Academic Staff Harassment Procedure

1. Introduction

The University and Balliol College are committed to maintaining a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all members of the university community are respected. This includes staff, students, and visitors to the University.

Harassment is a serious offence which is subject to the College’s disciplinary procedures. Where necessary, complaints of harassment, bullying or other inappropriate behaviour, including all forms of sexual and racial harassment, will be investigated in line with the appropriate procedures.

2. Procedure

2.1 Wherever possible, complaints of harassment will be resolved promptly and effectively through informal means, so that good working relationships and normal social interactions can be resumed as quickly as possible.

2.2 Any College member, including academic staff members, can make a complaint about a member of the College’s academic staff. All complaints about academic staff should be addressed to the Master in the first instance. College members can discuss confidentially with the Master whether there is a complaint to be addressed and options for addressing it.

2.3 For informal complaints against academic staff, or against college members who combine student status with academic teaching, supervision, or Graduate Officer positions, the procedure will follow the steps detailed in paragraph 5 of the Student Complaints Procedure, a link to which can be found in the College Handbook; with the substitution of ‘College member’ for ‘student’. Complainants in this situation are advised to seek informal advice from the Master, a Vice-Master or a Harassment Officer during Stage One (paragraph 5).

2.4 Formal complaints against academic staff will need to be put in writing to the Master or, if concerning the Master, to a Vice-Master. This person will then act as the Senior College Officer handling the complaint.

2.5 For formal complaints against academic staff, or against College members who combine student status with academic teaching, supervision, or Graduate Officer positions, the procedure will follow the stages detailed in paragraph 6 of
the Student Complaints Procedure, a link to which can be found in the College Handbook; with the substitution of ‘College member’ for ‘student’ and ‘Master’ for ‘Dean’.

2.6 In place of Stage Three of the Student Complaints Procedure, complaints against academic staff which progress beyond Stage Two of the SCP will follow the procedures laid out in Statute XII of the College Statutes [Academic Staff, all parts].

2.7 Complaints by academic staff about student members should be addressed to the Dean, who will deal with them under the Non-Academic Disciplinary Procedure, a link to which can be found in the College Handbook.

2.8 Complaints by academic staff about non-academic staff should be addressed to the Domestic Bursar, who will deal with them under the Non-Academic Staff Harassment Procedure.

2.9 Complaints by academic staff about University members who are not members of Balliol College should be addressed by reference to the University’s Harassment Policy. The College Harassment Officers can advise and support academic staff members on how to do this.

3. Contacts and Links

You can talk either to the Master, phone (2 77710); or to the Harassment Officers appointed by the college (see College Handbook 1.5.2, 5.2); or ring the University’s confidential harassment number (2 70760); or email harassment.line@admin.ox.ac.uk and ask for referral to someone outside the College.

Harassment Officers are there to listen and advise. Any further action will be your choice.

Further advice on dealing with harassment may be found at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/. A printed copy may be sought from the Diversity and Equal Opportunity Office by telephoning (2 70238). All conversations and interaction with the College Harassment Officers or University harassment team are in the strictest confidence.

4. Definitions and Guidance

Definition of Harassment

- A person subjects another to harassment where s/he engages in unwanted and unwarranted conduct which has the purpose or effect of:
  - violating that other’s dignity, or
• creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that other

• Harassment may involve repeated forms of unwanted and unwarranted behaviour, but a one off incident can also amount to harassment.

• Harassment on the ground of sex (including gender re-assignment), race, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation or age may amount to unlawful discrimination. Harassment may also breach other legislation and may in some circumstances be a criminal offence, e.g. under the provision of Protection from Harassment Act 1997.

Examples of bullying and/or harassing behaviour

  o Offensive comments or body language
  o Verbal or physical threats
  o Insulting, abusive, embarrassing or patronising behaviour or comments
  o Humiliating, intimidating, and/or demeaning criticism
  o Open hostility
  o Deliberately undermining a competent person by overloading with work and constant criticism
  o Isolation from normal work or study place, conversations, or social events
  o Publishing, circulating or displaying pornographic, racist, homophobic, sexually suggestive or otherwise offensive pictures or other materials
  o Unwanted physical contact, ranging from an invasion of space to a serious assault

Please note:

Reasonable and proper management instructions issued properly, or reasonable and proper review of a member of staff’s or a student’s work and/or performance will not constitute harassment or bullying.

Behaviour will not amount to harassment if the conduct complained of could not reasonably be perceived as offensive.