

UQ School of Mathematics and Physics Workplace Inclusivity: Staff and Research Students

Expectations for staff and students at UQ

All UQ staff and students have the responsibility to cultivate an environment:

- That is caring, inclusive and empowering for everybody.
- Where we engage respectfully with one another.
- That promotes our diversity.
- That is free from discrimination, harassment and bullying behaviours.

You can help foster an inclusive culture by calling out any inappropriate behaviour you observe, whether unconscious or intentional, if you feel safe to do so.

UQ encourages you to report or resolve any discrimination, harassment and/or bullying behaviours.

Expectations for the workplace

The university workplace provides a dedicated learning environment for students and staff, and opportunities for social interaction and collaboration.

- Any office or lab space should primarily be used as a place to work, whether this be independently, or in collaboration with others.
- Students and staff must abide by the relevant Code of Conduct. Bullying, harassment, or discrimination are never appropriate.
- If you feel that someone in your work area is behaving inappropriately, contact your supervisor, an SMP Inclusivity Champion, the School Manager, your Head of Discipline, or the Head of School.
- While you are encouraged to interact with those in your workspace, it is not appropriate to engage in personal discussions in shared areas where others are working.
- You must respect the privacy and boundaries of those that you work with.

Workplace etiquette

- Offices and labs are a safe space to do work and research. Behaviour and language should always be respectful and inclusive. This includes messages on whiteboards, online workspaces, and in group chats.
- If you are unwell, stay home.
- Take phone calls and meetings away from any shared workspace. You can book meeting rooms at <https://uqbookit.uq.edu.au/>.
- Keep conversations outside shared work areas. These can disrupt people working.
- Avoid aerosolized sprays, deodorants, and colognes. But please do use deodorant!
- Do not eat meals inside a shared lab or office – use one of the several shared kitchens or other spaces.
- Do not sleep in any SMP offices or facilities. If you are having financial difficulties, support is available to you (<https://my.uq.edu.au/financial-support>).

Discrimination

What is discrimination?

Unfavourable treatment of someone based on an attribute.

What is indirect discrimination?

An unreasonable rule or policy that applies to everyone but has the effect of disadvantaging some people based on an attribute.

Attributes

can be, for example:

- age
- disability
- race, including colour, national or ethnic origin or immigrant status
- sex, pregnancy, marital or relationship status, family responsibilities or breastfeeding
- sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status.

Harassment

What is harassment?

Any behaviour that makes someone feel humiliated, intimidated or offended, e.g.

- telling insulting jokes about particular cultural groups,
- sending explicit or sexually suggestive emails or text messages,
- displaying racially offensive or pornographic posters or screen savers,
- making derogatory comments or taunts about a person's disability, or
- asking intrusive questions about someone's personal life, including their sex life.

Sexual harassment

What is sexual harassment?

Harassment where the behaviour is unwanted and of a sexual nature, e.g.

- physical contact in a sexual way,
- sexual propositions,
- sexually suggestive looks or gestures such as leering, ogling, or staring,
- suggestive comments about a person's appearance,
- remarks about someone's sex life.

Bullying

What is bullying?

Repeated unfavourable treatment of someone by another, e.g.

- abusive and offensive language or shouting,
- deliberate exclusion, isolation or alienation,
- spreading gossip or rumours with an intent to cause harm to a person.

Respectful supervisor relationships

As an undergraduate or HDR student, or as an employee, you have the right to a safe work environment free from bullying, harassment, and discrimination.

The relationship between you and your supervisor:

- Has an inherent power imbalance.
- Should always be built on mutual respect and trust.
- Is inappropriate if it is sexual and/or romantic, and must be reported as a Conflict of Interest. (Staff report here: <https://policies.uq.edu.au/download.php?associated=1&id=1166&version=3>)
- The School will facilitate a prompt change of supervisor, and will provide other support as needed.

See Slides 16 & 17 for support resources.



Trigger warning

The next slide contains references to themes of racism, sexual harassment and discrimination, which some individuals may find distressing.

If you are feeling distressed by this content, support is available at UQ.

Students: Visit Student Central for a range of support options

<https://my.uq.edu.au/contact/student-central>

or visit <https://respect.uq.edu.au> to get support from the Sexual Misconduct Support Unit

Staff: visit <https://staff.uq.edu.au/information-and-services/health-safety-wellbeing>

Examples

Examples of discrimination:

- “It’s so gay that we can’t get this code to work.”
- “You’re too pretty to do maths.”
- I answered a question incorrectly during a seminar and one of my friends “jokingly” called me an ableist slur.
- Referring to COVID-19 as “the Chinese virus” or otherwise associating it with China.

Examples of sexual harassment:

- Two people in my office always brag about their sex lives.
- This person in my research group always tries to hug my friend, even though they’re clearly not OK with it.
- Someone in my office asks me inappropriate questions about my romantic relationships.

Examples

Examples of bullying:

- Every time I say something in a group meeting, I get dismissed or ignored.
- My office mate doesn't like what I wear, so now they ignore me during group meetings.
- The use of *any* slur, whether they are used in a “joking” manner or not. These can be based on, e.g., race, sexuality, gender, neurodivergence, or disability.

Examples of inappropriate supervisor behaviour:

- Sexual or romantic propositions.
- Asking for details about your private life in a way that makes you uncomfortable.
- Threatening to take your name off a paper you worked on, or otherwise not giving you credit for your work.
- Excessively monitoring your work or setting unrealistic deadlines.
- Belittling your achievements or skills.

Bystander actions: The 5 Ds

Distract

Indirect action to de-escalate or change the trajectory of a situation

e.g. ask a question, ask to borrow a pen, "accidentally interrupt"

Delegate

Get someone else involved

e.g. police, person of authority, tell someone else in a position of power

Direct

Directly engaging with the situation

e.g. "that's not ok", help someone move away, intervene on purpose

Delay

Taking action after the event or situation has occurred

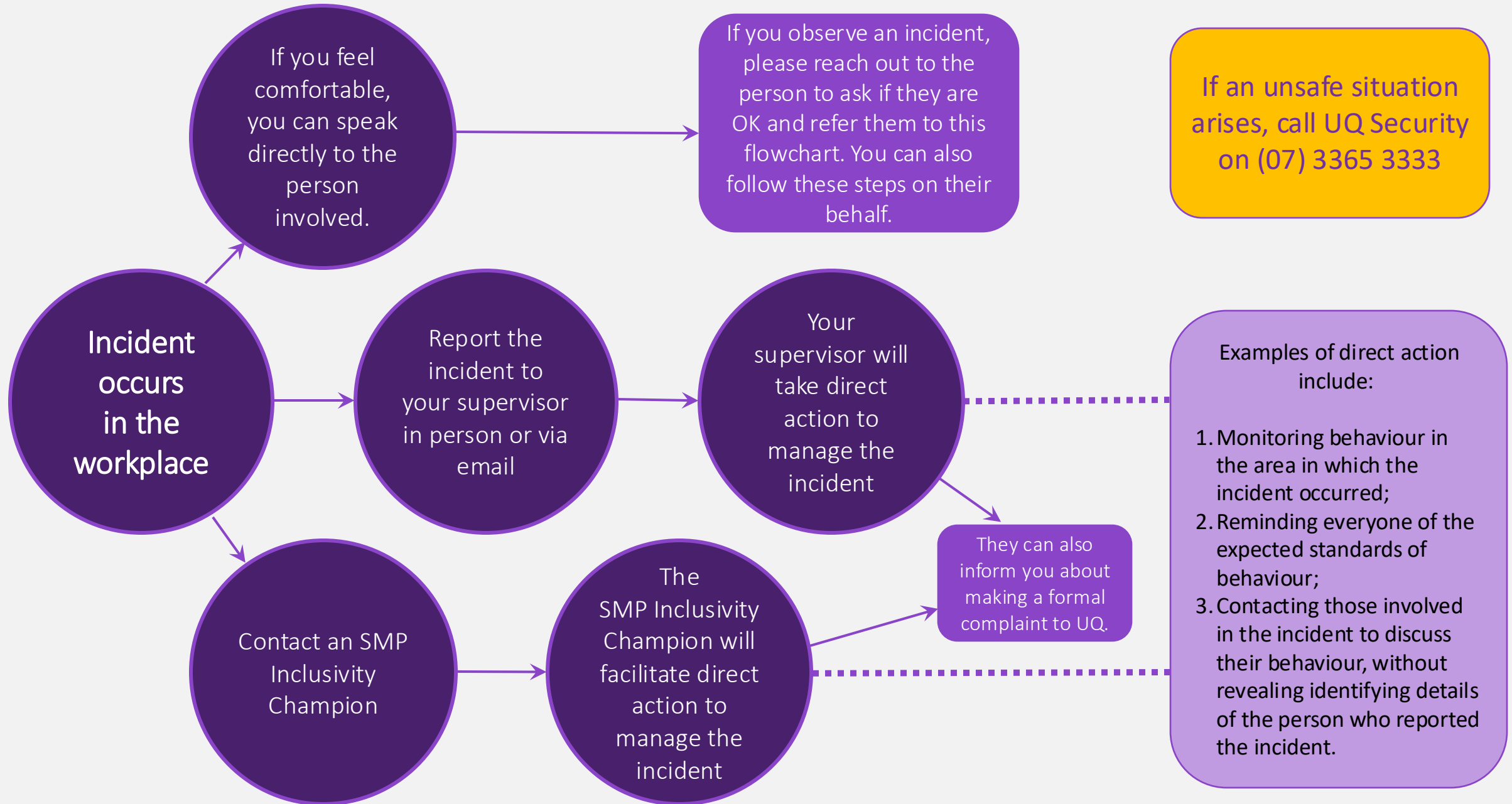
e.g. "Are you ok", reporting to someone else, offering support

Document

Keeping a record of the situation via notes, photos or videos

e.g. screenshot of harassing behaviour (but NEVER post online, or use without the permission of the survivor)

School of Mathematics and Physics: Workplace Behaviour Incident Flowchart



SMP Inclusivity Champions (updated 22/07/25)

To email: Click on the hyperlink,
or add uq.edu.au to the address



Every cohort has a nominated contact – however, you are welcome to contact whomever you choose.

UQ ALLY

Our champions are committed to listening to your inclusivity concerns, and ensuring they are suitably addressed.

UQ Respect Network



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mdavis



MATH1051/71
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Lara Atzeni
School Manager
smp.sm



Joseph Grotowski
Head of School
j.grotowski

SMP Inclusivity Champions: fostering a safe and inclusive environment

SMP Inclusivity Champions have voluntarily taken on the responsibility to create a safe and welcoming environment for everyone in the SMP community. They will empathetically listen to your concerns, and explore potential courses of action. They will always respect your desired level of privacy. Depending on the situation, they may:

1. **Resolve your concern** by proactively contacting the appropriate individuals, such as the course coordinator, to ensure that necessary actions are taken promptly.
2. **Formal complaints:** If the situation calls for it, they will inform you about making a formal complaint.
3. **Referral to support services:** If you require specialized support beyond their scope, they will refer you to relevant services better equipped to meet your needs.
4. **Engaging School leadership:** With your permission, they can escalate matters to the appropriate School leader.

They will keep you updated on actions taken and provide explanations for the outcomes.

Example outcomes from contacting SMP Inclusivity Champions

- 1. Offensive discussion board comments:** A student criticised a lecturer's pronoun use in an assessment item and made an offensive gender-related remark in a post. Following a report by a student, the SMP Inclusivity Champion alerted the course coordinator, who promptly redacted the offensive comment and addressed the issue on the discussion board and during a subsequent lecture.
- 2. Unwanted attention:** A student made several romantic advances towards a demonstrator despite being asked to stop. A report to an SMP Inclusivity Champion led to the student receiving a letter from an SMP Integrity Officer instructing them to cease such behaviour, with potential disciplinary action from the University if they continued.
- 3. Inappropriate comments from demonstrator:** A student group reported feeling uncomfortable with comments made by a demonstrator during class. The SMP Inclusivity Champion addressed the issue with the demonstrator, who then made appropriate modifications to their interactions with students.

The SMP Inclusivity Champions are dedicated to promoting an inclusive environment where all members can thrive and feel safe. We encourage you to reach out to them if you encounter any challenges or have any concerns. Together, we can foster a positive and supportive SMP community.

Further support resources

There are further support services available if you have experienced or witnessed discrimination, bullying, or harassment.



UQ resources

- UQ Respect <https://respect.uq.edu.au/>
- Sexual Misconduct Support Unit <https://respect.uq.edu.au/support/sexual-misconduct-support-unit-smsu>
- Student Services <https://my.uq.edu.au/contact/student-central>
- UQ Respect Network <https://respect.uq.edu.au/support/respect-network>
- UQ Ally Network <https://staff.uq.edu.au/information-and-services/human-resources/diversity/sexuality/ally-network>

External resources

- Beyond Blue Support Service www.beyondblue.org.au
- Lifeline Crisis Support & Suicide Prevention www.lifeline.org.au
- QLD/Australian Human Rights Commission <https://www.qhrc.qld.gov.au/complaints>
- Queensland Police Service 000 or 131 444 (non-urgent)

Further support resources (supervisor relationships)

If you feel that your relationship with your supervisor is exploitative, disrespectful, or otherwise inappropriate, contact:

- Summer/winter research students, Summer Industry Experience students, SCIE3250 students: course coordinator, or program coordinator.
- Honours students: the relevant Honours coordinator.
- HDR students: the SMP student support team: hdr.smp@enquire.uq.edu.au
- An SMP Inclusivity Champion (slide 15) or <https://smp.uq.edu.au/inclusivity>

You can get support from any of the sources on slides 18, and staff can also access the:

- Employee Assistance Program (confidential counselling & support)
<https://staff.uq.edu.au/information-and-services/health-safety-wellbeing/mental-health/eap>
- Workplace Psychologist (workplace management advice for staff affected by mental health difficulties)
<https://staff.uq.edu.au/information-and-services/health-safety-wellbeing/mental-health/workplace-psychologist>