



IH BELFAST PERSONAL HARASSMENT POLICY FOR STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES

Harassment

International House would like to create an environment in which students and staff can work and study effectively and is, therefore, particularly concerned to eliminate all forms of harassment. Harassment can be defined as unwanted behaviour, which is hostile and/or offensive to the recipient or others, and which is not justified by the professional and/or working relationship. Such behaviour may be physical, verbal or non-verbal. Unwanted behaviour of the kind described in this Policy Statement is unacceptable as is incitement to engage in unwanted behaviour.

Everyone associated with the activities of International House, staff and students, are responsible for helping to ensure that individuals do not suffer sexual, racial or any other form of harassment, and that they are encouraged and supported in any legitimate complaint.

- Sexual Harassment has been defined in the European Commission's Code of Practice as "unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, or other conduct based on sex, affecting the dignity of men and women at work".
- Disability Harassment is unwanted behaviour of a hostile or offensive nature based on a person's disability.
- Racial Harassment is unwanted behaviour of a hostile or offensive nature based on race or ethnic origin or expression by a person of one racial or ethnic origin against a person of another.

Differences in attitudes and cultures can mean that what is perceived as harassment by one person may not be seen as such by another. However, the common link is that such behaviour is **unwanted** by the recipient or others, and would be regarded as harassment by any reasonable person. Any difficulty in defining what constitutes harassment should not deter anyone from complaining of behaviour which causes them distress, nor should they be deterred by embarrassment, intimidation or fear of publicity. At International House the sensitivity of harassment complaints and the need for confidentiality will be respected.

The Harassment Policy is as follows:

International House seeks to provide an environment free from harassment, intimidation and victimisation; all students, staff, contractors and visitors, and anyone acting on behalf of International House, will respect the rights of others and will refrain from:

- unwanted behaviour that is not justified by the professional and/or working relationship, such as intimidating behaviour or bullying, or abuse of power relations;
- conduct that undermines or undervalues because of characteristics such as disability or race;
- unwanted physical contact, such as unwelcome touching or invasion of personal space;



- unwanted verbal conduct, such as unwelcome sexual advances, comments that ridicule, intimidate or abuse an individual because of her/his sex or sexuality, racist comments, remarks about disability, derogatory or degrading name calling, insults, stereotyping, offensive jokes, abuse, threats or questions or comments of a personal nature;
- unwanted non-verbal conduct, including sexually suggestive gestures, staring and leering;
- unwanted non-verbal conduct, including the display, storage or transmission of offensive material; (see e-mail and internet policy)
- any incitement to commit any of the above behaviour;

All individuals will be held personally accountable for their actions and behaviour in cases of complaint of harassment.

COMPLAINING ABOUT PERSONAL HARASSMENT

1. Informal complaint

If you are the victim of minor harassment 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 ask a colleague, OR your line manager to do so on your behalf.

2. Formal complaint

Where the informal approach fails or if the harassment is more serious, you should bring the matter to the attention of the **Director** as a formal written complaint. If your complaint is against one of the Directors you have the option of making a formal complaint to the International House World Organisation.

The person dealing with the complaint will carry out a thorough investigation in accordance with our disciplinary procedure. Those involved in the investigation will be expected to act in confidence and any breach of confidence will be a disciplinary matter.

When the investigation has been concluded, a draft report of the findings and of the investigator's proposed decision will be sent, in writing, to you and to the alleged harasser.

GENERAL NOTES

- a. If the report concludes that the allegation is well founded, the harasser will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with our disciplinary procedure. An employee who receives a formal warning or who is dismissed for harassment may appeal against the disciplinary action by using the Disciplinary Appeal Procedure.
- b. If you bring a complaint of harassment you will not be victimised for having brought the complaint. However if the report concludes that the complaint is both untrue and has been brought with malicious intent, disciplinary action will be taken against you.