Ākonga Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy and Procedure

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Version:	26.1	**Date Effective:**	10 November 2026
Responsibility:	Executive Director Partnerships and Engagement	**Date Reviewed:**	10 November 2026
Approver:	Chief Executive	**Next Review Date:**	9 November 2029

1 Purpose

1.1 This policy outlines the expected standards of behaviour, the pathways for reporting concerns, how UCOL will respond to concerns that are raised, and the support available to those affected.

2 Organisational Scope

2.1 This policy and procedure applies to all ākonga participating in UCOL learning and activities on campus, online, placements, field trips, events and digital communications where behaviour impacts the UCOL learning environment, including off campus conduct with a direct impact. This policy and procedure applies regardless of whether the behaviour occurs in person or through digital communication where it impacts the UCOL learning environment.

3 Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Executive Director Partnerships and Engagement	Has overall responsible to ensure this policy is implemented and reviewed.
Academic Portfolio Managers / Executive Deans	Support kaimahi, oversee local responses, determine escalation where required.
Ākonga (students)	Behave respectfully, report concerns, cooperate with investigations.
Kaimahi (staff)	Respond appropriately, ensure immediate safety, document incidents, escalate concerns and provide support.
Te Mana Tauira / Student Success	Provide advice, wellbeing support, culturally appropriate support and facilitate early resolution where appropriate.

4 Policy Statements

4.1 UCOL is committed to providing a safe, respectful and inclusive learning environment where all ākonga are treated with dignity and respect. Harassment, bullying, discrimination, intimidation and harmful digital communications are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

4.2 UCOL is committed to preventing and addressing harassment, bullying and other harmful behaviours that may cause physical, psychological, emotional or cultural harm, or adversely affect the health, safety and wellbeing of members of the UCOL community. UCOL takes a proactive approach to addressing behaviour that causes, or is likely to cause, such harm, whether it occurs in person or through digital communication.

4.3 This applies to behaviour occurring:

- on UCOL campuses;
- during UCOL learning activities, placements and events;
- within online learning environments and digital communications; and
- outside UCOL where the behaviour has a direct impact on the safety, wellbeing or learning environment of ākonga or kaimahi .

4.4 All members of the UCOL community are expected to:

- treat others with dignity and respect;
- use respectful language and refrain from offensive, abusive, threatening or discriminatory language;
- communicate respectfully both in person and online;
- contribute to a safe and inclusive learning environment;
- report behaviour that may place others at risk; and
- cooperate with any investigation.

4.5 Behaviour that intimidates, humiliates, threatens, discriminates against or excludes another person, whether in person or through digital communication, is inconsistent with UCOL's values and will be managed in accordance with this policy.

5 Procedure

Reporting Concerns

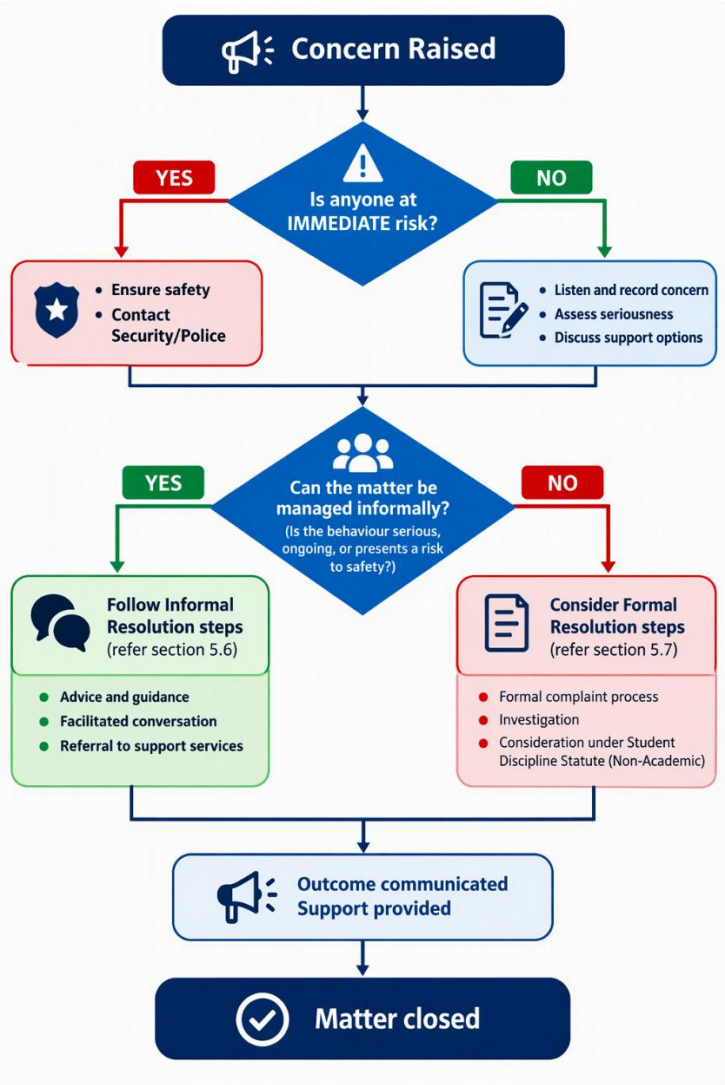
5.1 Ākonga are encouraged to report harassment or bullying as soon as practicable to:

- their lecturer;
- an Academic Portfolio Manager;
- an Executive Dean
- Te Mana Tauira / Student Success;
- Security (where available); or
- any kaimahi they feel comfortable approaching.

5.2 Concerns may be raised informally or formally. Concerns may be raised by the person affected, a witness, or another person acting on behalf of a ākonga.

Steps for Kaimahi Responding to a Concern

5.3 The following overview of the response process provides kaimahi with an outline of the steps to follow when a concern about student bullying, harassment or discrimination is raised. It should be read alongside the requirements in this procedure. Where there is an immediate risk to health, safety or wellbeing, kaimahi must prioritise safety and contact Security, Police or emergency services as appropriate.



Immediate Response

5.4 When a concern is reported, kaimahi will:

- Ensure the immediate safety of those involved.
- Contact Security where available.
- Where there is immediate risk or Security is unavailable, contact Police or emergency services.
- Listen respectfully and provide reassurance.
- Record the incident in accordance with UCOL procedures.
- Refer the ākonga to appropriate support services where required.
- Escalate the matter to the appropriate manager where necessary.

5.5 Kaimahi should not place themselves at risk when responding to an incident.

Managing Concerns

5.6 Informal Resolution

5.6.1 Where appropriate, concerns may be managed through:
a) advice and guidance;
b) facilitated conversations;
c) restorative approaches;
d) mediation; or
e) referral to support services.

5.7 Formal Resolution

5.7.1 A formal response may be appropriate where:
a) the behaviour is serious;
b) there is an ongoing risk to health or safety;
c) informal resolution is inappropriate; or
d) informal resolution has been unsuccessful.

5.7.2 A formal complaint may be submitted through studentfeedback@ucol.ac.nz and will be managed in accordance with the Student Concerns and Complaints Policy and Procedure.

5.7.3 Where the complaint may result in disciplinary action against a ākonga, it will be managed in accordance with the Student Discipline Statute (Non-Academic) 2019.

5.7.4 Where the behaviour may constitute criminal offending, UCOL will refer the matter to the Police.

5.7.5 Ākonga may also choose to seek assistance from external agencies, including the Human Rights Commission where appropriate.

Investigation

5.8 UCOL will:
a) assess immediate risks;
b) gather relevant information;
c) provide all parties with an opportunity to be heard;
d) maintain confidentiality as far as practicable;
e) determine findings based on the available information; and
f) communicate outcomes where appropriate.

5.9 Investigations will be undertaken by appropriately authorised kaimahi with regard to procedural fairness and natural justice. Interim measures may be implemented where necessary to protect the safety and wellbeing of those involved during an investigation.

Possible Outcomes

5.10 Possible outcomes may include:

- facilitated resolution;
- restorative actions;
- education or behavioural expectations;
- referral to support services;
- disciplinary action under the Student Discipline Statute (Non-Academic) 2019; or
- referral to the Police where criminal offending is suspected.

5.11 Outcomes will be proportionate to the nature and seriousness of the behaviour.

Support

5.12 Ākonga affected by harassment or bullying may access:

- Student Success - Te Mana Tauira
- Counselling
- Māori and Pacific support services
- Accessibility support services
- External agencies where appropriate, including the Police, the Human Rights Commission and Netsafe.

5.13 Support will be offered regardless of whether a formal complaint is made. Support may also be offered to witnesses and other ākonga affected by the incident where appropriate.

Awareness and Prevention

5.14 Ākonga will be made aware of this policy during orientation and induction.

5.15 This policy will be published on the UCOL website and ākonga intranet.

5.16 UCOL may provide education and awareness activities to promote respectful behaviour and encourage early reporting of concerns.

6 References

Internal • Criminal Reporting Policy • Health and Safety Policy • Privacy Policy • Student Concerns and Complaints Policy and Procedure • Student Discipline Statute (Non-Academic) 2019
External • Crimes Act 1961 • Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021 • Education and Training Act 2020

- Harassment Act 1997
- Harmful Digital Communications Act 2015
- Health and Safety at Work Act 2015;
- Human Rights Act 1993
- Privacy Act 2020

7 Definitions

Term	Definition
Harassment	Harassment is unwelcome or unreasonable behaviour that has the purpose or effect of humiliating, intimidating, threatening, degrading or otherwise causing, or being likely to cause, physical, psychological, emotional or cultural harm, or creating a hostile, intimidating or unsafe learning environment. Harassment may be a single serious incident or a pattern of behaviour and may occur in person, in writing, by telephone or through digital or online communication. Examples include: • offensive, abusive, threatening or discriminatory language; • racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic or other discriminatory comments or behaviour; • unwanted sexual comments, advances or physical contact; • suggestive remarks about a person's appearance or personal life; • leering, staring, inappropriate gestures or physical intimidation; • displaying or distributing offensive material; • abuse of authority or power to humiliate or intimidate another person; • cyber harassment through email, text messages, social media, messaging applications or online learning platforms; • sharing images, recordings or personal information without consent; • impersonating another person or creating or sharing manipulated or AI-generated content intended to embarrass, humiliate, threaten or damage a person's reputation.
Bullying	Bullying is repeated and unreasonable behaviour directed towards an individual or group that causes, or is likely to cause, physical or psychological harm, or creates a risk to their health, safety or wellbeing. Bullying may be physical, verbal, psychological, relational or digital and may occur face-to-face or online. Bullying may include: • repeated intimidation, humiliation or ridicule; • offensive or abusive language; • deliberate exclusion or isolation from learning or social activities; • spreading rumours or malicious gossip; • threatening behaviour or persistent unwanted contact; • cyberbullying, including repeated harmful messages, anonymous online abuse, impersonation or coordinated online harassment; • behaviour intended to undermine a person's confidence, participation or ability to learn.

Term	Definition
Cyberbullying / harmful digital communication	Cyberbullying or harmful digital communication is the use of digital technologies to harass, bully, threaten, intimidate, humiliate or exclude another person. This includes behaviour through social media, email, text messages, messaging applications, online forums, learning management systems, collaborative platforms or other electronic communication. This may include anonymous communications, sharing images without consent, doxxing, impersonation, manipulated or AI-generated content, or other behaviour that may breach the Harmful Digital Communications Act 2015.
Reasonable behaviour is not harassment or bullying	Harassment or bullying does **not** include: • respectful and constructive feedback provided as part of learning, assessment or supervision; • reasonable directions or decisions made by UCOL kaimahi in the course of their duties; • respectful disagreement or differences of opinion expressed appropriately; • occasional compliments that are welcomed by the recipient; • consensual friendships or relationships between adults; • legitimate academic or disciplinary processes undertaken in accordance with UCOL policies and procedures.

Document Version History

Version	Effective Date	Created/Reviewed By	Reason for review
26.1	10 November 2026	Chief Executive	New document. The existing Student Harassment and Bullying Prevention Policy, Procedure, and Guidelines have been consolidated into a single document.