

Dignity and Respect Policy Summary of Proposed Policy

The new Dignity and Respect Policy (DARP) represents a major modernisation and expansion of the older Dignity at Work and Study (DAWS) framework.

1. Purpose, tone and scope

What DAWS said	DAWS provides a general statement that the University will not tolerate discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation, but with limited explanation of cultural expectations or inclusive values.
What DARP improves	DARP provides a much clearer, more detailed statement of intent, including: • Commitment to a “safe, supportive and inclusive” environment. • Far stronger emphasis on culture building and shared responsibilities across the community.
Overall effect	The new policy is mission driven and culture focused, rather than compliance driven.

2. Modernised behavioural expectations

What DAWS said	Provides a brief definition of acceptable behaviour, focusing mainly on courtesy and politeness.
What DARP improves	Presents a robust set of behavioural expectations, including: • Respect, compassion, professionalism, inclusion, integrity. • Upholding freedom of speech and academic freedom lawfully. • Maintaining appropriate professional relationships.
Overall effect	Expectations are broader, clearer, values-based, and aligned with modern University values.

3. Expanded and clearer definitions of unacceptable behaviour

What DAWS said	Definitions are shorter and more limited, with fewer examples. It covers: • Discrimination • Bullying • Harassment • Victimisation
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What DARP improves	Greatly expands the taxonomy of harmful behaviours, including: • Bullying • Discrimination • Harassment (under two statutes) • Hate incidents & hate crime • Sexual misconduct • Sexual & Gender-based violence • Victimisation It includes an appendix with extensive illustrative examples, including online behaviours, misconduct by association or perception, and more nuanced scenarios.
Overall effect	More comprehensive, more up-to-date with legislation and sector guidance, and more accessible for users.

4. Much stronger recognition of legal frameworks & rights

What DAWS said	Refers to the Equality Act 2010 but does not address free speech, academic freedom, or human rights considerations.
What DARP improves	Integrates: • Equality Act 2010 • Human Rights protections regarding belief & religion • Freedom of Speech & Academic Freedom policies • Office for Students guidance on harassment • Clear differentiation between lawful expression and harmful behaviour
Overall effect	More legally informed, and better aligned to modern HE sector expectations.

5. Increased clarity on who is covered

What DAWS said	Covers “staff, students, visitors and associated individuals,” but does not clearly define these categories.
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What DARP improves	Much broader and more precise: • Defines clearer scope and broader definition of “employees” and (including agency workers, contractors, volunteers, honorary roles, casual workers) • All students (including placement/exchange) • Third-party partners and collaborators • Conduct both on and off campus, online and offline
Overall effect	Scope is comprehensive and future-proofed for new modes of work/study.

6. Supporting procedures: from two routes → four structured pathways

What DAWS said	Contains two procedures (informal & staff formal) plus referral to Regulation XVIII for student cases. Overall, the system is fragmented.
What DARP improves	Introduces four unified procedures, aligned with relationship types: 1. Employee reporting Employee 2. Student reporting student 3. Student reporting employee 4. Employee reporting student Each provides more informal resolution options as well as clarifying the formal procedure, promotes early resolution, and emphasises fair, sensitive handling.
Overall effect	A more consistent, transparent and inclusive framework for all reporting relationships.

7. Stronger emphasis on restorative, supportive approaches

What DAWS said	Mentions mediation via an informal procedure but focuses largely on investigation and disciplinary action.
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What DARP improves	- Emphasises restoring relationships, repairing harm, and building trust. - Offers multiple support channels (Dignity & Respect Advisors, Report & Support, People Directorate, EDI Team, School Hubs). - Makes wellbeing support more visible.
Overall effect	Moves from a punitive-only model to a restorative and person-centred model.

8. Modernised protections against retaliation & misuse

What DAWS said	Covers victimisation and malicious allegations briefly.
What DARP improves	Includes: - Explicit retaliation and victimisation section - Clear definitions of malicious and vexatious reports - Commitment to protecting good faith reporting
Overall effect	More sophisticated safeguards for fairness and trust in the system.

9. Major expansion of confidentiality and data governance sections

What DAWS said	A short section stating that confidentiality should be maintained “where possible”.
What DARP improves	Includes detailed guidance on: - Need-to-know sharing - Data protection obligations - Sharing with funders and external bodies - Record-keeping practices - How evidence may be shared between parties/witnesses
Overall effect	Higher transparency, clearer expectations, reduced risk.

10. More rigorous monitoring and institutional learning

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What DAWS said	Monitoring is split between staff survey data and annual complaint counts. Review every 3 years.
What DARP improves	Commits to: • Periodic review of behavioural incident data • Evaluating effectiveness • Continual improvement of procedures and policy.
Overall effect	Moves from basic monitoring to an active, data-informed improvement cycle.

Overview:

Theme	What DAWS said	What DARP improves
1. Purpose, tone and scope	States zero tolerance for misconduct, with limited cultural framing	Clear, values-led commitment to a safe, supportive and inclusive culture
2. Behavioural expectations	General emphasis on courtesy and politeness	Explicit, values-based expectations (respect, inclusion, professionalism, integrity)
3. Unacceptable behaviour definitions	Narrow definitions with limited examples	Expanded, up-to-date definitions with extensive non exhaustive illustrative examples
4. Legal framework and rights	Refers mainly to Equality Act 2010	Integrates equality law, human rights, free speech and academic freedom
5. Who is covered	Broad reference to staff, students and visitors	Clear, comprehensive coverage of employees, students, partners and third parties
6. Procedural structure	Fragmented routes for staff and students	Four unified procedures aligned to reporting relationships
7. Approach to resolution and support	Focus on investigation and discipline	Strong emphasis on early resolution, support and restorative approaches

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8. Retaliation and misuse safeguards	Brief references to victimisation and false allegations	Clear protections against retaliation and misuse; supports good-faith reporting
9. Confidentiality and data handling	Minimal guidance on confidentiality	Detailed, transparent guidance on data protection and information sharing
10. Monitoring and improvement	Basic monitoring and periodic review	Ongoing monitoring, evaluation and continuous institutional learning