

How to respond if bullying or harassment is reported to you

Guidelines for managers

These are brief guidelines to help you to know what to do if bullying or harassment is reported to you* and are aimed at achieving resolution informally. They do not replace the [UCL guidelines](#)** that have further detail and include the formal process should informal resolution not be possible.

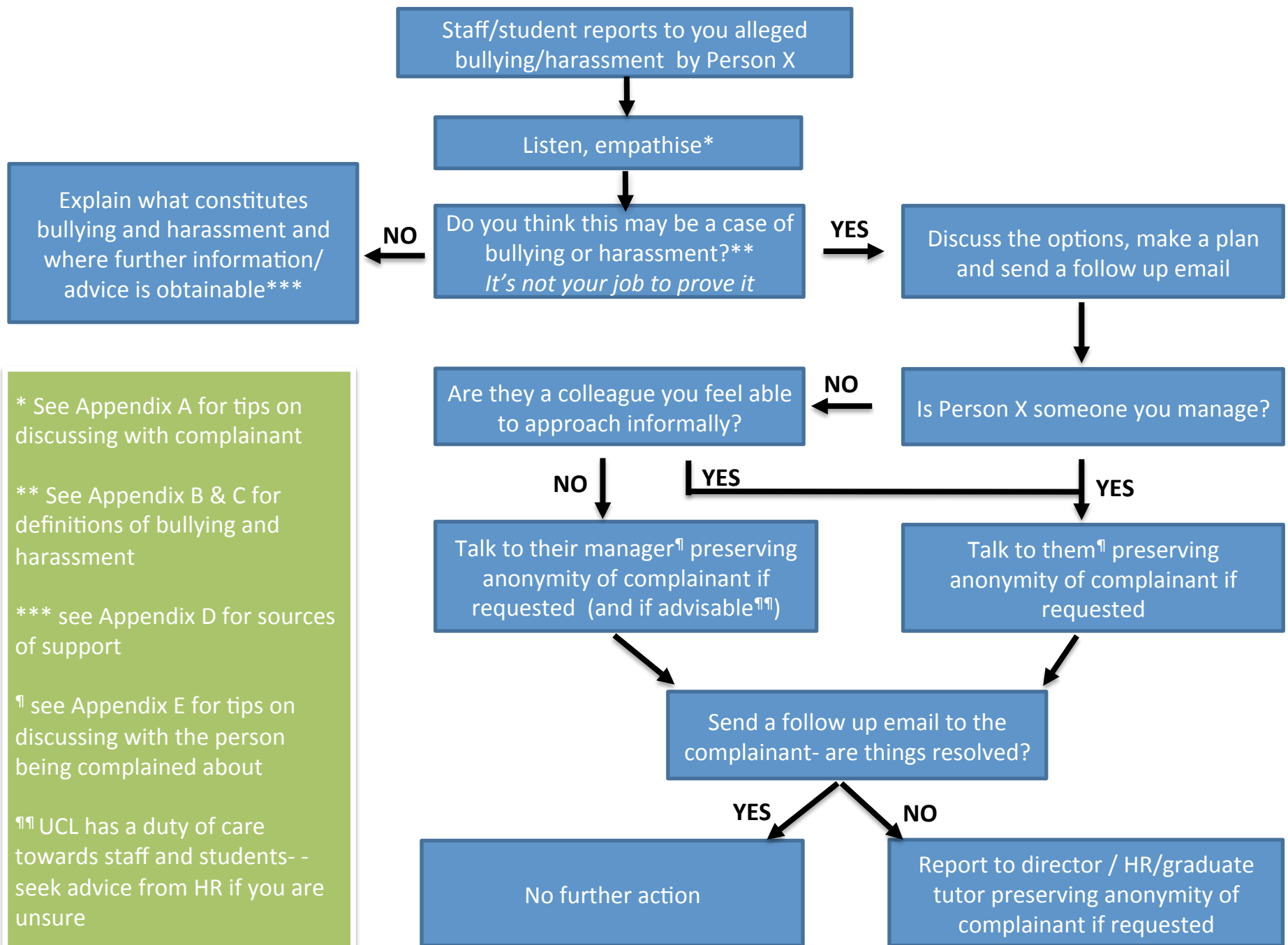
The flow chart on the next slide covers most situations but remember:

Doing nothing is not an option - it condones harassment – protecting a bully is not a strategy for protecting the department or institution

** If this is a repeat occurrence or gross misconduct*

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/sites/human-resources/files/disciplinary-appendix-a-misconduct-and-gross-misconduct.pdf>, please refer the person directly to HR (Gill Tunstall)

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/equality-diversity-inclusion/dignity-work/dignity-work-statement>



* See Appendix A for tips on discussing with complainant

** See Appendix B & C for definitions of bullying and harassment

*** see Appendix D for sources of support

† see Appendix E for tips on discussing with the person being complained about

†† UCL has a duty of care towards staff and students- - seek advice from HR if you are unsure

Appendix A

Informally responding to complaints

- Be supportive, actively listen, be non-prejudicial
- Do not make promises about confidentiality: UCL has a Duty of Care
- Explain that the informal process is about resolution – not proof or substantiation.
- The aim is to prevent the issues reoccurring, not ‘punishing’ the respondent
- Explain the options, *i.e.* addressing the matter directly with the respondent, or more subtle interventions
- Explain that a formal complaint can be made at any time – seeking informal resolution is not a barrier to a formal complaint later
- Be clear about when you think informal resolution is inappropriate
- Do not over-promise a result – investigations can be difficult and multi-faceted
- Follow up the meeting in writing. For example...
 - *I confirm we met yesterday.*
 - *We discussed options for resolution of this issue and you indicated that you would like to pursue an informal resolution.*
 - *We agreed that I/we/you would [speak to your colleague, etc..]*
 - *Following this, if the matter hasn’t been resolved you can make a formal complaint at any time [link to policy],*
 - *I am available to discuss the matter further at any time*

Definitions of Bullying and Harassment

Harassment is: 'Unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual'

Equality Act 2010

Bullying has no formal legal definition but is usually characterised as: 'offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient'

Bullying does not have to be related to a protected characteristic, occurs from a position of strength (seniority, numbers, etc.), involves a pattern of behaviour and can entail excluding individuals.

Bullying versus Firm Management

Bullying

Sets unrealistic deadlines, constantly moves goalposts

Failure to support development plan

Refusing to listen

Perpetuates a blame culture

Threatens disciplinary action

Aggressive

Constant negative criticism

Criticises in front of colleagues

Deliberately ignoring an individual's contribution

Firm management

Sets realistic deadlines

Monitors achievement

Addresses issues

Gives and receives feedback

Insists on high standards, but is consistent and fair

Clear about own ideas but doesn't assume they are always right

Maintains confidentiality

Appendix D

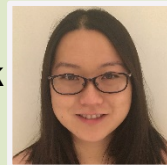
Support for staff and students

Departmental Equal Opportunity Liaison Officers

Gill Tunstall
020 7608 6955
g.tunstall@ucl.ac.uk



Louise Wong
louise.wong.12@ucl.ac.uk



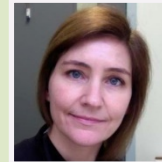
Student Mediator

Ruth Siddall
[www.ucl.ac.uk/
student-mediator](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/student-mediator)

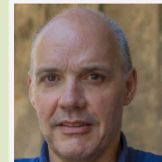


IoO Graduate Tutors

Jacqui van der Spuy
020 7608 4066
j.spuy@ucl.ac.uk



Karl Matter
020 7608 4014
k.matter@ucl.ac.uk

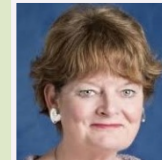


Virginia Calder
020 7608 6848
v.calder@ucl.ac.uk



Faculty Tutor

Julie Evans
020 3108 5099
julie.evans@ucl.ac.uk



Dignity at Work Advisors

[www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/
equality-diversity-inclusion/dignity-
work](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/equality-diversity-inclusion/dignity-work)

UCL Registry [www.ucl.ac.uk/students/
student-support-and-wellbeing](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/student-support-and-wellbeing)

UCLU Rights & Advice Service
[www.studentsunionucl.org/
help-and-advice](http://www.studentsunionucl.org/help-and-advice)

020 7679 2998

*UCL Staff & Student Support Service -
Care first*

0800 197 4510

Out of hours - Nightline
020 7631 0101

Local HR contact for advice and support: Gill Tunstall (g.tunstall@ucl.ac.uk)

By challenging inappropriate behaviours we can all play a role in ensuring that UCL is a harassment free zone.

Appendix E

Speaking to the person who is being complained about

- If the complaint is anonymous, you should protect the identity of the individual and only address the complaint in very general terms, either individually or in larger groups. For example:

“I’ve been made aware that there have been complaints about bullying in your team/research group. I cannot go into specifics. What is your perspective on this? Does everyone in your team understand the definition of harassment and bullying and its impact? Are you / they aware of UCL policy and the standard expected of employees, are you advised of the consequences if a complaint is investigated and upheld?”

- If not anonymous, use the **DESC** model:
 - **D**escribe the behaviour – say what, when, who, where – be specific
 - **E**xplain the effect –on others
 - **S**ay what you want to happen – be clear, polite but firm that action is needed
 - **C**ontract/consequences – aim for agreement, but if not willing be honest about consequences
- Explain that victimisation is serious misconduct