationality, economic status. Women, members of the LGBT+ community and individuals with disabilities are disproportionately affected by experiences of Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment.
- 1.2 The University is committed to promoting a culture in which any incidents of Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment will not be tolerated, to ensure the preservation of a safe study and work environment where all members of the University community feel respected. The University will take the appropriate action against those who commit misconduct.

# 2. Terminology

2.1 The definitions below explain the types of behaviour captured under this Policy and provide clarification of the terminology used within the Policy.

## 2.2 Key Definitions

2.2.1 **Sexual Misconduct** is defined as any unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which occurred in person or by letter, telephone, text, email, or other electronic and/or social media and includes, but is not limited to the following behaviour:

- i. engaging, or attempting to engage in a sexual act with another individual without consent;
- ii. sexually touching another person without their consent;
- iii. conduct of a sexual nature which creates, or could create, an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for others including making unwanted remarks of a sexual nature;
- iv. inappropriately showing sexual organs to another person;
- v. repeatedly following another person without good reason;



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### 3. Principles

- 3.1 The University holds the following set of principles to reflect the University's commitment to a culture of support and respect. All members of the University community have a responsibility for upholding principles that are as follows:
  - 3.1.1 We will treat all members of our community with dignity and respect at all times, and it is expected that all members of our community will share in this responsibility for creating and sustaining an environment which upholds the dignity of all
  - 3.1.2 We recognise the significant impact of all experiences of Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment



under any type of employment contract. This includes casual workers and honorary appointments

5.3.1 Where staff are also enrolled as students at the University, they are defined for the purposes of this policy by their staff status. Where students are employed pa



6.1 A number of options are available to students and staff who have been subject to, or have witnessed, Sexual Misconduct or Sexual Harassment (the Reporting Party) follows:

- a) to Report the incident to the University and receive welfare support from Student Services and/or the Students' Union (in respect of student Reports) or from HR and/or the [Employee Assistance Programme](#)



7.1 The University believes that the relationship between a student and a member of staff should be one which should be characterised by professionalism, trust, confidentiality and equal treatment. The boundaries of the professional role of staff must be fully recognised and respected and those who work for the University must make every effort not to put themselves in a position where they abuse, or could be accused of abusing, their position in any way. In the event that the University becomes aware of inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour from a member of staff towards a student, these concerns will be investigated and could lead to disciplinary action in accordance with the University's Staff Disciplinary Procedure

7.2 In order to maintain professional relationships with students all staff should:

- x maintain an appropriate physical and emotional distance from students and perform their University duties in the best interests of the University without favour towards any individual student over another student;
- x avoid creating friendships with students that go beyond professional boundaries;
- x use only a University email account, University telephone, University software and applications and internet access for communications with students, avoiding any personal messaging (such as WhatsApp or text messages) or the use of any personal social media accounts;
- x set an example by writing and communicating with students in a professional and business style;
- x avoid giving their personal mobile phone number or any other personal contact details (e.g. home address) to a student. Staff are encouraged to instead use their work telephone numbers which may be diverted to the staff member's personal mobile. Consideration may also be given to temporarily sourcing a University mobile phone from IT Services if necessary;
- x adhere to the same guidelines where logistically possible when participating in fieldwork with students, attending conferences and any other University activities whilst away from the usual workplace;
- x avoid socialising and drinking with students and never away from campus or a non-University event. In situations where a student is also a staff member and a team social event is organised, attendees should be mindful of this and, should the student-staff member decide to attend, all other staff members must behave appropriately and professionally when in their presence.

7.3 Where staff have a primary role of providing supervision, teaching, or pastoral care to students (including personal tutors), staff should:

- x where possible, ensure that meetings and discussions occur on campus or other University approved premises. Where not possible, ensure

- x refrain from contacting students outside of reasonable working hours;
- x not seek personal information from a student except as relevant to a University process (e.g. medical information for special consideration, personal circumstances information as part of an academic progress process or to ensure appropriate support for the students in place)
- x not pay undue special attention to a particular student;
- x not accept gifts from a student unless it is following final assessment completion and deemed to be a minor token of thanks in accordance with the University Policy on Gifts and Hospitality and Bribery Prevention;
- x not invite an individual student to their private home or room without the

member of staff to have a romantic or sexual relationship with a student under the age of 18.

- 7.54 If a student has any concerns about the professional relationship with a staff member, or if they have any concerns about the potential existence of a personal relationship between a fellow student and a member of staff, they should raise their query or concern through [the University's Sexual Misconduct reporting](#). If they have

career progression of the student, and the nature of contact in study, research or employment.

- 7.66 Failure to declare a pre-existing intimate or sexual relationship with a student, or applicant, at the time the student or member of staff, whichever is the latter applies to join the University, commencing a new close intimate or sexual relationship with a student, will always be investigated and could lead to a finding of misconduct.

## 8. Responsibilities

- 8.1 The Board of Governors is responsible for ensuring that the University's culture supports the principles set out in this Policy. The Board of Governors will receive reports and provide assurance that the Policy is being administered appropriately.

- 8.2 The Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive