

C5: Procedure for managing behaviour in respect to Student Regulations and Procedures

Academic year 2024/25

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Introduction and scope

1. The University is committed to providing a fair, consistent and accessible service. The University believes that everyone who interacts with it has the right to be heard, understood and respected. The University believes that its staff have the same rights, and the University must provide a safe working environment for its staff. The University must also ensure the efficient and effective operation of its work, so that it can provide a good service to everyone.
2. The University may decide to restrict access to its service where it considers someone's actions or behaviour are likely to have a negative effect on its staff or its work.
3. This Procedure applies to everyone who interacts or communicates with the University, including students and their supporters and describes types of actions and behaviour that may have a negative effect and what the University is expected to do in these circumstances. Students' supporters could be (but is not restricted to): a friend, family member, an Advisor from the University of Surrey Students' Union, or a legal representative.
4. The University recognises that some people may have difficulties in expressing themselves or communicating clearly, especially when anxious or upset. The University also understands that some people may find it difficult to identify what impact their behaviour might have on other people. The University will always consider making reasonable adjustments for a disabled person, but may still use this Procedure if there are actions or behaviours which are having a negative effect on its staff or its work.

Student Regulations and Student Procedures covered

5. The University Student Regulations and Student Procedures covered by this document include:
 - (i) [B1: Regulations for extenuating circumstances](#)
 - (ii) [B2: Regulations for academic integrity](#)
 - (iii) [B2.1: Regulations for academic integrity – appeals](#)
 - (iv) [B3: Student disciplinary regulations](#)
 - (v) [B4: Regulations for academic appeals](#)
 - (vi) [B5: Regulations for support to study](#)
 - (vii) [B6: Regulations for fitness to practise](#)
 - (viii) [C1: Procedure for complaints](#)
 - (ix) [C2: Procedure for hearings by Panels](#)
 - (x) [C3: Procedure for managed exclusion orders](#)
 - (xi) [C4: Procedure for awarding posthumous degrees](#)
 - (xii) [C6: Procedure for Expulsions and Criminal Convictions](#)
 - (xiii) [Admissions complaints procedure](#)

Examples of actions or behaviour which may have a negative effect on our staff or our work

Aggressive, offensive or abusive actions or behaviour

6. All University staff have the right not to be subjected to aggressive, offensive or abusive actions, language or behaviour, regardless of the circumstances.

7. This means any actions or behaviour that could cause staff to feel intimidated, threatened or offended. These include, but are not limited to: threats, physical violence, personal verbal abuse, derogatory remarks, and rudeness, whether made to the member of staff directly or elsewhere (including online bullying). Deliberately provocative or inflammatory statements and unsubstantiated allegations can also amount to abusive actions or behaviour.
8. Violence is not restricted to acts of aggression that may result in physical harm. It also includes behaviour or language, whether oral or written, that may cause staff to feel afraid, threatened or abused.

Unreasonable demands or persistence

9. If someone makes unreasonable demands on the University or its staff, or is unreasonably persistent, that behaviour may have an impact on the University's ability to progress their case, or the case of other people who are using the service.
10. Examples of unreasonable demands may include: requesting responses within an unreasonable timescale; insisting on speaking to or corresponding with a particular member of staff; frequent phone calls, emails, Microsoft Teams communication or letters; repeatedly changing the substance of the complaint or raising unrelated concerns; or attending University offices without an agreed appointment.
11. Examples of unreasonable persistence include: continual refusal to accept that a decision has been made in relation to a case; insisting that the University answer questions when it has done so or explained why it will not; persistent refusal to accept explanations relating to what the University can or cannot do; sending emails to multiple members of staff; or repeatedly trying to revisit a case through the University's internal processes, once those processes have come to an end. This also includes requests that are obsessive, harassing or repetitive; insistence on pursuing non-meritorious cases and/or unrealistic, unreasonable outcomes; cases which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance; and demands for redress which lack any serious purpose or value.

Our approach

12. When the University considers that a person's actions or behaviour are likely to have a negative effect, the University will tell them why and it will give them the opportunity to modify their actions or behaviour. If the actions or behaviour continue, the University will take steps to prevent or minimise the negative effects. Wherever possible, the University will continue with its progression of the individual's case. The University will try to ensure that any action it takes is the minimum required to protect its staff and to ensure that they can work effectively.
13. University staff may either place a caller on hold or end the telephone call if the caller is aggressive, offensive or abusive, or is making unreasonable demands. Staff are accountable for their actions and are required to log all instances of when calls have been terminated, noting the reason(s) for ending the call.
14. It may be necessary to apply restrictions to someone's contact with the University. A decision to do this may be taken by any Case Manager. Some of the options that the University may consider are:
 - (i). To restrict or block future contact from a person. For example, the University may:
 - a) Limit the person to making telephone calls on a specified day and time per week;
 - b) Require that contact is with a specified member of staff only;
 - c) Not accept any further telephone calls from the person – the University will keep at least one other form of contact.

- (ii) Require the person to communicate with the University through a supporter - or a different supporter where it is the supporter whose behaviour is causing concern.
 - (iii) Read and file future correspondence but acknowledge or respond to it only if the person is raising new information or making a new case.
 - (iv) Limit the number of emails a person may submit per day/week.
 - (v) Suspend or terminate consideration of a student's case. In exceptional cases, the University may also decide not to consider a future case from the person. The University will take into account the impact on them and also whether there is a broader public interest in considering the case further. This action can only be taken following the approval of the Head of OSCAR.
 - (vi) Refer the matter for consideration under the [Student Disciplinary Regulations or Regulations for Fitness to Practise](#) (when it relates to the behaviour of a registered student).
 - (vii) Report the matter to the University Campus Safety Team, Police or appropriate governing body, or take legal action. In such cases, the University may not give the person prior warning of taking that action.
15. The University will record any incidents which lead it to take action under this procedure, and what action the University has taken to address the issue.
16. Anyone who is unhappy with a decision to terminate consideration of a case may be eligible to take a complaint to the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator](#).