

Exeter College Policy and Procedure on Harassment

Introduction

1. Exeter College does not tolerate sexual harassment or any other form of harassment or victimisation and expects all members of the College community, its visitors and contractors to treat each other with respect, courtesy and consideration.
2. The College is committed to fostering an inclusive culture which promotes equality, values diversity and maintains a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all members of the College community are respected.
3. The aims of the College as reflected in this Policy are to:
 - Promote a positive environment in which people are treated fairly and with respect;
 - Make it clear that sexual harassment or any other form of harassment is unacceptable and that all members of the College have a role to play in creating an environment free from harassment;
 - To support the work of the College, as an employer, in taking reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of its staff;
 - Provide a framework of support for staff and students who feel they have been subject to sexual harassment or any other form of harassment; and
 - Provide a mechanism by which complaints can wherever possible be addressed in a timely way.
4. Those in positions of authority within the College, such as the Rector, the Sub-Rector, the Bursar, the Senior Tutor, have formal responsibilities under this Policy and are expected to familiarise themselves with the Policy and Procedures on appointment. All Fellows of the College, and all senior members of staff have a duty to implement this Policy and to make every effort to ensure that harassment and victimisation do not occur in the areas for which they are responsible and that, if they do occur, any concerns are investigated promptly and effectively.
5. All members of the College community have the right to expect professional behaviour from others, and a corresponding responsibility to behave professionally towards others. All members of the College community have a personal responsibility for complying with this Policy and Procedure and must comply with and demonstrate active commitment to this Policy by:
 - Treating others with dignity and respect;
 - Discouraging sexual harassment or any other form of harassment by making it clear that such behaviour is unacceptable; and
 - Supporting any member of the College who feels they have been subject to sexual harassment or any other form of harassment, including supporting them to make a formal complaint if appropriate.
6. This Policy and associated Procedures are designed to deal with harassment which occurs primarily within the environment of one or more colleges. Incidents of sexual harassment or other harassment that occur outside the college environment and/or solely within the University environment will normally be dealt with under the appropriate [University procedure](#). If there is doubt as to whether the College or University procedure applies, you are advised to seek advice from the relevant College officers described in this Procedure, the DSWSS or the University's Harassment Line.

In the case of staff, these procedures also deal with sexual harassment or any other form of harassment which affects staff in the course of their employment. This would include in a work

situation (which could be on College premises or elsewhere), in any situation related to work (e.g. at a work social event), or out of work where connected to an employee (e.g. on social media).

7. This Policy and Procedures should be read alongside other Exeter College policies and procedures, including the College's disciplinary procedures that may be found in the '[Red Book](#)', the Staff Handbook, and the Statutes and Bylaws of the College. These can be found at: <https://www.exeter.ox.ac.uk/college-policies-and-statements/>.
8. Any member of the College community who feels they have been subject to harassment can also contact the University Harassment Advisory Service, or their local Harassment Advisor, for support. The Service is also available to those against whom an allegation of harassment has been made. The University also lists other sources of [help and advice](#).

Definitions

9. A person subjects another to **harassment** where they engage in unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of:
 - violating another person's dignity, or
 - creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for another person.¹

The recipient does not need to have explicitly stated that the behaviour was unwanted.

10. **Sexual harassment** is a form of harassment. Sexual harassment is defined as **unwanted** conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. It can be: verbal (either in person or remotely), non-verbal (e.g. staring, stalking or following, gestures), or physical (see paragraph 18). It is unlawful, and (as with other forms of harassment) it will not be tolerated.
 - The College, as an employer, is required to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of staff in the course of their employment, and we provide further information below about how we will do this. Instances of sexual harassment involving staff should **always be reported**, in the first instance, to a line manager or Head of Department.

As with other forms of harassment and victimisation, sexual harassment involving staff may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal (with aggravating factors, such as abuse of power over a more junior colleague, being taken into account when deciding on what disciplinary action to take).
 - Sexual harassment of, or by, our students will be dealt with in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Appendices to this policy.
11. Freedom of speech and academic freedom² are protected by law though these rights must be exercised within the law. Vigorous academic debate will not amount to harassment when it is conducted respectfully and without violating the dignity of others or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.
12. **Bullying** is a form of harassment and may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.
13. The College seeks to protect any member of the College community from **victimisation**, which is a form of misconduct which may itself result in a disciplinary process. The College will regard as victimisation any instance where a person is subjected to detrimental treatment because they have, in good faith:

¹ [Statute XI: University Discipline](#)

² The [College Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech Policy](#)

- made an allegation of harassment, or
- indicated an intention to make such an allegation, or
- assisted or supported another person in bringing forward such an allegation, or
- participated in an investigation of a complaint, or
- participated in any disciplinary hearing arising from an investigation, or
- taken any other steps in connection with this Policy and Procedure, or
- is suspected of having done so.

Behaviours

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

The intentions of the alleged harasser are not always determinative of whether harassment has taken place. The perception of the complainant and the extent to which that perception is in all the circumstances reasonable will also be relevant.

15. Being under the influence of alcohol, drugs or otherwise intoxicated is not an excuse for harassment.

16. Harassment can take a variety of forms:

- Through individual behaviour
- face to face, either verbally or physically
- through other forms of communication, including but not limited to, written communications and communications via any form of electronic media or mobile communications device: such behaviour may also amount to a breach of the college's regulations relating to the use of Information Technology Facilities⁴
- directly to the person concerned, or to a third party.
- But also, through a prevailing workplace or study environment which creates a culture which tolerates harassment or bullying, for example the telling of homophobic or racist jokes.

17. Examples of behaviour which **may** amount to harassment under this Policy include (but are not limited to) the following:

- unwanted physical contact, ranging from an invasion of space to an assault, including all forms of sexual harassment, including: inappropriate body language, sexually explicit remarks or innuendoes and unwanted sexual advances and touching
- offensive comments or body language, including insults, jokes or gestures and malicious rumours, open hostility, verbal or physical threats: these include all forms of harassment and abuse on the grounds of disability, race or sexual orientation
- insulting, abusive, embarrassing or patronising behaviour or comments
- humiliating, intimidating, and/or demeaning criticism
- persistently shouting at, insulting, threatening, disparaging or intimidating an individual
- constantly criticising an individual without providing constructive support to address any performance concerns
- persistently overloading an individual with work that they cannot reasonably be expected to complete

- posting offensive comments on electronic media, including using mobile communication devices³
- threatening to disclose, or disclosing, a person's sexuality or disability to others without their permission
- deliberately using the wrong name or pronoun in relation to a transgender person, or persistently referring to their gender identity history
- isolation from normal work or study place, conversations, or social events
- publishing, circulating or displaying pornographic, racist, homophobic, sexually suggestive or otherwise offensive pictures or other materials.

18. Examples of behaviour which **may** amount to sexual harassment under this policy include (but are not limited to):

- inappropriate body language, including sexual gestures
- sexually explicit remarks or innuendoes
- unwanted sexual advances and touching
- suggestive looks, staring or leering
- displaying sexually graphic pictures, posters or photographs
- spreading sexual rumours about a person, and/or asking intrusive questions about their private or sex life
- sending sexually explicit emails, text messages, or other electronic or social messages
- publishing or threatening to publish, circulate or display intimate or sexual images of another, without their consent.

19. In relation to sexual harassment specifically, the College is required, by law, to ensure that it minimizes the risk that its employees will be harassed by colleagues and/or third parties in the course of their employment. To this end, we have completed a risk assessment to identify potential areas of risk, and to take steps to address those risks.

20. In relation to staff, the College will not tolerate third party sexual harassment. Staff are encouraged to report any instances where it happens using the procedures outlined in Appendices A & B below (as appropriate, depending on whether the alleged perpetrator is a member of staff, or a student), or using the College's Grievance procedure if the alleged perpetrator is not a current member of staff or student at the College.

In the event that the alleged perpetrator is an Exeter College student who is also a member of staff (e.g. undertaking casual work in the Hall, Bar, Lodge, etc), the matter will normally be dealt with using the student discipline procedures outlined in the Bylaws.

21. Where a complaint is upheld, the College will take suitable action to seek to prevent the situation arising again. This could include, for example:

- warning the third party about their behaviour;
- banning them from College premises; and/or
- reporting any criminal acts to the police.

Third parties might include (but are not limited to) students, contractors, commercial clients, visitors accompanying members of the College, and members of the general public.

³ The College's [policy on IT](#).

Whilst an individual cannot bring a claim for third party harassment alone, it can still result in legal liability when raised in other types of claim.

22. **Stalking** may also be a form of harassment and may be characterised by any of the following repeated and unwanted behaviours:
- Following a person;
 - Contacting, or attempting to contact, a person by any means;
 - Publishing any statement or other material Relating or purporting to relate to a person, or purporting to originate from a person;
 - Monitoring the use by a person of the internet, email or any other form of electronic communication;
 - Loitering in any place (whether public or private);
 - Interfering with any property in the possession of a person;
 - Watching or spying on a person including through the use of CCTV or electronic surveillance.

Application of the Policy

23. Harassment is a serious offence. Any member of the College community who feels they have been subject to harassment can make a complaint via the appropriate Procedure: see Annexe A for the Procedure in relation to complaints about staff; and Annexe B for the Procedure in relation to complaints about students.
24. In respect of the implementation and execution of these policies, the College remains mindful of subsisting legal obligations in respect of the welfare of its student members and staff alike.
25. When a criminal offence may have been committed, the relevant harassment Procedure may not be appropriate. These cases will include, but not be limited to, serious assault or threat of serious assault. Student members can seek advice from the College's Harassment Advisors and/or the SPH Lead Safeguarding, Protection & Harassment Lead (SPH Lead) and/or the University's DSWSSs and/or approach the Police directly; and staff members can seek advice from the staff Harassment Advisors or the HR Manager and/or approach the Police directly. [Further guidance](#) on dealing with cases of sexual assault or sexual violence is available from the University.
26. Incidents of harassment that occur outside of the college environment and within the University environment will normally be dealt with under the appropriate [University procedure](#).
27. All parties involved in a complaint (including any witnesses who may be interviewed as part of any investigation, or trade union representatives supporting any of the parties) should maintain the confidentiality of the process. Those involved in advising complainants should, where possible, seek the consent of the individual for the onward disclosure of relevant information to those with a clear need to know. Where such consent is not forthcoming, the person entrusted with the information should make it clear that, in exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to disclose the information, taking account of the duty of care which may be owed to the individual and/or others.
28. This Policy and Procedure may be found at www.exeter.ox.ac.uk/information/policies or are available in hard copy from the office of the Bursar's Assistant. Copies in alternative formats are available on request.

By College Order 25/039, this policy was approved by Governing Body on 12th March 2025 with immediate effect, and is to be reviewed by 31st March 2028 and was also approved for display on the website.

Annex A: Complaints of harassment against College staff

1. The Procedure below applies in all cases where the person who is the subject of the complaint is a member of College staff, or who has an association with a particular college, short of an employment contract. The Human Resources ('HR') Manager will have oversight of all cases, and will take the lead as appropriate in liaising with other parts of the collegiate University.
2. Where the complainant is a student, support during this process will be provided by the SPH Lead and, where relevant, the University Director of Student Welfare and Support Services ('DSWSS').
3. In the event that the alleged perpetrator is an Exeter College student who is also a member of staff (e.g. undertaking casual work in the Hall, Bar, Lodge, etc), the matter will normally be dealt with using the student discipline procedures outlined in the Bylaws.
4. This complaints Procedure may not be applicable where the allegations are of behaviours that may attract criminal sanction. These cases may include, but are not limited to, cases of serious assault or threat of serious assault. In the first instance such allegations will normally be a matter for police investigation and action. This complaints Procedure therefore focuses on complaints of harassment which can be dealt with within the College environment. However, it also includes the procedure for informing and receiving support from the College in cases where there is police involvement.

Initial action

5. The Procedure below assumes that the individual has not been able first to resolve the issue through an informal approach. If a member of staff wishes to seek informal resolution, they should approach the HR Manager to ask for help in achieving a resolution of the problem. Students should seek support from the SPH Lead. At no time should a student or staff member feel obliged to approach an alleged harasser.
6. There are a range of support services available to those who feel that they have experienced bullying and/or harassment, and individuals may wish to refer to the resources [listed on the University of Oxford website](#).

Members of staff may also wish to contact the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), and details are available from the HR Manager.

Mediation or conciliation

7. In some situations, it may be appropriate to ask the parties to consider entering into a mediation or conciliation process. Although mediation or conciliation may be attempted at any time before or after a formal investigation, it may be particularly helpful if it is considered at an early stage before the formal procedure is invoked.
8. In the case of a complaint involving two members of staff, an experienced mediator or conciliator acceptable to both parties will normally be nominated by the HR Manager, who may seek advice from the University's Director of Human Resources if appropriate, for example, in the case of a joint appointment. In the case of a complaint involving a member of staff and a student, the HR Manager will consult the SPH Lead, who may seek advice from the DSWSS as appropriate. The mediator or conciliator will meet with the parties separately and as soon as practicable to begin to seek a resolution. The normal expectation is that resolution would be achieved within 20 working days of the initial meetings with the parties (although this time limit may be extended by agreement). Any agreed outcome will normally be recorded in writing.
9. All those involved in the mediation or conciliation process must maintain appropriate confidentiality.

Complaints procedure

10. If informal action does not succeed in resolving the situation, or would not be appropriate given the nature of the complaint, the complainant should make a written complaint. If the complainant is a member of staff, the complaint should be submitted to the HR Manager. If the complainant is a student, the complaint should be submitted to the SPH Lead who will then communicate it to the HR Manager and/or the Head of Department. A student complainant may also seek support as relevant from the University DSWSS. In cases where it is not immediately clear to whom a complaint

should be addressed, or if the complainant feels it is not appropriate to approach the HR Manager, or wishes to make a complaint against the HR Manager, advice may be sought from the Harassment Advisors and/or the SPH Lead. Students and staff can seek support from College Harassment Advisors throughout the complaints process. If the student or staff member does not feel comfortable contacting a College Harassment Advisor, they can contact the Harassment Line for details of another advisor (Tel. 01865 270760 or email harassment.line@admin.ox.ac.uk).

Submission of the complaint

11. In the submission to the HR Manager or the SPH Lead, the complainant should set out as clearly and succinctly as possible

- the nature of the behaviour that they are concerned about;
- the effect of this behaviour on them; and
- the resolution they are seeking.

The complaint should include dates and details of any witnesses to any incidents referred to in the complaint, together with any documentary evidence (for example copies of emails or social media posts). The complainant should also explain what attempts, if any, have been made to resolve the difficulties and the outcome they are seeking.

12. Every effort will be made to achieve a prompt resolution to the complaint – the aim being to conclude the investigation within a period of no more than six weeks. Both the complainant and the person who is the subject of the complaint will be expected to co-operate with the College in achieving that result. In exceptional cases, an investigation may take longer than six weeks, and both parties will be kept updated about the progress of the investigation.
13. Both parties to the complaint have the right to be accompanied and supported by a trade union representative or by a colleague of their choice from within the College at any formal meeting held under this procedure. If the complaint involves a student they may be accompanied by another student member of the College or a member of the College's welfare team, a senior member of the College, or a member of staff from OUSU's Student Advice Service. These people must maintain appropriate confidentiality.
14. There may be circumstances in which an aggrieved party is not willing, or able, to make a formal complaint but the HR Manager or SPH Lead considers that the implications for the aggrieved person or others actually or potentially affected are serious. This may include cases where other parties, but not the aggrieved party, have made a complaint. In this case, the Head of House or other senior member may initiate an investigation and make a decision on further action on the basis of such evidence as is available.

Action by the HR Manager on receipt of a complaint

15. On receipt of a complaint, the HR Manager will, in consultation with the SPH Lead in the event of a student complainant, take such steps as they think necessary or appropriate to understand the nature of the complaint and the outcome sought which may include:
 - informing the person against whom a complaint has been made of the allegations against him or her;
 - meeting separately with the complainant and the alleged harasser (at which meetings they should be provided with the right to be accompanied);
 - speaking to other relevant people on a confidential basis; and/or
 - obtaining further relevant information.
16. The HR Manager will then decide how to proceed and will inform the parties in writing. They may make such enquiries as are necessary to determine the complaint, or may commission an investigation, where circumstances preclude them from concluding the matter in a timely fashion.

17. The HR Manager may also determine that immediate interim action is necessary pending the outcome of a formal process.

Investigation

18. The purpose of an investigation is to establish the relevant factual evidence in connection with the allegation(s) made by the complainant.
19. The College will appoint an appropriate senior member of the College or an appropriately trained external investigator to act as Investigator. As a general rule, the Investigator should not have had previous involvement with the issues in the case. The investigation should be concluded as soon as is reasonably practicable. The Investigator will prepare a report and may make recommendations on possible courses of action.
20. The HR Manager will inform the complainant and the person who is the subject of the complaint in writing (a) of the conclusions that have been reached after review of the evidence, including any investigation report; (b) of the action the College intends to take; and (c) of the reasons for any such action.
21. The HR Manager will also inform any other parties who have been asked to participate in an investigation that the investigation has been concluded.

Investigation procedure

22. The procedure for an investigation will normally be as follows, but may be adapted by the Investigator to meet the needs of the case:
 - The Investigator will meet the complainant to confirm the details of the complaint.
 - The complaint as clarified will be forwarded to the person complained against together with any other relevant material that the Investigator has.
 - The Investigator will interview, where reasonably practicable, individuals identified by the complainant as having relevant evidence.
 - The Investigator will meet the person complained against to hear their response to the complaint and any further evidence that has come to light.
 - The Investigator will interview, where reasonably practicable, individuals identified by the person complained against as having relevant evidence.
 - Having considered all the evidence, including any relevant documents, the Investigator will prepare a written report of their findings, in relation to which they may check relevant sections in draft with the parties before finalising.
 - The report will be forwarded to the HR Manager, usually with a copy to the Rector and, in the case of staff members, the Bursar, and, if the complainant is a student, normally to the SPH Lead. In cases involving students, consent should be sought from the complainant to inform their department if appropriate. The Welfare Lead will ensure that appropriate support is available to students following an investigation.

Possible outcomes of a complaint

23. Depending on the nature of the complaint and the evidence found, including the findings of any investigation report, the College will either:
 - Take no further action, other than, where appropriate, implementing or suggesting steps that would help to restore reasonable professional relationships between the parties.

Or

 - Initiate resolution of the issues (e.g. by requiring that certain individuals undergo specific training, or implementing practical arrangements to improve professional relationships). If a

successful resolution is achieved the case will be closed, but the situation will be monitored for an appropriate period.

Or

- Institute disciplinary proceedings where the HR Manager is reasonably satisfied that there is evidence to support allegations of harassment of a sufficiently serious nature that should be further examined through the disciplinary process. In this event, the College will determine what intermediate measures are necessary, including any re-allocation of duties, in consultation as appropriate with the relevant department.

Appeal from the Decision

24. If either party does not accept the outcome of the complaint, they may invoke the relevant grievance or complaint procedure within the time scales specified. For staff see relevant procedure(s) under 'Grievance Procedure' in the [Employee Handbook](#). For students see the appeals procedure (available in the 'Red Book'). If the complainant is a student, a Completion of Procedures letter should be issued.
25. If a student complainant is not satisfied with the outcome following the investigation of the formal written complaint, they may be able to apply to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) for a review of the case. They must do so within three months of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter.

Potentially criminal conduct

26. This Procedure may not be applicable where the allegations are of behaviours that may attract criminal sanction. This would include, but not be limited to, cases of serious assault or threat of assault. The HR Manager will decide which procedure is appropriate.

Confidentiality

27. Information concerning allegations of harassment must so far as reasonably possible be held in confidence by those to whom it is divulged. Unnecessary disclosure of such allegations may attract disciplinary sanction. Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis, including as appropriate with the individual against whom a complaint is brought. Once a formal complaint is pursued, it is likely to be appropriate and/or necessary for certain information to be provided to others within the College, the University, or to external bodies.
28. Those to whom disclosure may be made outside the University include the police, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator ("OIA") and the civil and criminal courts. The College will not normally report a matter to the police without the complainant's agreement, except in those rare circumstances where there is sufficient evidence to suggest that an individual poses an extreme risk.

Records

29. The College and all those involved in this process must comply with the principles of the College's Data Protection Policies⁴. These include ensuring that personal data is kept accurate and up-to-date, held securely, and not kept for longer than necessary.
30. Those interviewed in the course of any investigation will be asked to review the notes of their individual discussions with the Investigator as soon as is reasonably possible in order to comment on any inaccuracies or omissions.
31. The HR Manager, and if the student is a complainant, the SPH Lead, should be consulted about filing and retaining any notes and documents, all of which must be held in confidence.

⁴ This shall be in accordance with the College Data Protection Policy which can be found at www.exeter.ox.ac.uk/information/policies

Annex B: Complaints of harassment against students

1. This Procedure is designed to deal with student complaints of harassment by other students that arise in a College context. Complaints of harassment brought by students against college-only staff will be dealt with under the staff Procedure above, and complaints by students against University staff will be dealt under the University Procedure. In all cases a student complainant will be supported by the SPH Lead and, if appropriate, the University DSWSS. If a student is unsure whether a particular instance of harassment falls under the University's procedures or College procedures, they should seek advice from the SPH Lead, the University Director of Student Welfare and Support Services ('DSWSS') or a Harassment Advisor.
2. If a member of College staff wishes to make a complaint of harassment against a student, this will normally be considered as a disciplinary issue. In the first instance, a member of staff should seek support and guidance from the HR Manager, who should consult the SPH Lead and/or the DSWSS as relevant.
3. The SPH Lead and Harassment Advisors can provide support to students, and to staff requiring advice on student cases. The SPH Lead will have oversight⁵ of all cases referred to them under this Procedure, and will take the lead as appropriate in liaising with other parts of the collegiate University. The SPH Lead will act as a source of information and advice for the College on student cases of harassment, and will make referrals as appropriate. They will also be responsible for recording and reporting of cases referred to their office under this Procedure.
4. In serious cases, it is likely to be appropriate to proceed directly to stages 2 and 3 of this Procedure.

Stage 1 - Informal action

5. In some cases, a student who feels that they are being harassed by another student may feel able to approach the person in question to explain what conduct they find upsetting, offensive or unacceptable, and to ask that person to refrain from that behaviour. At no time should a student feel obliged to approach an alleged harasser, and the College does not wish to suggest that a student who feels that they have been harassed is responsible for rectifying the situation. It may often be appropriate to proceed directly to stages 2 and 3 of the procedure.
6. Before taking informal action, the student could discuss the situation with a College Harassment Advisor. If the student does not feel comfortable contacting a College Harassment Advisor, they can contact the Harassment Line for details of another advisor (Tel. 01865 270760 or e-mail harassment.line@admin.ox.ac.uk). Harassment Advisors will not approach the alleged harasser on behalf of an individual. Details of the role of the harassment advisor can be found at <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/support>
7. Other sources of advice when considering informal resolution include any the Chaplain, College Advisor (list of current Advisors posted in the Lodge), JCR and MCR Welfare Reps and/or member(s) of the Peer Support team, Student Peer Supporters, and OUSU's Student Advice Service (Tel. 01865 288466 or e-mail advice@ousu.org).
8. These sources of support and advice are also available to students who have been accused of harassment.

Stage 2 - Student Welfare and Support Services

9. If informal action does not succeed in resolving the situation, or would not be appropriate given the nature of the behaviour, the SPH Lead and Harassment Advisors are available for support and advice to any student who feels that they are being harassed. Students can contact the SPH Lead by e-mail safeguarding@exeter.ox.ac.uk
10. The SPH Lead will refer the student to a staff member trained in dealing with harassment cases, normally a Harassment Advisor. This staff member will be available to support the student throughout the process, including if they decide to move to [stage 3](#) and make a formal complaint,

⁵ Oversight in this context refers to the SPH Lead being aware of all cases so as to ensure the provision of appropriate support to students.

and will also provide support following the outcome of any formal complaint. The SPH Lead will oversee all cases, and will advise and take action as appropriate. Actions taken will vary depending on the case. Actions taken by the trained staff member may include:

- Giving advice on options for ways to proceed, and helping the student to make decisions on the action they want to take
- Referring the student to appropriate support services (such as the Student Counselling Service, Harassment Advisors and OUSU Student Advice Service).

Actions taken by the SPH Lead may include:

- Facilitating a mediation or conciliation process between the student and the alleged harasser, if both parties agree. An experienced mediator or conciliator acceptable to both parties will normally be nominated by the SPH Lead, who may seek advice from the University's DSWSS. The mediator or conciliator will meet with the parties separately and as soon as practicable to begin to seek a resolution. The normal expectation is that resolution would be achieved within 20 working days of the initial meetings with the parties (although this time limit may be extended by agreement). Any agreed outcome will normally be recorded in writing. All those involved in the mediation or conciliation process must maintain appropriate confidentiality.
 - Referring a case to the University, if it transpires that the alleged harassment did in fact take place outside of the college environment and within the University environment.
 - Ensuring that relevant members of staff within the collegiate University are informed of the case if appropriate, with the student's consent, and having due regard for obligations of confidentiality owed to others.
11. Support from the SPH Lead and Harassment Advisors, or those designated by them is also available to students against whom complaints of harassment have been made. Actions taken will vary depending on the case, but the support will be equivalent to that available to a student who feels that they being harassed by another student, including referral to appropriate support services. The SPH Lead will ensure that, where a complainant and a student complained against are both seeking support, they will be dealt with by different members of staff, who will maintain appropriate confidentiality.
 12. Support from the SPH Lead and Harassment Advisors is also available to students who wish to make or have made a complaint of harassment against a member of staff, under the [Annex A: Complaints of harassment against College staff](#)
 13. Brief records will be kept of all meetings held and actions taken in relation to the case at this stage. These records will be managed in accordance with the principles of the Colleges Data Protection Policy. These include ensuring that personal data is kept accurate and up-to date, held securely, and not kept for longer than necessary.

Stage 3 - Formal Written Report

14. If informal action does not succeed in resolving the situation, or would not be appropriate given the nature of the behaviour, the student should make a formal report to the Sub-Rector and ask that the matter be dealt with under the College's student disciplinary procedures. Harassment, including all forms of sexual harassment and misconduct, is prohibited by the College's Disciplinary Code. Before making such a report, students should refer to the College's Disciplinary Bylaw.
15. If the student making the formal Report has not already accessed advice and support, the Sub-Rector will normally direct the student to College and/or University Welfare provision.
16. The formal report to the Sub-Rector should set out as clearly and succinctly as possible:
 - the nature of the behaviour that the reporting student is concerned about;

- the effect of this behaviour on the reporting student; and
- where possible, the resolution that the reporting student is seeking.

The Report should include dates and details of any witnesses, together with any documentary evidence. The reporting student should also state, where appropriate, any action taken at Stages 1 or 2 of Annex B of this policy.

17. The Oxford SU Student Advice Service, or if appropriate, the Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Service may be able to discuss a draft of the formal Report with the reporting student in order to check that the report is complete and that relevant supporting documentary evidence is included. These Services cannot offer legal advice, or speculate on possible outcomes.
18. If the reporting student is dissatisfied with the way this procedure has been followed, they can make a complaint under the College's Student Complaints Procedure, in which case the complaint will be considered by members of staff who have not previously been involved in the case.
19. There may be circumstances in which an aggrieved party is not willing, or able, to make a formal complaint but the SPH Lead considers that the implications for the aggrieved person or others actually or potentially affected are serious. This may include cases where other parties, but not the aggrieved party, have made a complaint. In this case, the SPH Lead may propose to the Sub-Rector that disciplinary procedures be initiated.

Referrals

20. On occasion, complaints of harassment which should be considered under this Procedure may be made to staff other than the SPH Lead. In this situation, staff should explain the Procedure, and ask the complainant if they would like the case referred to the SPH Lead, so that they can receive support from a trained staff member, or submit a formal written complaint.
21. If a student does not wish to seek support and advice, or to make a complaint, under stages 2 or 3 of this Procedure, or if there are queries about the procedure to be followed, staff can contact the SPH Lead or the DSWSS for advice on a confidential basis⁶.
22. There may be occasions where a student does not wish to seek support and advice or to make a complaint under stages 2 or 3 of this Procedure, but where the SPH Lead considers that the implications for the individual and/or for others actually or potentially affected are serious. This may include cases where other parties, but not the aggrieved party, have made a complaint. In such circumstances the SPH Lead may initiate an investigation and make a decision on further action on the basis of such evidence as is available. The individual's consent will normally be sought if disclosure is to be made, and a decision on disclosure would be made at a senior level.

Confidentiality

23. Information concerning allegations of harassment must so far as reasonably possible be held in confidence by those to whom it is divulged. Unnecessary disclosure of such allegations may attract disciplinary sanction. Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis. Once a formal complaint is pursued, it is likely to be appropriate and/or necessary for certain information to be provided to others within the College, the University, or to external bodies.
24. Those to whom disclosure may be made outside the University include the police, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator ("OIA") and the civil and criminal courts. The College will not normally report a matter to the police without the complainant's agreement, except in those rare circumstances where there is sufficient evidence to suggest that an individual poses an extreme risk.

⁶ Any member of the collegiate University can also contact the Proctors for advice and information on any matter.

Records

25. The College and all those involved in this Procedure must comply with the principles of the College's Data Protection Policy⁷. These include ensuring that personal data is kept accurate and up-to-date, held securely, and not kept for longer than necessary.
26. Those interviewed in the course of any investigation by the investigator will be asked to review the notes of their individual discussions with the investigator as soon as is reasonably possible in order to comment on any inaccuracies or omissions. All notes will be preserved during the process and until such time as the College's internal processes and any external processes are concluded.
27. The SPH Lead should be consulted about filing and retaining any notes and documents related to this Procedure, all of which must be held in confidence.

By College Order 25/039, this policy was approved by Governing Body on 12th March 2025 with immediate effect, and is to be reviewed by 31st March 2028 and was also approved for display on the website.

⁷ The College's Data Protection policy can be found at www.exeter.ox.ac.uk/information/policies/