UNIVERSITY OF PARDUBICE HANDBOOK

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU FACE INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PARDUBICE?

The University of Pardubice strives for promoting an environment of social safety for all students and employees, and thus has zero tolerance for negative phenomena such as discrimination, bullying or sexual harassment (hereinafter "inappropriate behavior").

If you face such inappropriate behaviour from teachers, employees or students, we are prepared to provide you with any assistance you may need; these guidelines will provide you with all key information and options for solving such situations.

What is inappropriate behaviour?

Inappropriate behaviour is such behaviour that interferes with your feeling of safety and compromises your dignity. Inappropriate behaviour includes unequal treatment, discrimination, gender-based violence, sexual harassment, bullying as well as other forms of behaviour.[1]

What to do when you face inappropriate behaviour at the University?

Inappropriate behaviour is unacceptable and it must be opposed to limit any negative impact it may have on you. You are not required to report such behaviour; however, we strongly recommend that you do so and we are ready to provide you with assistance.

If you prefer to deal with inappropriate behaviour yourself, it is important that you clearly show that you find such behaviour unpleasant either directly to the person behaving in such a way or later by e-mail or in person.

If you decide to deal with such behaviour, we provide you with guidelines, key information and a network of support staff to help you.

The University Ombudsperson is the go-to-person at the University to deal with such cases and may be approached by students as well as employees; the University Ombudsperson has a duty to deal with any reported cases (see below for more details).

[1] Key terminology is explained at the end of this document.

If you need time and support to deal with your difficult situation, you may contact the BALANC Counselling Centre, which is independent of the faculties and provides crisis intervention as well as psychological counselling and psychotherapy.

They may walk you through your situation and help you identify resources to cope with the situation and deal with it actively. See the website of the BALANC Centre for details about their services BALANC Centre | University of Pardubice; the contact details are also available at the end of this document.

Each faculty counts on trained contact persons who can sensitively inform you about the appropriate course of action and help you contact the Ombudsperson or the BALANC Counseling Center, where you can receive appropriate professional assistance. They will discuss the best solution with you in a sensitive way, share with you the contacts for the Ombudsperson and direct you to the expert services (see the end of the document for their contact details).

What is the role of the University Ombudsperson?

The University of Pardubice has established the office of the Ombudsperson to further enhance social safety and offer new ways to deal with issues involving misconduct or inappropriate behaviour. The Ombudsperson receives complaints from students and employees and has a duty to investigate such complaints.

In addition, the Ombudsperson acts as a mediator in disputes and conflicts involving social safety, offers counselling to those who report such issues, and proposes remedial measures to remove any shortcomings or introduce systemic changes.

How to contact the University Ombudsperson and file a complaint?

- In person subject to appointment made by e-mail.
- By e-mail sent to **ombuds@upce.cz**.
- By mail sent to the address of the University or filed with the filing office, the envelope must read “neotvírat - ombudsosoba” (Do not open - Ombudsperson!).

To be able to duly investigate a complaint, it should include:

Details of the complainant (e.g. Jana Nováková, a student of the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy) and their contact details (this does not apply to anonymous complaints) – ***Who am I?***

The issue and description of the situation that the complainant wishes to be investigated by the Ombudswoman – ***What happened?***

Persons or units concerned – ***Where did it happen and who caused it?***

Proposed remedy – ***What do I need/expect or require?***

If possible, please provide as many details as possible about the complaint: in particular include the description of the situation and its history, specify the persons concerned (may be specified in general terms: students of xy course, employees at xy department), your view of the situation and expected outcome.

The more details you provide about the issue, the easier it will be to investigate the complaint faster without the need to ask further questions, which may make the complainant feel uncomfortable.

How are complaints investigated?

Each complaint involving inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with without undue delay, confidentially, sensitively and in a way showing respect for the complainant. The Ombudsperson shall deal with the complaint within 30 days; if justified, the period may be extended by another 30 days.

The Ombudsperson will first check whether she is competent to deal with the complaint. If so, the Ombudsperson has a duty to deal with it; if the complaint does not involve inappropriate behaviour, it will be referred to the competent person.

If the complaint targets a specific person, or unit of the University, the Ombudsperson will always provide them with a possibility to make a statement on the case. If necessary, the Ombudsperson will also interview witnesses and collect other relevant information.

The Ombudsperson will inform the complainant of the outcome of the investigation and will draw up an investigation report. The Ombudsperson will make recommendations based on the investigation and if the complaint is found to be founded, it will be referred for further proceedings together with the recommendation to the head of the respective unit (Head of Department/Dean), the Rector or the Ethics Committee.

The proposed remedies may be formal (a warning, change of position or termination for employees, or a reprimand or expulsion for students) or informal (apology, mediation, training).

Is it possible to make anonymous reports?

If you do not want to use your name to report a case of misconduct, you may file an anonymous complaint. The Ombudsperson will grant complainant's application for nor disclosing their identity.

It is, however, necessary to realize that anonymous complaints may not be investigated in the same way as non-anonymous complaints, and the Ombudsperson's options to deal with the complaint are limited.

SAFE UPCE

HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

SAFE UPCE

The University of Pardubice has an ambition to be a safe, respectful and supportive environment for all students. Everyone is entitled to feel good in study and social relations at the University and to be protected against inappropriate behaviour. If you face situations that make you feel uncomfortable or you deem them to be inappropriate, you are not alone to deal with it. Do not be afraid to speak up and use the support offered by the University – we are here for you.

SAFE UPCE team

Key contact details

Office of the Ombudsperson at the University of Pardubice

ombuds@upce.cz

BALANC Counselling Centre

balanc@upce.cz

SAFE UPCE

safe@upce.cz

Contact persons trained in dealing with crisis and stress situations and referring the students to the BALANC Centre (see here for contact details).

Definitions of Terms

Discrimination means "an act or omission when a person is or has been treated less favourably than another person in a comparable situation on grounds of race, ethnic origin, nationality, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, faith or worldview." [2]

Gender-based violence includes "all acts of physical, sexual, psychological, economic, or other forms of violence that target women because they happen to be women or men because they happen to be men or acts of violence that disproportionately affect women or men"[3] or other persons of other gender identities.

Sexual harassment means inappropriate behaviour having sexual pretext and aimed at degrading human dignity and creating intimidating, hostile and degrading or offensive environment. Sexual harassment may be verbal, non-verbal or even physical.

Sexual harassment includes, without limitation humiliating, offensive, vulgar, or obscene remarks or inappropriate comments (e.g. regarding an individual's appearance, sexual orientation, or personal relationships); unwelcome sexual attention; unwelcome visual contact (such as staring at a person's cleavage); unsolicited sexual advances; promises of preferential treatment in exchange for sexual activity; unwelcome physical contact; and sexual coercion or blackmail.

Bullying is a situation in which an individual (or a group) is repeatedly subjected to negative behavior by another individual or group, with the intent to cause harm, intimidate, or assert dominance. In addition, victims of bullying find it very difficult to counteract such behaviour.[4]

Common forms of bullying include: slander, insults, ridicule, humiliation, intimidation, as well as deliberate ignoring, silencing, repeated displays of arrogance, or various spiteful actions.

[2] Act No. 198/2009 Sb., on equal treatment and legal protection against discrimination (Anti-discrimination Act)

[3] Government Office. Domestic and Gender-based Violence Prevention Action Plan *2019-2022*.

[4] See Kateřina Zábrodská. Preventing Workplace Bullying: Guidelines for HEI.