

A Guide to Promoting a Mutually Respectful University Community

Introduction

The purpose of this guidance is to promote a shared understanding of what is an inclusive and supportive environment for the Teesside University community and provide practical guidance and information as a means of enabling this. The core principles and associated guidance are designed to complement, not replace, University, School, and Department policies and procedures, as well as the Student Protocol. These already exist and should continue to be used to deal with concerns around behaviour/conduct as necessary. This includes Codes of Professional Conduct where relevant. The guidance applies equally to face to face, telephone and all forms of electronic communication including social networking sites.

The guidance draws on current best practice across the university and is in 3 parts:

Part 1: Core Principles

This section outlines common, core principles for all students and staff. It may be used as a resource, a starting point when negotiating ground rules.

Part 2: Student Guidance

This section provides guidance for students on how they can promote mutual respect within the University community. Staff may also use this section to define/establish what they can reasonably expect from students.

Part 3: Staff Guidance

This section provides guidance for staff on how to promote mutual respect within the University Community. Students will also find this useful in terms of what they can reasonably expect from staff.

If required, information on University disciplinary procedures can be found at: <http://www.tees.ac.uk/policies> .

Part 1: Core Principles

These core principles have been designed to enhance the experience of all members of the university community, by promoting a safe, supportive and effective environment. They apply equally to face to face, telephone and all forms of electronic communication including social networking sites.

- ✓ **Be Respectful** – For example, ensure your interactions are always respectful and professionally conducted and University facilities are appropriately used.
- ✓ **Be Sensitive** – For example, be aware of your language and behaviour to ensure it respects others and recognises diversity.
- ✓ **Be Understanding** – For example, ensure there is mutual respect by listening to others (be aware your voice may be more easily heard in some venues than others).
- ✓ **Be Punctual** – For example, make sure you arrive, start and finish on time. Let the appropriate person know if you are delayed. To avoid disruption to others, late entry

to a session/appointment may not be possible.

- ✓ **Be There** – For example, actively participate to get the most out of the time available.
- ✓ **Be Prepared** – For example, make sure you have done the necessary preparatory work. If insufficient preparation has been done it may not be possible for the planned activity to take place. Students who have attempted but had difficulty with preparatory work should bring this to the attention of the relevant staff member.
- ✓ **Be Considerate** – For example, use mobile phones and electronic devices with an awareness of how this might impact on others.

Part 2: Student Guidance - Top Tips for Promoting a Mutually Respectful University Community

A reasonable and supportive approach from all students and staff is necessary to ensure a conducive learning experience. Therefore all students and staff have a shared responsibility for promoting a mutually respectful university community and positive learning environment.

You should:

- Familiarise yourself with the core principles (see Part 1)
- Familiarise yourself with Part 3 of this guidance.
- Contribute to the development and use of the core principles for activities you participate in. For example, you may request that a peer abides by the agreed core principles.
- Inform the relevant member of staff of inappropriate behaviour.
- Share ongoing concerns with the relevant person. For example, the course/school representative.
- Be aware of the associated University policies and procedures and any Professional Codes of Conduct that apply.

Other Sources of Support Available to You:

- Module Tutor
- Personal Tutor
- Module/Programme Leader
- Student Services
- Subject Librarian
- Students' Union

Part 3: Staff Guidance – Top Tips for Promoting a Mutually Respectful University Community

A reasonable and supportive approach from all students and staff is necessary to ensure a conducive learning experience. Therefore all staff and students have a shared responsibility for promoting a mutually respectful university community and positive learning environment.

Be Proactive:

- Avoid assuming that every person arrives equipped to understand and manage the university environment and finds it easy to articulate what they need
- Familiarise yourself with the core principles (see Part 1)
- Familiarise yourself with Part 3 of this guidance.
- Be clear about individuals' responsibility to behave appropriately and the reasons for doing so. For example, so that:
 - ✓ Everyone has the opportunity to experience an environment of mutual respect, sensitivity and equal opportunity
 - ✓ Effective learning can take place
 - ✓ Everyone has an opportunity to display key transferable professional skills which may enhance employability
 - ✓ Codes of Professional Conduct (where relevant) can be met
- Think about setting out some clear guidance/boundaries for all from the outset. This provides a basis upon which to gently and sensitively raise issues with those who are not being respectful.
- It can be useful to consider why a person is behaving in an unacceptable manner.
- Address issues swiftly - delay may be perceived as the behaviour being acceptable/the situation can escalate.

Re-enforce the Core Principles When Appropriate

You will need to use your judgement on how to deal with circumstances as they arise - you may find the following suggestions useful:

- Remind individuals/groups that their behaviour influences how they are perceived by others.
- Attempt to talk directly to those concerned if appropriate.
- Where appropriate discuss with the group any specific situation where the core principles are not being kept.

If needing to raise an issue with an individual/group, consider the following actions, as appropriate to your role:

- Acknowledge that they are dealing with.... / feeling.....
- Be clear about what is appropriate/acceptable behaviour and why.

- Give examples of where their behaviour has been inappropriate and the effect of this on yourself/others. Give examples of good behaviour if possible.
- Ask if there are any reasons for the situation. We cannot know what has led them to this point.
- Explain how it is detracting from them getting the most from their experience.
- Ask them if they need any support and refer as appropriate.
- Explain the limits of your role but what is available elsewhere.
- Explore options and agree a helpful course of action, if appropriate. For example, monitor for two weeks, get together and review how it has been. Use this as an opportunity for positive feedback (Be careful not to ask them to do something that others don't have to do as this could be construed as discrimination).
- Be clear that continued unreasonable behaviour may lead to disciplinary action.
- Be aware of the associated University policies and procedures and any Professional Codes of Conduct that apply.

After the problematic situation:

- Make sure you talk to someone about what happened and if appropriate make a record of events in accordance with School/Departmental guidance.

Consider:

- Seeking support from the appropriate person. For example: line manager, mentor, subject leader.
- Notifying the relevant person. For example: line manager, personal tutor, module leader, programme leader. This may be a pattern of behaviour.

In the learning environment:

- Following a warning to individuals about their behaviour you can ask those concerned if they would prefer to leave. This can resolve the situation but if not, you can request they leave.
- If inappropriate behaviour continues consider giving the individual/group a reasonable time (e.g.10 minutes) to modify their behaviour. It may be appropriate to leave the room and return when the individual/group is ready.
- In exceptional circumstances, if the situation is not resolved after this designated time, consider ending the activity.
- Security may be called.
- If the behaviour is across a cohort or group this should be recorded in the module box (rather than in every students' record).
- If appropriate, record details of events on the individual student e-record or equivalent.
- Provide a copy of the record for the student(s) concerned.
- In exceptional circumstances (and where relevant) it might be necessary to consider Fitness to Practice/Professional Regulations.

- Issues of student conduct or student discipline in the University setting or in relation to mis-use of University facilities, may, in addition, be investigated through the School Student Disciplinary procedure and/or the University Regulation relating to student discipline (on grounds other than an unsatisfactory standard of work). However in order to do this successfully it is necessary to:
 - ✓ Challenge such behaviour
 - ✓ Ideally have witnesses to such behaviour and when it is challenged
 - ✓ Make a record of both the behaviour and the challenge to it. Alert a member of the School Senior Management Team to your concerns as soon as possible

Other Sources of Support:

Further information on a range of relevant workshops and other resources is available from your:

- Line or Departmental Manager
- School Learning & Teaching (L&T) Co-ordinator
- School Assistant Dean (L&T)
- School Disability Co-ordinator
- Union Representative
- Department for Learning Development