



Policy on Offensive Behavior

- including bullying and sexual harassment

1. Purpose and target group

The purpose of the policy is to clarify what Roskilde University means by offensive actions and to set a framework for how the university wants students and employees to act if someone sees, hears or experiences something offensive. For further elaboration and specific instructions, read <https://intra.ruc.dk/nc/en/employees/services-to-employees/ruc-hr/working-environment-at-ruc/dealing-with-offensive-behavior/>.

2. Definition

Roskilde University understands offensive acts as defined in the Danish Working Environment Authority's guidelines version 4.3.1-1: "Offensive acts, including bullying and sexual harassment":

"Harassment occurs when one or more persons grossly or repeatedly subject other people to behavior that is perceived as degrading. Harassment is an umbrella term for bullying, sexual harassment and other ways in which harassment can occur at work. It can be both active and inactive actions. Abusive actions in relation to work can include, for example:

- *Withholding necessary information*
- *Hurtful remarks*
- *Unfair deprivation or reduction of responsibilities and duties*
- *Slander or exclusion from the social and professional community*
- *Attacking or criticizing an employee's private life*
- *Being shouted at or ridiculed*
- *Physical abuse or threats of physical abuse*
- *Hostility or silence in response to questions or attempts at conversation*
- *Belittling employees' jobs, their work performance or their competence*
- *Abusive phone calls*
- *Abusive written messages, SMS, pictures and videos, including on social media*

- *Unpleasant teasing*
- *Disparagement, e.g. due to age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity or religious beliefs*
- *Exploitation on the job, e.g. for private errands for others.*

Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

It is irrelevant whether the actions are the result of recklessness or a deliberate intent to offend. It is the persons experience of the offensive acts that is central.

Whether or not the offensive acts involve a risk of physical or mental health deterioration depends on the severity, duration and frequency of the acts. There can be a risk both in the case of individual abusive acts that are particularly severe, in the case of abusive acts that have a certain duration and frequency, as well as a combination of these.

If the infringing acts are not particularly serious, they must happen over a certain period and with a frequency to constitute a risk. If they do not have a temporal extent and frequency, they must have been particularly severe, to constitute a risk.

Abusive acts can be committed by both employees and managers. Although abusive behavior between colleagues is more common, abusive behavior by a manager is often experienced as extra stressful. This is due to the power that can be behind the abuse, and that it is often not possible to get the manager's support and help, especially if it is the employee's own manager who is perceived abusive. The same applies if there are informal power relationships, including situations where employees with a strong position in the workplace infringe colleagues. The manager can also be infringed by subordinates.

The ordinary exercise of leadership, collegial feedback and the like, are not in itself offensive acts."

The Danish Working Environment Authority's guidance defines bullying as follows:

"Bullying occurs when one or more people regularly and over a longer period - or repeatedly in a gross manner - subjects one or more other people to offensive acts that they perceive as hurtful or degrading. However, the offensive acts only become bullying when the people they are directed at are not able to defend themselves effectively against them. What further distinguishes bullying from other forms of offending is that it is the same person or group who are systematically subjected to the abusive acts. Just as it is often the same people who perpetrate the abusive acts."

The Danish Working Environment Authority's guidance defines sexual harassment as follows:

"Abusive acts can occur as sexual harassment. Abusive acts of a sexual nature are all forms of unwanted sexual attention, for example:

- *Unwanted touching*
- *Unwanted verbal requests for sexual intercourse*
- *Dirty jokes and comments*
- *Inappropriate inquiries about sexual topics*
- *Viewing pornographic material.*

Please note that this list is not exhaustive."

3. Attitudes

Roskilde University's management encourages employees and students to be aware of treating each other with respect and tolerance. Preventing and dealing with offensive actions is never only the responsibility of the individual but is a shared responsibility for the entire university.

The university wants to support a conflict-handling culture, where employees and students react concretely, constructively and with respect for everyone involved when someone has experienced something offensive, whether it is between employees, students or employee and student. Therefore, the university focuses on prevention and early intervention. This is partly about creating a trusting environment with good communication between managers, employees and students, and partly about ensuring that everyone is aware of abusive actions and where to find support and guidance. If something is experienced as offensive, the senior management team will encourage react constructively, concretely and as quickly as possible.

4. Framework for dealing with abusive acts

All cases of harassment are handled in accordance with the provisions of the Danish Public Administration Act, and the focus will be on taking care of the affected parties throughout the process. In this context, legal certainty is respected for all involved, as the involved

in a case of harassment will often experience incidents and processes differently.

If a case results in disciplinary sanctions for students it may be a warning, partial or full expulsion. For employees, it may be a reprimand, warning or dismissal. If criminal offenses are discovered during a case, it will be reported to the police. The rector and university director are informed of particularly serious cases. The university's management encourages anyone who may have experienced something offensive to contact them, all inquiries are handled confidentially and with respect for everyone involved. The university has different contact options for employees and students. In general, it is important that anyone who has seen, heard or experienced something offensive, to contact someone they trust.

4.1 Specifically for students

Students can contact their house coordinator, head of studies, the central student counseling or the Deputy Director of Education and Students about their experience. In addition, students can approach the student counseling service or the student chaplain for individual help. All inquiries will be handled as described under point 4.

4.2 Specifically for employees

Employees can contact their union representative, health and safety representative, immediate manager or the Vice President of HR. In particularly serious cases, the union representative and health and safety representative will inform their immediate manager or the Deputy Director of HR, in agreement with the person concerned. In the case that employees need to discuss the incident with an impartial person outside the university, you can contact The Danish Working Environment Authority's hotline on bullying and sexual harassment (tel.: +45 70 22 12 80). In addition, employees have the option of psychological assistance through Roskilde University's staff services. All cases will be handled as described under point 4.

4.3 Confidential mailbox request - students and employees

Take-care is a confidential mailbox where students and employees can get support, guidance and advice if they have seen, heard or experienced something offensive. The mailbox is managed by the Take-care team in accordance with the procedure, which you can find [here](#). Inquiries to the mailbox can be made at: take-care@ruc.dk.

4.4 Contacting the whistleblower scheme from December 17 2021- students and employees

All employees can anonymously report sexual harassment or other serious harassment to [RUC's whistleblower scheme](#).

5. References

The Policy on Offensive Behavior should be viewed in connection with the following policies at Roskilde University:

- Working Environment Policy
- Diversity and Inclusion Policy

6. Validity and termination

The policy is enforced upon the assessment by the Central Liaison Committee (HSU) and the processing and approval by the Executive University Management (UL).

The policy may be terminated at any time by either party with three months' notice, cf. Circular on agreement on cooperation and work councils in state-owned companies and institutions. Before termination the works council must attempt to change the policy in a way that is satisfactory to the parties.

ASSESSED BY HSU 16. MARCH 2022.

PROCESSED AND APPROVED BY UL 4. MAY 2022.