LEITHS EDUCATION

Student Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Policy

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Notable changes:	

Introduction

All Leiths students are entitled to a working and learning environment that is safe and inclusive so that all members of the community are able to achieve their full potential. This means freedom from sexual harassment and misconduct, feeling safe and supported, and having access to redress if such behaviour does arise.

Sexual harassment and misconduct takes many forms but whatever form it takes, it is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010 as amended and will not be tolerated.

We take action to prevent sexual harassment and misconduct from occurring and have clear reporting procedures for our students and staff to make a complaint about sexual harassment and misconduct. If you have been subjected to sexual harassment or misconduct, or you have been a witness of sexual harassment or misconduct, we encourage you to tell us so that we can deal with the matter swiftly.

The CEO has overall responsibility for the operation of this policy but may delegate elements of implementation or decision making to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and HR & Compliance Manager. Our managers will maintain an open door policy. All of our staff have a responsibility to behave in line with the requirements of this policy.

Instances of sexual harassment and misconduct or victimisation may lead to disciplinary action including termination of studies and/or employment.

This policy is reviewed regularly to ensure it remains up to date and in order to monitor its effectiveness. Any changes required will be implemented and communicated to all students, staff and those associated with teaching and learning and Leiths.

Scope

We deplore all forms of sexual harassment, misconduct and violence and seek to ensure that the learning and working environment is safe and supportive to all those who study and work at Leiths.

Definitions

Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. It also covers treating someone less favourably because they have submitted to or refused to submit to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, or that is related to gender reassignment or sex.

Sexual harassment may be committed by a fellow student, member of staff, an agent of an organisation, or a third party. It does not need to occur in person. It can occur via digital means including social media sites or channels e.g. WhatsApp. Someone may be sexually harassed even if they were not the target of the behaviour. Examples of sexual harassment and misconduct include, but are not limited to:

a) sexual comments or jokes, which may be referred to as ‘banter’
b) displaying sexually graphic pictures, posters or photos
c) suggestive looks, staring or leering
d) propositions and sexual advances
e) making promises in return for sexual favours
f) sexual gestures
g) intrusive questions about a person’s private or sex life or a person discussing their own sex life
h) sexual posts or contact in online communications including on social media
i) spreading sexual rumours about a person
j) sending sexually explicit emails, text messages or messages via other social media

k) unwelcome touching, hugging, massaging or kissing

The OfS Condition E6 defines sexual misconduct as "Any unwanted or attempted unwanted conduct of a sexual nature."

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexual harassment
- Sexual assault
- Rape

Victimisation is subjecting someone to detriment because they have done, are suspected of doing, or intend to do an act which is protected under discrimination and harassment laws. It is not necessary for the person to have done the protected act in order for detrimental treatment to be considered as victimisation.

The protected acts are:

a) making a claim or complaint under the Equality Act 2010 (for example, for discrimination or harassment)
b) helping someone else to make a claim by giving evidence or information in connection with proceedings under the Equality Act 2010
c) making an allegation that someone has breached the Equality Act 2010, or
d) doing anything else in connection with the Equality Act 2010

Examples of victimisation may include:

a) Failing to consider someone for promotion because they have previously made a sexual harassment complaint
b) Dismissing someone because they accompanied a colleague to a meeting about a sexual harassment complaint
c) Excluding someone from work meetings because they gave evidence as a witness for another employee as part of an employment tribunal claim about harassment.

Consent is the decision to participate in a sexual act where the individual has both the freedom and capacity to make that decision. Consent cannot be assumed on the basis of a previous sexual experience or previously given consent, or from the absence of complaint. Consent is also person-specific and cannot be inferred from a person consenting with someone else. Each new sexual act requires a re-confirmation of consent as the foundation of a healthy and respectful sexual relationship. Consent may be withdrawn at any time

Circumstances which are covered

This policy covers behaviour which occurs in the following situations:

a) An educational situation
b) A work situation
c) a situation occurring outside of the normal place of study or work or normal working hours which is related to work, for example, a working lunch, a business trip or social functions
d) outside of a work situation but involving a colleague or other person connected to the Company, including on social media
e) against anyone outside of a work situation where the incident is relevant to your suitability to carry out the role.

What to do if you are subject to sexual harassment or victimisation

We are committed to ensuring that there is no sexual harassment or victimisation in our organisation. Allegations of sexual harassment, misconduct and victimisation will be treated as a disciplinary matter, although every situation will be considered on an individual basis and in accordance with the principles of our disciplinary procedures, a copy of which is available in the Student Handbook.

1) **Informal complaint**

We recognise that complaints of sexual harassment or victimisation can be of a sensitive or intimate nature and that it may not be appropriate for you to raise the issue through our normal complaints procedure. In these circumstances, you are encouraged to raise such issues with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) either in person or using the reporting QR code in the Student Handbook. This person cannot be the same person who will be responsible for investigating the matter if it becomes a formal complaint. You are encouraged appoint a confidential helper of your choosing to support you in making an informal complaint. We recommend your confidential helper is one of out Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL's) or one of our Mental Health First Aiders, details of whom can be found in the Student Handbook.

If you experience sexual harassment and you feel comfortable to do so, 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.

In addition, you may also choose to raise concerns during your regular communication with your designated Tutor, for example, in a 1-2-1 meeting. Your Tutor will listen to you and take your concerns seriously if you do this, but may encourage you to follow the reporting procedures set out below.

2) **Formal complaint**

Where the informal approach fails or you do not wish to use the informal procedure, you should bring the matter to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as a formal written complaint. Your confidential helper can assist you in this.

If possible, you should keep notes of what happened so that the written complaint can include:

a) the name of the alleged harasser;

b) the nature of the alleged harassment;

c) the dates 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 study or work area or suspension until the matter has been resolved.

A member of the Safeguarding Team will be appointed as investigator and will invite you to attend a meeting, at a reasonable time and location, to discuss the matter and carry out a thorough investigation. The meeting will normally be held within five working days of receipt of your complaint. You have the right to be accompanied at such a meeting by your confidential helper or another person 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 may be dealt with under the student and/or staff disciplinary

procedure.

On conclusion of the investigation, which will normally be within ten working days of the meeting with you, the decision of the investigator, detailing the findings, will be sent in writing to you.

You have the right to appeal against the findings of the investigator. If you wish to appeal you must inform the HR & Compliance Manager within five working days. You will then be invited to a further meeting. As far as reasonably practicable, the Company will be represented by a more Senior Manager than attended the first meeting (unless the most Senior Manager attended that meeting).

Following the appeal meeting, you will be informed of the final decision, normally within ten working days, which will be confirmed in writing.

Regardless of the outcome of the procedure, we are committed to providing the support you may need. This may involve mediation between you and the other party or some other measure to manage the ongoing relationship.

You will not be victimised for having brought a complaint.

What to do if you witness sexual harassment or victimisation

If you witness sexual harassment or victimisation, you are encouraged to take appropriate action to address it. You should not take any action that may put you at risk of sexual harassment or other harm. If you feel able, you should intervene to prevent the matter continuing. If you are not able to do this, your action may include offering support to the person who has been sexually harassed and encouraging them to report the incident or reporting the incident yourself.

If reporting the incident, you should bring the matter to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Your concerns will initially be handled by the DSL who will sensitively talk to the person subject to sexual harassment to determine how they want the matter to be handled.

Third-party sexual harassment

Third-party sexual harassment occurs when one of our students or staff are subjected to sexual harassment by someone who is not part of our workforce but who is encountered in connection with their studies or work. This includes but is not limited to our suppliers, members of the public, guests, customers, friends and family.

Third-party sexual harassment of our students or staff is unlawful and will not be tolerated. The law requires employers to take steps to prevent sexual harassment by third parties.

The law does not provide a mechanism for individuals to bring a claim of third-party harassment alone. However, failure for an employer to take reasonable steps to prevent third-party sexual harassment may result in legal liability in other types of claim.

In order to prevent third-party sexual harassment from occurring, we will:

a) attach signage to the walls of the areas within the workplace where third-parties are present to warn that sexual harassment of our staff is not acceptable
b) inform third-parties i.e. suppliers of our zero-tolerance sexual harassment policy within our supplier documentation
c) inform students of our zero-tolerance sexual harassment policy through the student handbook

If you have been subjected to third-party sexual harassment, you are encouraged to report this as soon as possible to the DSL.

Should a third-party sexually harass a student or member of staff, we will take one or a number of the following actions; warn the third-party about their behaviour, ban them from our premises and share information relating to the incident with the wider organisation. Any criminal acts will be reported to the police.

Disciplinary Action

If the decision is that the allegation of sexual harassment or victimisation is well founded, the harasser/victimiser will be liable to disciplinary action in accordance with our staff or student disciplinary procedure, whichever is most appropriate, up to and including summary dismissal. An employee who receives a formal warning or who is dismissed for sexual harassment/victimisation may appeal by using our disciplinary appeal procedure.

When deciding on the level of disciplinary sanction to be applied, we will take into consideration any aggravating factors affecting the case. One example of aggravating factors is an abuse of power.

If, due to the investigation, it is concluded that your complaint is both untrue and has been brought with malicious intent, disciplinary action will be taken against you.

Training

We provide training to all our staff on sexual harassment to ensure there is a clear understanding of, amongst other things, what sexual harassment is and how it may occur, that it will not be tolerated, expected levels of behaviour, how they can report any incidents of having been sexually harassed or having witnessed it and that acts of harassment will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure potentially resulting in dismissal.

We also provide training for students at induction on what sexual harassment is, how it may occur and how to report any instances they experience or witness.

We ensure that all levels of management are trained on implementing this policy including preventing and managing sexual harassment in the workplace, and the procedure to follow if an allegation is reported.

We will regularly review the effectiveness of our training.

We provide refresher training as appropriate.