

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

Policy Title:	Sexual Harassment Policy
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Effective Date:	25/05/2025
Next Review Date:	25/05/2026
Version Number:	V1.0
Classification:	Not protectively marked

Policy Statement

IQUK is committed to promoting a learning and working environment free from all forms of harassment, including sexual harassment. We are committed to upholding the dignity and rights of all students, staff, contractors, and stakeholders, in line with the Equality Act 2010, and guided by standards set by the Office for Students (OfS) and other relevant UK educational bodies.

Sexual harassment is unlawful and considered gross misconduct. It is incompatible with IQUK's core values of respect, integrity, and professionalism. Any such conduct will be dealt with swiftly and seriously, with potential consequences including disciplinary action up to and including dismissal or exclusion.

Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment refers to any unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment. It includes (but is not limited to):

- Unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favours
- Verbal conduct (e.g., sexual jokes, slurs, or innuendo)
- Visual conduct (e.g., displaying sexually explicit images or gestures)
- Physical conduct (e.g., touching, assault, blocking movements)
- Online misconduct (e.g., sending offensive emails, messages, or content)

Such behaviour is deemed unacceptable whether it occurs in-person or online, on or off campus, and regardless of intent.

Unacceptable Conditions

Sexual harassment may occur under the following conditions:

- **Implied or explicit condition of academic or employment decisions**, such as grades, promotions, or access to resources
- **Use of submission or rejection** of such conduct as a basis for academic, employment, or disciplinary decisions
- **Conduct that interferes** with an individual's academic performance or creates a hostile educational or working environment

Conduct Not Considered Harassment

This policy does not apply to mutually acceptable interactions, compliments, or isolated comments that are not severe, pervasive, or offensive. However, repeated or inappropriate conduct - even if claimed to be "harmless" - may still violate this policy.

Third-Party Harassment

iQualifyUK also aims to protect staff and students from harassment by external parties including visitors, contractors, agents, partner institutions, or clients. Reports involving third parties will be handled with equal seriousness.

Procedure for Reporting Complaints

Individuals who believe they have experienced sexual harassment are encouraged to report the matter immediately via any of the following:

- Email: hr@iqualifyuk.com
- Directly to a senior staff member or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

While written complaints are preferred for record-keeping, verbal reports are also welcome. Confidentiality will be maintained to the fullest extent possible.

Investigation Process

Upon receiving a complaint, iQualifyUK will initiate a timely and impartial investigation. The complainant will be informed within five working days of the next steps. Outcomes may include:

- Formal warning or mandated training
- Suspension or dismissal (staff)
- Exclusion (student)
- Referral to law enforcement authorities if warranted

Both the complainant and the respondent will be informed of the outcome. An appeals process is available.

Disciplinary Action

Any employee, student, or affiliated person found to have violated this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary measures, including potential dismissal or contract termination. Legal liability may also apply in severe cases.

Managerial Responsibility

All managers, academic heads, and supervisors have a duty to enforce this policy and prevent inappropriate behaviour. Any failure to act on knowledge of such misconduct will be considered a breach of duty.

Retaliation is Prohibited

Retaliation against individuals who report or participate in an investigation is strictly prohibited. Any form of victimisation will result in disciplinary action.

Policy Updates

This policy may be amended periodically and will be published in staff and student handbooks and online portals. All individuals are expected to stay informed about the current policy version.