

# Anti-bullying Policy

## 1. Purpose statement

The IT University (ITU) is committed to encourage and maintain an inclusive and healthy working environment where every individual is treated equally and with respect. Bullying behaviour is not tolerated at ITU. The purpose of this policy is to guide ITU's approach to workplace bullying if it occurs. This policy applies to all employees who are subject to alleged bullying behaviour or any other behaviour that may be considered as breach of this policy.

It is important that all employees make an effort to ensure a healthy working environment at ITU, since workplace bullying not only influences the person exposed to the hurtful or degrading behaviour, but also the workplace at large. Studies have shown that bullying in a working environment can be a result from low satisfaction with leadership, low work control, poor job content, and a negative social environment as well as a negative social climate.<sup>1</sup>

The legal basis for this policy can be found in appendix A.

## 2. What is bullying?

The Danish Working Environment Authority has the following definition:

*"Bullying is when one or more people, regularly and over a longer period - or repeatedly in an abusive way, expose an individual or a group to offending actions to which the victim perceive as hurtful or degrading. However, the offending actions only become bullying, when the victim is not able to defend him-/herself effectively against them".<sup>2</sup>*

Teasing that is perceived by both parties as good-natured is not bullying. Continuous teasing can however escalate into bullying.

## 3. Examples of bullying

Below is a non-exhaustive list of examples of bullying behavior:

- behaviour or language that intimidates, offends, degrades or humiliates
- discriminating behavior based on gender, age, physical ability, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity or national origin
- spreading misinformation or malicious rumors about someone behind his/her back
- making repeated inappropriate comments about a person's appearance, lifestyle, family, or culture
- regularly teasing someone and leaving someone in center of pranks or practical jokes
- purposefully excluding, isolating, or marginalizing a person from work activities
- withholding information essential to do a task properly

---

<sup>1</sup> Bullying and harassment at work and their relationship to work environment quality: an explorative study. Journal of work and organizational psychology 1994, Einarsen S, Raknes IB, Matthiesen SB.

<sup>2</sup> Danish Working Environment Authority, [www.arbejdstilsynet.dk](http://www.arbejdstilsynet.dk)

- assigning impossible tasks, meaningless tasks unrelated to the job, or giving someone the majority of unpleasant tasks
- sexual harassment, see separate Sexual Harassment Policy

#### **4. When boundaries are crossed**

Any relation or situation can lead to misunderstandings or different perceptions, hence comments or actions that one employee may laugh of could cause distress for someone else.

If comments or actions are not perceived as light-hearted or playful and boundaries are being crossed, the employee is encouraged to address the other part, hence to give the other part a chance to understand how a certain (potentially unintended) behavior is perceived.

By addressing and resolving undesirable or misunderstood behavior through open and honest dialogue, we demonstrate responsibility as well as human and collegial care.

#### **5. When bullying occurs**

All employees, whether subject to or witness to bullying, are encouraged to resolve the situation with least possible escalation if possible and reasonable. Otherwise, employees are expected to report to their immediate manager in order to resolve concerns at the earliest stage possible with the cooperation of the parties involved. If the report concerns the manager, employees are expected to go to HR or any working environment or trade union representative at ITU.

Managers, working environment or trade union representatives who observe or receive a report of bullying are expected to include HR for counselling.

All reporting of alleged bullying is taken seriously and treated with respect, discretion and integrity and will result in a plan of action suitable for the specific case in cooperation with the parties involved.

#### **6. Counselling for involved parties**

Employees who are subject to bullying will be offered professional counselling if necessary, e.g. via Falck Healthcare, to handle any stress which might have occurred in relation to the situation. <https://intranet.itu.dk/administrative-abc/c/counselling>.

#### **7. Evaluation of the policy**

Head of HR at ITU is responsible for ongoing review of the policy, including assessing new initiatives.

#### **8. Approval and commencement**

The policy is approved by M-CoSB on 13 September 2018 and takes effect from October 2018.

## Appendix A

### **Legislation and guidelines in relation to workplace bullying**

In section 9a on the Performance of Work in pursuant to the Danish Working Environment Act states that: *"In connection with the performance of work, it shall be ensured that the work does not involve a risk of physical or mental impairment to health as a result of bullying, including sexual harassment"*.

In section 1, subsection (5) of the Consolidation act on Equal Treatment of Men and Women as regards Access to Employment etc., it is stated that: *"Harassment shall be understood as taking place when any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct is exhibited in relation to one person's sex for the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment"*.

It is noted that certain cases of positive discrimination (or affirmative action) are allowed and regulated by the Danish law through a statutory instrument; *when a group of people is particularly underrepresented in an activity or field, initiatives to counter inequality are encouraged.*<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> the Executive Order on initiatives to promote gender equality (access to equal opportunities initiatives without exemption), [www.retsinformation.dk](http://www.retsinformation.dk)