

Student Sexual Harassment & Misconduct Policy and Procedures

1. Principles, scope, and linked policies

1.1 As an organisation, LIS approaches questions of sexual harassment with the utmost seriousness. We are committed to providing a safe and respectful environment where our whole community is able to study, work and live free from sexual harassment. LIS expects all members of the community to treat each other with respect, courtesy, and consideration.

1.2 Our overarching principles are as follows:

Prevention

We have mandatory training for staff and students.

We promote a culture of respect.

We have visible and accessible policies, processes, and language emphasizing our approach.

Intervention

We have clearly accessible reporting procedures.

We have a transparent investigation process to address complaints promptly and fairly.

Support

We offer immediate and ongoing support mechanisms for victims, witnesses, and others affected by harassment.

We protect against retaliation for those reporting incidents.

We offer guidance and training for staff involved in managing complaints.

Confidentiality

Ensuring confidentiality is a key principle in creating a culture where those affected feel safe to make a disclosure about sexual harassment and misconduct.

1.3 This policy covers all students at LIS. As such, it includes people on all programmes and courses (including short courses and professional development training).

1.4 Students experiencing sexual harassment have legal rights. Where required, LIS will engage with external investigations by the police, and statutory and voluntary agencies as required. For reference, [Appendix 1](#) provides a summary of legislation that provides protection under this policy.

1.5 For students, incidents and behaviours that may constitute sexual harassment will be investigated within the time limits set out in the “Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure”.

- 1.6 To ensure that the policy is publicly accessible, LIS's Sexual Misconduct Policy is published on the policy page of the LIS website and on the LIS intranet. The policy will be covered at induction (for staff and students).

2. Key Definitions

2.1 Sexual Harassment

- 2.1.1 Sexual harassment describes a range of words, behaviours and/or conduct of a sexual nature that are unwanted and uninvited.

- 2.1.2 Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

Verbal Harassment

- Making sexually explicit comments, jokes, or remarks.
- Inappropriate comments about someone's body or appearance.
- Repeatedly asking someone on a date after being refused.
- Making degrading or demeaning remarks about someone's gender or sexual orientation.
- Spreading sexual rumours or gossip.

Non-Verbal Harassment

- Leering or making sexually suggestive gestures.
- Sending unsolicited sexual messages, images, or videos (including via email, text, or social media).
- Displaying sexually explicit images or objects in shared spaces.
- Using offensive emojis or innuendos in digital communication.

Physical Harassment

- Unwanted touching, hugging, or kissing.
- Inappropriate or excessive physical contact, such as brushing up against someone deliberately.
- Blocking someone's path or invading their personal space in a way that feels intimidating.
- Sexual assault or coercion.

Abuse of Power or Authority

- Offering benefits (e.g., promotions, grades, or favourable treatment) in exchange for sexual favours.
- Threatening negative consequences (e.g., demotion, poor grades, or exclusion from opportunities) for refusing sexual advances.
- Using a position of authority to manipulate or exploit someone sexually.

Environmental Harassment

- Creating a hostile or uncomfortable environment through sexualised behaviour or comments.
- Allowing or encouraging a culture where inappropriate behaviour is normalised or ignored.
- Failing to remove offensive material or stop harassment when it's reported.
- A single incident and / or persistent behaviour can both amount to harassment.

- 2.2 *Reporting Party.* The individual who has made the allegation of alleged (or criminally proven) sexual misconduct and reports it to the School.

3. Disclose, Report, and Support

- 3.1 No student is under any obligation to disclose any incident of sexual harassment. However, if a student believes that they have experienced sexual violence or sexual harassment, LIS encourages students to act promptly and not wait until the situation is repeated or exacerbated. It is important that affected individuals feel that they should not have to tolerate such behaviour.
- 3.2 We recognise the significant negative effects that experiencing sexual harassment can have upon individuals and it is important that anyone affected by sexual violence or sexual harassment should seek support as soon as possible.
- 3.3 The Student Support Team provides a supportive and confidential environment where students can feel confident and empowered to disclose, where they will be listened to and supported to understand the options available to them.
- 3.4 Allegations of sexual harassment can be distressing for both the victim and the alleged perpetrator. LIS will ensure that all parties concerned are supported in a non-judgmental way. All reports will be handled sensitively, with information shared on a need-to-know basis.
- 3.5 If required and requested, the Student Support Team can signpost or refer students to external organisations including the police
- 3.6 In the event of a disclosure about an incident of harassment, all parties will have equitable access to appropriate support prior to any decision to launch a formal investigation, for the duration of any investigation and following its outcome.
- 3.7 LIS recognises the potential for vexatious or malicious reporting of sexual misconduct. Staff will always listen to and respond to reports in a non-judgmental way.

4. Confidentiality

- 4.1 Ensuring confidentiality is a key principle in creating a culture where those affected feel safe to make a disclosure.
- 4.2. The School will take all reasonable steps to protect the confidentiality and privacy of those who make a disclosure falling within the scope of this policy. However, there may be circumstances where the School is required to share information internally or with external agencies, such as the Police, in order to protect an individual at risk.
- 4.3. The School may be required to break confidentiality and share information internally or with external agencies if:
 - the person is a child or young person under 18 who has experienced, or is at risk of, significant harm; or
 - information is provided about a child or young person under 18 who has experienced, or is at risk of, significant harm; or
 - that person is an adult at risk as set out in the School's Safeguarding Policy who has experienced, or is at risk of, significant harm; or
 - information is provided about a person who may be an adult at risk who has experienced, or is

- at risk of, significant harm; or
- it is believed that there is a risk of significant harm occurring to any individual; or
- it is believed that there is a risk to the public or students or staff; or
- the disclosure is otherwise required by law or in accordance with the School's duties and obligations under data protection law.

4.4. There may also be circumstances where the School needs to share certain information internally. This could include (but is not limited to):

- conducting the investigation
- preventing or detecting criminal behaviour or misconduct;
- ensuring appropriate information about support services is passed on;
- data collection;
- managing conflicts of interest;
- seeking advice from other School departments;
- protecting others.

5. Procedure for Reporting Sexual Harassment

5.1 Student allegation against a student (named report)

- 5.1.1 Students should report incidents to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- 5.1.2 Reports can be made in person to the DSL or by emailing studentsupport@lis.ac.uk.
- 5.1.3 When emailing, the student should highlight they would like to make a sexual harassment complaint.
- 5.1.4 The DSL will then arrange a meeting to take notes to create a report which will be checked by a student before proceeding.
- 5.1.5 Upon receipt of the email, the DSL will alert the Head of Finance & HR. In their absence of or if the report concerns the Head of Finance & HR then the report should be made to the Chief Operations Officer.-
- 5.1.6 The Head of Finance & HR will then investigate under the terms and timescales set out in the "Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure".
- 5.1.7 The DSL will support the students throughout the process and ensure relevant safeguards are in place during the investigation. The DSL will also follow the safeguarding policy to support academic responsibilities.
- 5.1.8 It is normally the Reporting Party's decision whether or not to report a crime to the police. However, in some circumstances, it is a legal requirement for the School to report incidents to the police, for example in relation to the protection of children or safeguarding of other vulnerable persons.

In addition, circumstances may arise where failure to report a matter to the police may be against the public interest or the interest of the School community, for example, when significant violence has been used which may subsequently put the reporting party or others at risk. In such a case, the Head of Finance & Human Resources and Registrar, in consultation with the CEO and/or the Chair of the Board, will make the decision whether the matter should be reported to the police, taking into account any potential harm to the reporting student from unauthorised disclosure, including further

distress to the student.

- 5.1.9 The School recognises that it is not placed to undertake a criminal investigation. It will, however, cooperate fully with any associated police investigation and subsequent legal proceedings. The School may also undertake separate disciplinary proceedings where such measures are indicated by the behaviours and circumstances. The School will not undertake any investigations or actions which may hamper any police investigation. Therefore, disciplinary proceedings will normally be placed on hold once the police are involved.
- 5.1.10 A decision by the Police or Crown Prosecution Service to take no further action in relation to a criminal matter or an acquittal at a trial does not preclude the School from taking action under this policy and does not mean the Reporting Party has made a vexatious or malicious report.
- 5.1.11 The School does not have the legal investigatory powers of the Police, and cannot determine criminal guilt. The internal process cannot be regarded as a substitute for a Police investigation or criminal prosecution.
- 5.1.12 In all cases, if the Reporting Party requires immediate medical attention, the emergency services should be called on 999.

5.2 Student allegation against student (anonymous)

- 5.2.1 Anonymous reports can also be submitted via the sexual harassment dropbox which is sent to the DSL and the Head of Finance & HR. It is encouraged that dates, times, locations and any evidence is included in the complaint.
- 5.2.2 The Head of Finance & HR will make a determination as to which further steps are appropriate in the case of an anonymous complaint.
- 5.2.3 It is important to highlight that direct reports are encouraged as effective action is limited with anonymous complaints.

5.3 Student allegation against staff member (named report)

- 5.3.1 Students should report incidents to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- 5.3.2 Reports can be made in person to the DSL or by emailing studentsupport@lis.ac.uk.
- 5.3.3 When emailing, the student should highlight that they would like to make a sexual harassment complaint.
- 5.3.4 Upon receipt of the email, the DSL will alert the Head of Finance & HR.
- 5.3.5 The DSL will then arrange a meeting to take notes in order to create a report which will be checked by the student before proceeding.
- 5.3.6 The Head of Finance & HR will then investigate under the terms and timescales set out in the "Staff Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure".
- 5.3.7 The DSL will support the student throughout the process and ensure relevant safeguards are in place during the investigation. The DSL will also follow the safeguarding policy to support academic responsibilities.

5.4 Student allegation against staff (anonymous)

- 5.4.1 Anonymous reports can also be submitted via a dropbox which is sent to the DSL and the Head of Finance & HR. It is encouraged that dates, times, locations and any evidence is included in the complaint.
- 5.4.2 The Head of Finance & HR will make a determination as to which further steps are appropriate in the case of an anonymous complaint.
- 5.4.3 It is important to highlight that direct reports are encouraged as effective action is limited with anonymous complaints.

6. Training

- 6.1 All staff and students will receive Sexual Harassment training which will be refreshed annually.
- 6.2 The Head of Finance & HR and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will undertake Level 3 Safeguarding training which will be refreshed annually.

7. Personal relationships between Staff and Students

- 7.1 We are committed to protecting students from any actual or potential conflict of interest and/or abuse of power that may arise from intimate personal relationships with staff.
- 7.2 Personal relationships between staff and students are prohibited. Staff must therefore not enter into a romantic or sexual relationship with a registered student at the School.
- 7.3 In the event that a relationship pre-exists then the staff member must inform their line manager so that any conflict of interest can be appropriately managed.
- 7.4 Students are obliged to report to the Head of Finance & Human Resources, or in their absence, the Chief Operating Officer if a relationship with a staff member already exists.

8. Non-disclosure agreements

- 8.1 The School will not use non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) in relation to complaints of sexual harassment, abuse, misconduct, or other forms of harassment and bullying.

9. Monitoring and Review

- 9.1 This policy will be reviewed annually by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

Appendix 1 – Related Legislation

The Equality Act 2010 provides protection for everyone from discrimination and makes it unlawful to harass or discriminate against someone on the grounds of the nine protected characteristics of age, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy & maternity, marriage & civil partnership, disability, gender, and gender reassignment. The legislation defines harassment as ‘unwanted conduct’ including that of a sexual nature, which has “the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment”.

Other key legislation that provides protection under this policy includes:

- i. The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – pursue a course of conduct which amounts to harassment which includes the offence of stalking
- ii. Criminal Justice Act – harassment can be a criminal offence and give rise to a civil claim
- iii. Health and Safety Act 1974 – the provision of a safe working environment
- iv. Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1995 – anti-social and criminal behaviour including matters such as obscene communications
- v. Human Rights Act 1998 - sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that everyone in the UK is entitled to
- vi. Telecommunications Act 1984 – improper use of public telecommunications system, such as sending messages that are grossly offensive, indecent, menacing or knowing false
- vii. Malicious Communications Act 1998 – sending communications which conveys indecent or grossly offensive, threatening or information that is known to be false.
- viii. Office of Students: Prevent and address harassment and sexual misconduct.