

## Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy

### Who this guidance applies to

The support, guidance and regulations detailed within this policy apply to all students studying higher education courses with UGM Manchester. Within this policy, all staff working either as a permanent, sessional or part-time employee will be referred to as UGM Manchester staff. This policy applies to all registered students and encompasses:

- Students studying on either a standard or non-standard delivery pattern
- Students required to repeat elements of their studies
- Students who may be on a study break
- Students who may be suspended
- Students at all stages of their studies such as foundation, undergraduate and post-graduate

This policy sets out specific guidance for students at UGM Manchester and has been created in alignment with the partner institution, University of Greater Manchester, and the Office for Student's E6 guidance.

### Summary

UGM Manchester is committed to fostering an atmosphere that ensures all staff and students feel safe and respected both at work and in their studies. UGM Manchester does not tolerate any form of sexual misconduct or sexual harassment and will investigate all reports of this nature in order to challenge inappropriate behaviour. UGM Manchester will ensure that staff responsible for investigating complaints of sexual violence will be appropriately trained, experienced and supported in carrying out their work.

This document works in conjunction with other UGM Manchester policies and University of Greater Manchester policies, such as the Staff and Students Relationships policy and the Whistleblowing policy, to protect and support both our staff and students.

As part of the UGM Manchester commitment to creating an atmosphere free of sexual harassment or sexual misconduct, staff will be trained in order to be compliant with this policy. Additionally, UGM Manchester may utilise the Wellbeing team within the institution as well as working with local and national providers to ensure that both staff and students are supported in their knowledge and understanding of sexual harassment and misconduct. UGM Manchester will ensure that support is provided to those reporting incidents as well as ensuring the wellbeing of those 'first responders' within the institution who work in a supportive capacity with victims.

Where possible, action will be carried out only with the consent of the complainant. However, this may be reviewed where UGM Manchester finds:

- There is significant risk to other members of the UGM Manchester community
- There is a possibility of safeguarding risks to a vulnerable adult or child

In these cases, UGM Manchester may inform the police in order to protect the interests and safety of all parties. In cases where there is reasonable belief that a safeguarding issue may arise, the institution will follow guidance as set out within the Safeguarding policy.

### **Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct**

UGM Manchester views any allegation or incidence of harassment or sexual misconduct as serious and a breach of policy that causes significant harm to members of the UGM Manchester community and damages the reputation and integrity of the institution.

Sexual misconduct can include, but is not limited to:

- Making inappropriate and unwanted sexual remarks
- Unwanted touching, whether skin to skin or through clothing
- Kissing
- Engagement in sexual acts such as penetration with a body part or object
- Showing sexual organs to another person

Sexual harassment can include, but is not limited to:

- Inappropriate 'jokes' of a sexual or lewd nature
- Innuendo or sexualised comments
- Displaying or distributing images of a sexual nature either directly to another person or via social media/messaging apps
- Unwanted sexual advances such as comments; making sexualised noises (whistling, catcalling, grunting etc); suggestive looks such as leering or staring; commenting inappropriately on the appearance of another person; sexts or unwanted communication such as emails and messages; unwanted physical contact such as brushing purposefully against another person or initiating unwanted touching such as massaging them.
- Engaging in upskirting
- Spreading sexual rumours about another person
- Someone discussing their own sex life in a public space or through unsolicited conversation

Although some cases may be deemed more serious than others, all reports of sexual harassment or misconduct will be treated seriously and may result in severe disciplinary action such as expulsion (in the case of students) or termination of employment (in the case of UGM Manchester staff members).

All incidents reports will be investigated on a case by case basis in order to preserve the safety, respect, integrity and dignity of the members of the UGM Manchester community.

### **Data Handling**

UGM Manchester will collect relevant data and keep records of all allegations of sexual misconduct and sexual harassment. This information will be kept secure and confidential in line with the Data

Protection policy and GDPR guidelines. Where appropriate, anonymised data may be shared when reporting trimesterly or annual reports at an institution level.

## **Reporting an Incident**

It is acknowledged that a staff or student may report an incident of sexual harassment or misconduct to a trusted member of staff within the institution. In line with safeguarding procedures, any reports of sexual harassment or misconduct will be treated as potential safeguarding risks and the following guidance will be implemented:

- The member of staff receiving the report will listen and not investigate or probe the complainant in order to investigate the claims independently
- Staff will pass on any and all information verbatim, or as closely as possible to the words of the complainant, to the Academic Registrar or Director of Studies (hereafter named the investigating officer) who will follow the procedures set out in this policy to investigate the complaint
- Staff will not promise anonymity or that information can be kept secret at this stage. Staff will reassure the complainant that all complaints will be dealt with sensitively but must be passed on to the investigating officer
- Staff will pass on any complaints or reports of sexual harassment and misconduct as soon as possible after receiving a report
- Where a complaint may pertain to the investigating officer, the Whistleblowing procedure will be followed to ensure that the next senior individual in the chain of command is informed of the complaint and that this procedure may be followed

After receiving an allegation of sexual harassment or misconduct, the investigating officer will make a record using the template located in the secure safeguarding file. The investigating officer will speak directly to the complainant to ensure that all information is correct. The complainant may be accompanied by a trusted friend or member of staff where appropriate in order to support their wellbeing.

The UGM Manchester investigating officer will ensure that all measures are taken to protect both the safety and dignity of both the complainant and the accused party, this may involve minimising the likelihood of parties coming into contact with each other by moving individuals to other classes or instructing parties to refrain from attending the institution until the investigation has concluded. All allegations will be investigated, however the nature of this allegation will be proportionate to the claim. UGM Manchester will ensure that accused parties are treated fairly and reasonably, presuming innocence until claims can be founded.

Where a complainant or the accused is unhappy about the outcome of the investigation, the procedures set out in the Non-Academic Complaints policy will be followed.

Where allegations are of a serious nature, the investigating officer may need to work in conjunction with local authorities such as the police. Where a police investigation is ongoing, the institution may hold off on internal proceedings until the outcome has been formalised; UGM Manchester will

ensure that they work cooperatively with the police and do not interfere with or hinder any police investigation.

### **Investigation Outcome**

Where a student or member of staff is found to be in breach of this policy, an appropriate disciplinary measure will be taken. In the case of staff members, this may involve dismissal. Where the accused is a student, this may involve the permanent expulsion of the student and denial of further right to study at the institution.

At the conclusion of the investigation, all parties will usually be informed of outcome within 30 days. Following the conclusion of the investigation, the institution may choose to continue to implement procedures to safeguard both parties such as changing timetables to minimise the risk of contact.

Where a police investigation is taking place, disciplinary action at an institution level will usually be delayed until such a time as the police investigation is finalised. In line with this policy, there may be occasions where the institution concludes that a complaint will be upheld by the institution even when a police investigation concludes that there was no case to answer.

### **Report + Support**

Our Report + Support system ensures that students, staff, visitors and placement partners can share any concerns relating to harassment, sexual misconduct, bullying, discrimination and hate incidents or crimes. You can seek to report with your details, enabling us to respond and receive support from an advisor, or you can choose to share information anonymously for the purposes of general information sharing.

If you choose to provide your details, a trained advisor will contact you to provide information on support available within the university and externally, as well as explaining your reporting options to enable you to make informed decisions.

Completing a disclosure on Report + Support does not initiate a formal complaints process. The advisor will discuss reporting options with you, both internal and external, and will support you with whatever you decide. If you would like to make a formal report, the advisor can initiate this process on your behalf using the information you provide.

Students who wish to make a formal report to UGM Manchester of harassment or sexual misconduct can do so by:

- Contacting the Wellbeing team by emailing the wellbeing inbox and a trained advisor will be able to advise how to make a formal report.

Staff can make a formal report to the university:

- Contacting the Wellbeing team by emailing the wellbeing inbox

### **Making an appointment**

Students can make an appointment with a trained advisor, in the following ways:

**Email:** [wellbeing@manchester.ugm.ac.uk](mailto:wellbeing@manchester.ugm.ac.uk)

## Anonymous reporting

UGM Manchester offers multiple avenues for individuals to share concerns, allowing information to be submitted either anonymously or with identifying details. Anonymous reporting may be chosen for various reasons, including fear of retaliation, lack of trust in the reporting process, or concerns about not being taken seriously.

Recognising the importance of anonymous reporting in fostering trust and addressing concerns proactively, UGM Manchester provides a Report + Support platform. This platform provides students, staff, visitors, and members of the public with a safe, secure, and accessible way to submit anonymous reports.

## Key Principles

To ensure anonymous reports are handled effectively, UGM Manchester adheres to the following principles:

- The Report + Support platform serves as the primary system for submitting, responding to, and tracking anonymous reports related to both students and staff.
- All anonymous reports are taken seriously and processed consistently and effectively. However, the absence of identifying details may limit the UGM Manchester's ability to respond in accordance with procedures or offer direct support to individuals involved.
- To maintain confidentiality while ensuring appropriate information-sharing, student-related reports are managed by Student Services and Staff-related reports are overseen by the People Team
- Wherever possible, anonymity is protected to encourage honest reporting. However, in exceptional circumstances, identifiable information within a report may require action. Examples include cases involving safeguarding concerns, ongoing risks, or known issues. In such situations, reports may need to be shared with specific individuals or teams to mitigate risks.
- While anonymity is prioritised, individuals named in a report may sometimes infer the identity of the reporting party. This possibility is communicated clearly at the point of submission.
- If a reporting party chooses to reveal their identity at a later stage, this enables more tailored support and more effective action. In such instances, individuals will be informed of their available options for further reporting and accessing support.
- Depending on the content of the report and subsequent triage, the following steps may be taken in response:
  - Reach out to named individuals to conduct wellbeing checks
  - Share information with professional services/school
  - Share information with external agencies
  - Review relevant policies and practices
  - Provide anonymised insights to the Faculty Board
  - Increase security presence at certain times or in specific locations
  - Develop targeted training or communications
  - Monitor the situation
  - Carry out further investigation (within the anonymity limitations)



- Redact identifiable information from the report
- No further action, if deemed appropriate
- Reports containing personal and identifiable information will be redacted upon closure