

Misconduct Policy (Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination and Sexual Violence)

1.0 Introduction and background

- 1.1 The University of Northampton is committed to ensuring an environment which values and respects the rights and dignity of all members of the University community. It is committed to an environment that is free from any forms of bullying, harassment, discrimination or violence and in which unacceptable behaviours are actively challenged and addressed.
- 1.2 The University has a deep commitment to ensuring all students are treated in an equitable way and that the diversity of its student body is valued, protected and supported in line with its [Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#).
- 1.3 Any forms of bullying, harassment, discrimination, or violence can have an extremely negative and lasting impact on individuals and on the broader University community. As well as preventing students from achieving their potential, such behaviour can jeopardise the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of those affected.
- 1.4 The negative impact of this behaviour can result in our community members feeling humiliated, unsafe, stressed, nervous, vulnerable, depressed, and unable to engage with work or studies.
- 1.5 The University expects all relationships and interactions to be grounded in mutual respect, open communication and clear consent and this policy is based on these principles and practices.
- 1.6 The University will strive to ensure that those implementing this policy approach disclosures of any forms of bullying, harassment, discrimination, or violence sensitively, impartially and with discretion. It will also seek to work with external experts to enhance the implementation and effectiveness of its approach to instances of any forms of bullying, harassment, discrimination, or violence.
- 1.7 The University is committed to supporting any student who has been the victim of any form of bullying, harassment, discrimination, or violence from another student, a member of staff or an individual not connected with the University. Where a disclosure or report of bullying, harassment, discrimination, or violence has been made the University will take steps to ensure the reporting party's physical safety and to facilitate their access to specialist support and academic advice services within the University and / or externally.

2.0 Purpose and Scope

- 2.1 The purpose of this Policy is to ensure the University community is afforded a safe and positive environment in which to work and study.
- 2.2 The Policy makes clear behaviours that are unacceptable and what constitutes bullying, harassment, discrimination, or violence.
- 2.3 This Policy covers face-to-face actions as well as those taking place through non-face-to-face media including any form of correspondence, telephone-based communications, Virtual Learning Environments (e.g. NILE), social media and publications as they affect University of Northampton students.
- 2.4 The Policy provides framework of support for students who feel they have been subjected to any type of bullying, harassment, discrimination, or violence. Student support is available at all stages of the process; before a formal disclosure, during the investigation and following the investigation/panel outcome/s.
- 2.5 The Policy provides a mechanism by which complaints related to any forms of bullying, harassment, discrimination, or violence can be addressed in a timely manner.
- 2.5 The Policy sets out how any forms of bullying, harassment, discrimination, or violence disclosures and reports are managed in the following situations:
- by a current student on another current student;
 - by a current student on a current member of staff. Workers not directly employed by the University (e.g. contractors) are not included in this policy but a referral may be made to the employer of a contractor named in any allegation;
 - where a member of staff is also a current student, the Academic Registrar and Director of HR will decide if this policy or the Staff Misconduct Policy applies.
- 2.6 Disclosures and reports made under this policy are not limited to University premises or the immediate geography of the University. It extends to incidents that take place both on and off University premises and venues used for University purposes.
- 2.7 Where a current student has been the victim of bullying, harassment, discrimination, or violence but the responding party is not a current student

at the University nor a current staff member, only the sections of this policy related to supporting the reporting party will apply.

2.8 This policy contributes to the University's compliance with its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 which identifies the following Protected Characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The University will treat all students and staff fairly and equitably regardless of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religious or political beliefs, disability, marital status, pregnancy or maternity, family responsibility and socio-economic standing, membership of professional associations or trade unions, or any other category where discrimination cannot be reasonably justified as determined by legislation.

2.9 The University is committed to equality and valuing the diversity of all its students. It will seek to ensure that no requirements or conditions are imposed that could disadvantage students on any of the above grounds unless justifiable by means of achieving a legitimate aim. The University aims to create an environment that enables all students to fulfil their potential without unnecessary barriers, including behaviour by other students that disrupts or disturbs study.

2.10 The scope of this policy covers the following groups of students:

- All students directly registered with and enrolled on the University's programmes of study and studying at the University's campus or via Distance Learning – the whole policy applies.
- All students directly registered with the University and enrolled on one of its programmes of study and studying at one of the University's partner institutions – the partner is responsible for conducting the investigation. A student then has the right to refer the case to the University for consideration if the student is dissatisfied with the outcomes of the initial consideration by the partner.

- All students enrolled on University programmes of study but directly registered with one of the University's partner institutions – it is expected that the partner institution will provide a comparable policy owned and implemented by them.

3.0 Definitions

- 3.1 Bullying – repeatedly and intentionally hurting an individual/s by another individual/s, where there is an imbalance of power in the relationships. It can be physical, verbal or psychological.
- 3.2 Harassment – unwanted illegal behaviour towards an individual that causes mental or emotional distress. This could be repeated unwanted contact without reasonable cause, insults, threats, touching and/or offensive language.
- 3.3 Discrimination – Treating an individual/s unfairly or differently to how others are treated because of their age, disabilities, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religious or other beliefs, sex or sexual orientation.
- 3.4 Violence – extremely forceful actions that are intended to hurt individuals physically or cause damage to property.
- 3.5 Sexual Violence – any sexual activity or act (in-person or online) that is unwanted or involves one or more of the following; pressure, manipulation, force, threats, deception, intimidation and bullying.
- 3.6 Consent – the agreement to participate in a sexual act where the individual has both the freedom and capacity to make that decision. Consent cannot be assumed on the basis of previous sexual experience or previously given consent, or from the absence of complaint. Consent may be withdrawn at any time.
- 3.7 Freedom to consent – for consent to be present, the individual has to freely engage in a sexual act. Consent cannot be inferred from a lack of verbal or physical resistance. Consent is not present when submission by an unwilling participant results from the exploitation of power, or coercion or force.
- 3.8 Coercion or Force – includes any physical or emotional harm or threat of physical or emotional harm which would reasonably place an individual in fear of immediate or future harm, with the result that the individual is compelled to engage in a sexual act.
- 3.9 Capacity to consent – Free consent cannot be given if the individual does not have the capacity to give consent. Incapacitation may occur when an

individual is asleep, unconscious, semi-conscious, or in a state of intermittent consciousness, or any other state of unawareness that a sexual act may be occurring. Incapacitation may also occur on account of a mental or developmental disability, or as the result of alcohol or drug use.

- 3.10 Alcohol and/or Drug Use – Incapacitation arising from alcohol or drug consumption should be evaluated on the basis of how the alcohol/drugs have affected the individual; signs of incapacitation may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following: slurred speech, unsteady gait, bloodshot eyes, dilated pupils, unusual behaviour, blacking out, a lack of full control over physical movements, a lack of awareness of circumstances or surroundings, and/or an inability to communicate effectively. Intoxication is never a defence for committing an act of Sexual Violence and Misconduct, or for failing to obtain consent. If there is any doubt as to the level or extent of one’s own or the other individual’s incapacitation, the safest approach is to not engage in a sexual act.
- 3.11 Some examples of unwanted behaviour based on the definitions above (3.1-3.10) are listed below, however the list is not exhaustive. All of these could take place in person, by letter, telephone, videocall, text, email or other electronic and/or social media mechanism.
- Physical assault
 - Threats of physical assault
 - Offensive conversations, texts, calls or social media posts
 - Threat of offensive conversations, texts, calls or social media posts
 - Verbal abuse/insults
 - Abusive gestures and offensive ‘jokes’ or ‘banter’
 - Racial slurs
 - LGBTQ+ insults
 - Faith-based insults or slurs
 - Engaging or attempting to engage in a sexual act with another individual without consent.
 - Sexually touching another person without their consent.
 - Conduct of a sexual nature which creates (or could create) an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for others including making unwanted remarks of a sexual nature.
 - Inappropriately showing sexual organs to another person.
 - Repeatedly following another person without good reason.
 - Recording and/or sharing images or recordings of another person without their consent.
 - Arranging or participating in events aimed at degrading or humiliating those who have experienced sexual harassment, misconduct or violence, for example inappropriately themed social events or initiations.

- 3.12 Reporting Party – the student who has made the sexual harassment, misconduct or violence report.
- 3.13 Responding Party – the person against whom the sexual harassment, misconduct or violence report has been made.
- 3.14 First Disclosure – the act of an individual disclosing an incident of sexual harassment, misconduct or violence for the first time.
- 3.15 Informal Report – the act of an individual speaking to an Sexual Violence Liaison Officer, Personal Academic Tutor or Student Support Officer about their experiences in order to access support, without necessarily wishing for that report to be investigated any further.
- 3.16 Formal Report – the act of an individual making an official complaint against a fellow student or member of staff.
- 3.17 Anonymous Report – the act of an individual reporting an incident involving a fellow student or member of staff without including any identifying information about themselves.
- 3.18 For the purposes of this policy, where an individual role is named this refers to those roles or a nominee.

4.0 Principles

- 4.1 All students are entitled to participate in University life without fear of intimidation, discrimination, victimisation or bullying behaviour. Respect is about harnessing an environment where every individual is valued, supported by others and where harassment of any kind is known to be unacceptable.
- 4.3 Taking action to reduce the incidence of bullying, harassment, discrimination, or violence can involve difficult decisions and balancing many viewpoints. People of all kinds can misuse their power or intimidate others, sometimes unintentionally. Behaviours that are acceptable in some contexts and for some cultures can be experienced as threatening or inappropriate in other situations. Being tolerant and embracing diversity in university life may involve challenging unspoken assumptions and helping peers and colleagues to understand the impact of their behaviour on others.
- 4.4 However, people in some groups are more likely than others to experience discrimination and abuse. As well as contributing to compliance with legislative obligations, addressing bullying, harassment and victimisation

contributes to our vision of creating more equal life chances through access to higher education and personal development.

- 4.5 The University opposes all forms of bullying, harassment, discrimination, or violence and does not tolerate it. This means actively challenging such behaviours whenever they occur, not leaving it to someone else to act or speak out. Students and staff are expected to help prevent bullying and harassment by reporting incidents they experience or observe. In turn the University will always investigate and take action, under the terms of this Policy and related policies and procedures.
- 4.6 In addition to [The Equality Act 2010](#), public authorities, including universities, are subject to the [Public sector equality duty \(April 2011\)](#) which means universities must give due regard to the areas listed below. This duty provides an additional incentive, should one be needed, to act on and seek to prevent intimidating behaviour directed towards members of minority groups and vulnerable people.
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by The Equality Act 2010;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it;
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it;

To ensure transparency, and to assist in the performance of this duty, the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 require public authorities, named on , to publish:

- equality objectives, at least every four years (from 6th April 2012);
 - information to demonstrate their compliance with the public sector equality duty (from 31st January 2012)
- 4.7 The following principles will be followed throughout this Policy:
- The University will act fairly and proportionately when considering each case.
 - The University has an obligation to both the reporting and the responding parties. As such, the University will seek to ensure appropriate support and advice is available to both parties in the application of this policy, both internally and externally as relevant.
 - Where decisions are required, these will be made on matters of fact to the standard of proof of 'on the balance of probabilities'.

- In determining whether a student is culpable of a breach of this policy, the University shall have due regard to the student's actions and their understanding of the importance of these actions.
- Anyone who makes a disclosure or report that, due to its nature, is subsequently considered through this Policy may be entitled to know the final outcome.
- A member of staff involved in considering a case under this Policy will consider whether there is any evidence that a reporting or responding student is subject to pressure, coercion or exploitation that may result in them being radicalised. If there is any evidence that this may be the case, the member of staff, following discussions with the Academic Registrar, will follow the requirements of the PREVENT duty guidelines. Any consideration under the PREVENT duty guidelines will be undertaken in parallel with this policy.

4.8 The University will encourage and support a student who makes a disclosure or report of sexual harassment, misconduct or violence to:

- Access support via a Sexual Violence Liaison Officer (SVLO).
- Make an informed decision about reporting the incident(s) to the police or Sexual Assault Referral Centre where this is appropriate, to consider whether a potential criminal act has occurred.
- Where the responding party is also a student or is a member of staff, make an informed decision about making a formal report about the incident(s) to the University, for the University to consider whether a breach of the Student or Staff Code of Conduct has occurred.

The University will respect the wishes and decisions of the reporting party.

4.9 Notwithstanding the principle that the University will respect the wishes and decisions of the reporting party, there may be circumstances where the University is required to take action in response to a disclosure e.g. an informal report of sexual harassment. This will be where the perceived risk to others is of such gravity that the University would not be fulfilling its wider responsibilities if it did not take action. In such cases, the action taken by the University would be to report to the police and/or to instigate disciplinary action against the responding party. If the University determined that such action was required, the disclosing party would be informed and supported appropriately.

4.10 In any case where a student has come forward to disclose or report bullying, harassment, discrimination, or violence the Academic Registrar or delegated nominee, will undertake a risk assessment to determine any actions that the University should take to reduce risk for the individual,

others or the broader University. This risk assessment will take account of the University's responsibilities to the disclosing or reporting party, the responding party, the broader University community and the organisation.

Possible actions taken following a risk assessment may include, for example:

- That the responding party comply with specific conditions, including agreeing not to contact another student or students. The consequence of any breach of these conditions may result in escalation to the steps outlined below.
- That the responding party may be suspended from academic activities (either partially or fully, and potentially including offsite academic activities as well) and/or excluded from any or all of the University's facilities, grounds and premises, until such a time as any criminal proceedings and/or University investigations have concluded. .

- 4.11 It should be noted that any precautionary suspension or exclusion does not indicate that the responding party is presumed guilty of any breach. Due regard must be given to the possible effect on the responding student's ability to progress academically, and any negative effects mitigated where it is possible to do so. Due regard will also be given to the University's responsibilities towards the responding party during the course of any suspension or exclusion, with access to support offered as appropriate.
- 4.12 The University will share relevant information relating to precautionary action and risk assessment recommendations or measures placed upon the responding party with the reporting party. 'Relevant' information is that which it is reasonably necessary to share to maintain the wellbeing and safety of the reporting party.
- 4.13 Where the reporting party decides to progress with a formal report, the University will follow the investigation process detailed in this policy. The reporting and responding parties will be supported through this process. Staff involved in investigating such cases will have due regard to the sensitivities involved.
- 4.14 Where an investigation is underway then the responding party and reporting party are prohibited from having any contact with one another until the investigation has been concluded and the outcome confirmed.
- 4.15 Where a report of bullying, harassment, discrimination, or violence is made by a student to the police, the University may be required to suspend any investigation of its own until the criminal investigation and legal proceedings have concluded. However, the fact that the police are unable, unwilling or not yet able to proceed does not automatically preclude

the University from progressing its own investigation. The University may also continue its own investigations alongside police investigations where it is determined that it can do so without prejudicing those investigations.

- 4.16 Where the University has suspended its investigations due to a criminal investigation, the responding party should be reminded that, if possible, they should keep the University informed of any progress in the criminal proceedings and/or change in status regarding their case. The Student and Academic Services Administrator will review the case monthly and will make recommendations to the Academic Registrar if any action is required during this review period.
- 4.17 Where the University has suspended its investigations due to a criminal investigation and once those proceedings have concluded the Academic Registrar will review the case and determine next steps:
- Where the student has been convicted of a criminal offence, the conviction shall be taken as conclusive evidence that the offence for which the student was convicted has occurred; no further investigation into that offence shall be required by the University. The University will then use this Policy to determine the impact of that conviction on the convicted student. The full range of penalties as set out below will be available.
 - Notwithstanding this, the University may also still wish to investigate other matters if there are outstanding matters of concern to the University that have not been addressed through criminal proceedings. This investigation will proceed as per 5.0.
 - Where the student has been acquitted the University will take account of the decision of the court. This does not prevent the University from undertaking its own investigation as per 5.0 if there are grounds to do so. The same is true where the police decide to take no further action in a case.
- 4.18 The possibility of malicious or spurious complaints is recognised. Any complaints identified as such will be dealt with under the University's Student Disciplinary Policy.
- 4.19 The University recognises the importance of privacy in cases where sexual harassment, bullying, discrimination or violence is disclosed. At the same time, third party or anonymous disclosures of bullying, harassment, discrimination, or violence against named individuals cannot normally be investigated. Moreover, whilst confidentiality will be maintained on a 'need to know' basis and in accordance with Data Protection legislation, the University does reserve the right to share information in exceptional circumstances where disclosure is necessary to protect an individual or the

wider University community from harm or to prevent a crime from taking place.

- 4.20 Records will be kept in relation to the nature and outcome of the Misconduct process, the time taken to deal with it and EDI statistics such as gender and ethnic origin of complainant(s). All documents relating to the formal stages of the procedure will be managed in line with current Data Protection legislation and both the [University's Privacy Policy](#) and its [Records Management Policy](#).
- 4.16 As part of the University's annual quality assurance and improvement cycle the Academic Registrar will provide an anonymised report to Senate (for further dissemination) of the overall statistics/cases presented.
- 4.17 As part of the University's desire to be transparent it will publish anonymised statistics on cases considered under this policy in the Student Newsletter each semester.

5.0 Investigating a Formal Report of Bullying, Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Discrimination or Violence

- 5.1 The process to be followed in dealing with reports under this policy will be at the discretion of Academic Registrar and will depend upon the circumstances of the incident. Normally this process will include:
- An investigation into the situation.
 - One or more meetings with the reporting and responding parties.
 - One or more meetings with witnesses to the incident, where relevant.
 - One of more case conferences involving relevant university staff.
- 5.2 The Academic Registrar will appoint a member of staff trained to conduct an investigation of the nature presented e.g. sexual violence, racial discrimination. The investigation is designed to consider the seriousness of the incident, any wider risk posed, the perceptions of all parties involved in the incident and the impact that the incident has had upon the reporting student.
- 5.3 Expected timings for the investigation process are listed below. However, it is noted that there will be circumstances where these timings change. The investigator will make best endeavours to adhere to the expected timings or to communicate any delays to relevant parties.
- 5.4 This investigation is likely to incorporate:
- Meetings with the reporting student. The student will be informed of any meeting in writing at least 5 days in advance, including the purpose of

the meeting and the name and contact details of the Investigating Officer. The student will be provided with a copy of this Procedure. The student will be asked to notify the University in advance whether they will be attending and informed that they are permitted to bring a companion and/or Student Union colleague with them to the meeting for support. (see 8.2 and 8.13 below) In cases of sexual misconduct the reporting student may wish to be accompanied by an SVLO too. The process followed will allow the student a full opportunity to describe the incident, explain the impact this has had on their wellbeing and discuss any measures that they would find helpful to be able to engage fully in their studies.

- Meetings with the responding party. They will be informed of any meeting in writing at least 5 days in advance, including the purpose of the meeting and the name and contact details of the Investigating Officer. The responding party will be provided with a copy of this Procedure. The responding party will be asked to notify the University in advance whether they will be attending and the identity and role of any person(s) who will be accompanying and/or representing them at the meeting. The process followed will allow the respondent a full opportunity to respond to the accusations.
 - Meeting and information sharing with the Students' Union where appropriate, e.g. the SU are required to conduct further investigations on behalf of the Investigating Officer. It may also be necessary to share outcomes from a panel with SU where relevant e.g. the responding student is a member of an SU society.
 - If the respondent(s) chooses not to attend the meeting they will be offered the opportunity to provide a written statement.
 - If the respondent(s) does not respond to the invitation to attend a meeting and/ or submit a written statement within 5 working days then the investigation will continue without their attendance/ input.
- 5.5 The investigator should aim to complete the investigation process within 8 working weeks of the initial report. Any delay to this will be communicated to the reporting and responding parties and the reason for the delay explained as fully as possible.
- 5.6 The investigator will present their report and proposed recommendations to a panel of Investigating Officers. This panel, usually comprising of 3 members including the Chair, will comprise University staff and/or external professionals experts in their respective fields. At least one member of the panel will be trained in the relevant area/s under discussion e.g. sexual violence, racism, homophobia, bullying, hate crime etc. All members will of the panel will have undergone appropriate panel training.

5.7 The panel of Investigating Officers will consider the recommendations of the investigation and whether the actions proposed by the investigator are the most appropriate to be taken or whether an alternative action is most appropriate. Recommendations may include (but are not limited to):

- No further action be taken.
- Adjustments to be put in place to limit contact between the reporting and responding parties.
- The responding party is required to undertake a course and/ or other training to encourage positive behaviour change and awareness of issues surrounding consent, sexual misconduct, harassment, bullying, racism, homophobia, as appropriate.
- The responding party is required to provide a written apology and/ or reflective written exercise.
- The responding party be referred to another policy – normally the Fitness to Practise Policy, the Student Disciplinary Policy or Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
- The responding party be withdrawn from placement, overseas study or other University related activity.
- The responding party be excluded from living in University Halls of Residence.
- The responding party be suspended for a stated period of time, with or without conditions for any subsequent return to study.
- The responding party is issued with a final written warning for a stated period of time and/ or the duration of their studies.
- A recommendation be made to the Vice Chancellor that the student's programme of study is terminated.

5.8 The panel will present their report and proposed recommendations to the Academic Registrar for final authorisation.

5.9 A copy of the original report and summary notes of any meetings should be made and kept securely and centrally by the Academic Registrar. In the event of any further incidents involving the reporting and responding parties, these notes may be considered in future investigations.

6.0 Appeals

6.1 A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal in writing to the Academic Registrar within ten working days of the outcome being communicated. The appeal may only be based on one or more of the following grounds:

- That the University has failed to follow its own Policy adequately.
- That the student has material new information/evidence which was not reasonably available before.

The student must submit a full and final statement of the grounds for the appeal accompanied by evidence if relevant.

- 6.2 The Academic Registrar will consider the appeal submission and determine whether there are valid grounds to appeal.
- 6.3 Where valid grounds have been determined and the student is appealing against suspension or termination, the Vice Chancellor (VC) will consider the appeal. The VC will either dismiss or uphold the appeal. If the appeal is upheld they will:
- Refer the matter back to an earlier level of this Policy for reconsideration (e.g. if the correct process had not been followed);
 - Refer the matter back to an earlier level of this Policy for fresh reconsideration (e.g. if material new information or evidence has been made available);
 - Determine an alternative outcome from the list in 5.7 above.

The outcome of the appeal, together with reasons, will be notified to the student in writing within seven working days of determination of the appeal. This decision is final and will conclude this procedure. A "Completion of Procedures" letter will be issued to the student. Further information on procedures for external and independent review can be obtained from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education website (www.oiahe.org.uk).

- 6.4 Where valid grounds have been determined and the student is appealing against an outcome other than suspension or termination, a Dean or Deputy Dean (not from the student's Faculty) will consider the appeal. They will either dismiss or uphold the appeal. If the appeal is upheld they will:
- Refer the matter back to an earlier level of this Policy for reconsideration (e.g. if the correct process had not been followed);
 - Refer the matter back to an earlier level of this Policy for fresh reconsideration (e.g. if material new information or evidence has been made available);
 - Determine an alternative outcome from the list in 5.7 above.
- 6.5 The outcome of the appeal, together with reasons, will be notified to the student in writing within seven working days of determination of the appeal. This decision is final and will conclude this Procedure. A "Completion of Procedures" letter will be issued to the student. Further information on procedures for external and independent review can be obtained from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education oiahe.org.uk. This is a free service offered to students by an independent body set up to review student complaints about

Universities. The OIA will usually ask for a Completion of Procedures letter to prove all internal processes have been exhausted.

7.0 Links to related UN Policies/Guidance/Regulations

- 7.1 Student Complaints Policy
- 7.2 Student Disciplinary Policy
- 7.3 Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- 7.4 Fitness to Practice Policy
- 7.5 Health, Wellbeing and Fitness to Study Policy
- 7.6 Campus Security Policy
- 7.7 Guidance for staff and for students on cases of sexual harassment, misconduct and violence.

8.0 Student Support and Advice

8.1 This may be an anxious time for the student/s involved in the Misconduct Policy process. The University is aware of this additional strain will impact students differently. A number of specialist teams are available to support students through this process.

8.2 The Students' Union are able to give confidential and independent advice and always ensure a non-judgemental approach. They also provide members of their team to accompany students to meetings and panels if needed. They can be contacted directly at su.advice@northampton.ac.uk

8.3 Students are also encouraged to contact the Student Support and Advice Team on studentsupportofficers@northampton.ac.uk where colleagues are available to offer support and signpost any other help that may prove useful e.g.

8.4 The University has members of staff called Sexual Violence Liaison Officers (SVLOs), who have received specialist training and can provide sensitive, professional support to students who have experienced sexual assault and sexual violence. This service is available to students whether or not they have reported what has happened to them to the police or University.

8.5 SVLOs work within a strict set of boundaries and a code of confidentiality. They are not counsellors or legal advisers, but they can help students access appropriate support to meet individual needs. An SVLO can listen and discuss the options available through external services and within the University. An SVLO can also liaise with these external services and university staff where required and will provide ongoing 'wrap around' care and support.

8.6 An SLVO can help with:

- Navigating systems and resources within the university and the community
- Understanding the reporting options available to you
- Referrals to external specialist services such as the local Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) – making an appointment on your behalf, helping with the cost of transport and going with you if you would like additional support
- Referrals to specialist counselling support
- Information about university policies, procedures, and managing the impact on your studies

8.7 The SVLO team are part of the Student Support & Advice team and are accessible during office hours (9am-5pm) Monday-Friday and can be contacted via email at SVLO@northampton.ac.uk and additional information from the University's website can be found [here](#).

8.8 [Serenity](#) – Northampton Sarc is an NHS sexual assault referral centre offering medical, practical and emotional support to anyone who has been sexually assaulted or raped. They have specially trained paediatricians / Forensic Nurse Examiners (FNE) and support workers to support students. www.serenitynorthants.co.uk 03000 270 040(Day) 01604 601 713 (Night)

8.9 Here is the [link](#) to the Government's webpages for reporting sexual violence and sexual assault

8.10 The University's Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals team are also able to help students on any aspect of this policy and related procedures scca@northampton.ac.uk

8.11 Students are also encouraged to seek support from external service providers as relevant to the student e.g. mental health services and GPs.

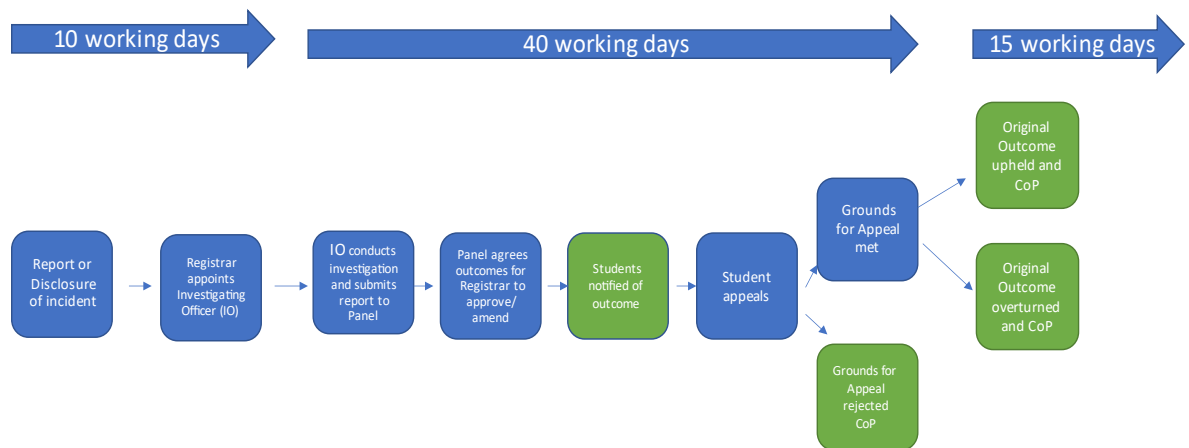
8.12 At any stage of the Misconduct Policy process students may choose to have an SU representative (8.2 above) and/or companion accompany them to the meetings.

8.13 A companion may be a friend on their course or a friend from outside of the University or indeed a relative. The companion's role is to provide moral support for the student. The companion and/or SU representative cannot answer questions on behalf of the student but can ask the panel questions on behalf of the student. The student can however confer with their SU representative and/or companion during the course of the hearing or

meeting, for example, before responding to any question from the panel or investigator.

- 8.14 As the Appeal Panel is part of University’s internal arrangements, and is not a legal process, formal legal representation is not helpful or appropriate.
- 8.15 Students returning to studies following a period of suspension with either full or partial withdrawal of privileges will be encouraged to work closely with their Personal Tutor and/or the Student Support and Advice Team on studentsupportofficers@northampton.ac.uk to ensure they are signposted to the most appropriate help e.g. academic catch-up, accommodation, mental wellbeing.

9.0 Flowchart summarising the Misconduct Policy and Procedure



CoP = Completion of Procedures letter. This indicates the end of the University’s internal procedures and enables the student to pursue the matter via the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (oiahe.org.uk).

10.0 Policy Governance

The table shows who is responsible in the University for keeping this policy updated and the timeline for ensuring this work is completed.

Policy Title	Misconduct Policy (Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination and Violence)
Policy Owner	Academic Registrar
Principal Contact	Academic Registrar
Dissemination & Implementation Plan:	Via AQSC , SEC and Senate for approval Via Web, and FSEC's
Date of initial committee approval	date unknown
Date of Senate approval	unknown
Date of last annual update	June 2021
Proposed date of next annual update	March 2024
Date of last full review	March 2023
Proposed date of next full review	March 2025
Version number and date	1.3 March 2023