

Respect at Kent

Statement

The University of Kent aims to provide an environment, both physical and digital, which respects and values the positive contribution of all its students, enabling them to achieve their full potential and to gain benefit and enjoyment from their involvement in the life of the University. We recognise that the broad range of experiences that a diverse student body brings strengthens our community.

This commitment relates to all students registered on University of Kent courses and taught at University of Kent campuses (both in person and remotely) and operates within the context of the academic and social community.

The Principles have been drawn up within the context of the [2010 Equality Act](#) and [Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights](#) which protects your right to hold your own opinions and express them freely without government interference within the boundaries of the law.

The Principles have been approved by Education and Student Experience Board, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Group and Kent Union and are supported by the e-learning module 'Expect Respect.'

References (associated policies, practices, and procedures)

In addition, other relevant University of Kent Policies, Practices and Procedures include:

- [Student Complaints Procedure](#)
- [Safeguarding Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Personal Relationships Policy](#)
- [Support to Study Procedure](#)
- [Student Disciplinary Procedure](#)
- [Student Pregnancy and Maternity Policy](#)
- [Trans Student Support Policy](#)
- [Religion and Belief Guidelines](#)
- [Examination Arrangements \(including adapted arrangements and religious observance requests\)](#)
- [Ramadan and Examinations: Staying Healthy Guidelines](#)
- [LGBTQ+ Study Abroad Guidance](#)
- [Report and Support reporting system](#)
- [Expect Respect training module](#)
- [Harassment Support](#)
- [Sexual Assault, Misconduct and Rape guidance and support](#)
- [General Equality and Diversity information and support](#)

Version Control

Version	Status	Revision Date	Summary of Changes
Version 1	Draft		New policy created
Version 2. a	Draft	November 2021	Informal consultation and review: Student Conduct and Complaints Office Interim Head of EDI Director of Student Service EDI Team

			Talent and Organisational Development / HR
Version 2. b	Draft	April 2022	Approved: EDI Operations Group
Version 2. C	Draft	May 2022	Approved: EDI Strategy Group
Version 2. d	Draft	June 2022	Approved: Education and Student Experience Board
Version 3	Complete	June 2022	Owner: Student Services

- These Principles are due for review in 2025
- This document has been checked and is fully accessible.

1. Principles

We expect commitment and involvement from all our students, staff, partners and providers of goods and services to achieve these principles.

- 1.1 The University and student experience is inclusive and accessible to all.
- 1.2 Everyone is treated with dignity and respect.
- 1.3 Positive attitudes towards equality, diversity and inclusivity are promoted in all activities and interactions.
- 1.4 People are treated fairly with regards to all processes, procedures, assessments, and choices.
- 1.5 No prospective or existing student shall receive less favourable treatment, be discriminated against, harassed, bullied or victimised on the grounds of age, ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity status, socio-economic class, parental and/or caring status or spent criminal convictions, by either another student or group of students, a member or group of staff, or University systems, procedures, and structures.
- 1.6 Sexual misconduct, sexual assault or sexual harassment is not acceptable in any form.
- 1.7 Individuals have the right to hold different views and beliefs and to express these respectfully, within the boundaries of the law. Hostile or degrading expressions that, for example, encourage racial or religious hatred or negatively impact the rights, reputations, and safety (physical, emotional, and psychological) of other people, are not acceptable in any form.

2. The University has a responsibility to:

- 2.1 Support a positive learning culture and nurture an inclusive and diverse community, which is open and accessible to all by providing:
 - 2.1.1 A wide range of training for staff and students, to provide a better understanding of equality and respect.
 - 2.1.2 Clear guidance on appropriate behaviours and conduct to support a positive culture
 - 2.1.3 Appropriate mechanisms to address concerns about behaviour which may breach the policy.
 - 2.1.4 Resources, support, and services that aim to ensure that these principles are embedded into our culture at Kent and inequalities are challenged.

3 Students have a responsibility to:

- 3.1 Foster inclusion and always treat others with dignity and respect.
- 3.2 Not commit any acts or behave in a manner that would contravene this policy.
- 3.3 Cooperate with initiatives, training opportunities and resources introduced by the University to support and enable understanding of accountabilities, knowledge, and behaviours.

4. Mutual expectations

[The Student Charter](#) clearly outlines the mutual expectations of the University, Kent Union, and the student body to ensure an inclusive and welcoming community, highlighting academic freedom,

integrity, and accountability. The Student Charter recognises that the fair and equal treatment of every person, and diversity in the student and staff community, is a key component of the student experience.

5. Reporting and monitoring

Potential breaches of these expected behaviours and principles will be investigated via the appropriate routes and appropriate action taken. Students experiencing any breaches can report this via the Student Conduct and Complaints Office and/or the [Report and Support reporting system](#)

Appendix: Definitions

Under the Equality Act 2010 it is unlawful to discriminate, harass or victimise someone because they have, or are perceived to have a protected characteristic or are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic.

Protected Characteristics

Protected characteristics are legally defined as age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment*, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity. At the University of Kent, we recognise all gender identities and sexualities including asexual and intersex people. The complainant does not necessarily have to possess the characteristic.

*The definition of gender reassignment was extended in September 2020 to include people who identify as non-binary or gender fluid – recognising that gender is a spectrum.

Harassment

Harassment is unwanted behaviour or conduct which is related to a legally protected characteristic defined in the Equality Act 2010. It has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. Whether it is deliberate or unintentional, the salient point is that the individual feels it is unwelcomed and unwanted. It may be against an individual by an individual or involve groups of people. Examples of harassment could be (but are not limited to):

- Harassment or intimidation arising from current or historical conflict between people of different ethnic or religious groups.
- Deliberate or unintentional harassment brought about by differing perceptions of attitude, culture and/or the misrepresentation of social signals.

Direct Discrimination

Direct Discrimination is where someone is treated less favourably than someone else because of a protected characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination

Indirect Discrimination can be enacted in multiple ways:

- **Discrimination by Perception**
Discrimination by perception is where the conduct or behaviour is based on the perception that an individual has a protected characteristic
- **Discrimination by Association**
Discrimination by association is where an individual is treated less favourably because of that person's association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.

Racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and bigotry are examples of direct, indirect, and associated discrimination or harassment.

Bullying

Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate, or injure the recipient. Examples of bullying could be:

- abuse of power or authority
- verbal, written and/or physical intimidation e.g., threats, derisory remarks
- persistent unjustified criticism
- public humiliation
- the setting of impossible deadlines or intolerable workload burdens
- having responsibilities or decision-making powers withdrawn without good reason or explanation
- unwarranted exclusions
- open and obvious, for example, shouting at people, threats or physical intimidation, personal/offensive remarks, inappropriate physical touching
- hidden, disguised or not immediately apparent, for example, innuendo, excluding someone or other methods of ostracism, intrusively questioning a person regarding his/her personal circumstances
- through verbal exchanges, face to face conduct, or the display or circulation of physical material in any media, which could be offensive and is not approved for academic purposes

Vigorous speech and comment, academic debate, and legitimate management of the performance of staff or students can be distinguished from bullying behaviour. However, care should be taken to ensure that neither staff nor students are made to feel intimidated.

Victimisation

Victimisation occurs where an individual is subjected to detrimental conduct or behaviour because that person has raised a complaint of discrimination, or because the person has supported another person in raising a complaint of discrimination. This may involve groups of people.

Third Party Harassment

Third party harassment concerns the conduct and behaviour of people who are not students of the University but who are on campus for academic or other purposes. Examples would include students at other universities visiting to attend research seminars or to discuss their work with Kent students or staff. Where the University is aware that third party harassment has taken place, it will take reasonable steps to prevent it from happening again.