

Imperial College
London

Respect for others

**A GUIDE FOR STAFF
AT IMPERIAL**

Human
Resources
Division



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Imperial's mission

Imperial College London's mission is to achieve enduring excellence in research and education in science, engineering, medicine and business for the benefit of society.





Foreword: A community built on respect

Imperial College London is a community of over 22,000 people who work together to create one of the leading environments for education and research in the world.

The many courteous and supportive interactions among students, staff and visitors that take place at the College every day are a reflection of the importance of respect in our culture.

The College aims to build a supportive and highly motivated staff community across all functions and activities, in a respectful, welcoming and inclusive environment. We place great importance on protecting and respecting the dignity of all our staff and students. Of course, this means there is no place for discriminatory behaviour or for bullying and harassment, whether intentional or not. However it also means that in our day-to-day actions, we should consider the thoughts and feelings of others: we should be polite and civil when we speak to each other or communicate via email or telephone, and aware of the boundaries of inappropriate behaviour. It also means that we should embrace diversity and recognise and celebrate achievement among our fellow colleagues.

I encourage all staff to review Imperial's Respect for Others Pledge, which outlines the way in which we will maintain a community built around respect and the protection of dignity, and the action we will take to eliminate discrimination, harassment and bullying. More generally, this leaflet provides guidance on the behaviour we expect from all staff, and the advice and support available when behaviour falls beneath these expectations. While it mainly refers to staff at the College, there should be no doubt that the expectations it articulates are those we expect in all staff–student interactions, and also within our student community. I look forward to working with you to create a work and study environment that promotes empathy, courtesy and, above all, respect.

Professor James Stirling
Provost, August 2015



Respect for Others: Imperial's Pledge

The Respect for Others Pledge outlines the commitments that the College makes to creating an environment which is respectful and collaborative and has a zero tolerance approach to bullying, discrimination, victimisation and harassment. The Pledge also states how all members of staff are expected to contribute to this environment. Every member of our community is expected to read and uphold this pledge.

Imperial College London expects its staff to:

- Commit to maintaining an inclusive and non-threatening environment by treating all members of the staff and student community with respect.
- Undertake training and development programmes where necessary in issues around bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination.
- Report unacceptable behaviour through the channels provided by the College.
- In addition, managers at Imperial are expected to act in accordance with Imperial Expectations (see page 7).

Imperial College London will:

- Provide guidance and training to foster an inclusive and non-threatening environment for work and study.
- Provide confidential assistance and support to staff members experiencing professional or personal difficulties.
- Monitor and review progress towards the goal of creating a respectful environment, and implement new or amended policies as required.
- Provide clear channels for reporting unacceptable behaviour.
- Investigate unacceptable behaviour when it is identified and take action, including disciplinary sanctions, where appropriate.

Why does respect matter?

Respect is often defined as ‘due regard for the feelings, wishes and rights of others.’ Respect can also refer to feelings of admiration for someone based on their abilities, qualities or achievements. Respect in the workplace can be best understood as acting considerately when engaging with colleagues and recognising their skills and expertise, but most importantly, their human rights as individuals.

Why does respect matter?

Imperial has over 8,000 members of staff. For each person that works here, an inclusive working environment which promotes respect and consideration is key to good mental health and general wellbeing, as well as morale and productivity. At the level of a department or division, an emphasis on mutual respect leads to an environment in which all team members feel supported to achieve their best and progress in their careers at Imperial. For the College as a whole, respect is critical to the achievement of our mission. It allows us to attract and retain talented and diverse staff who feel committed to the College and recognise that their impact and achievements across all disciplines, functions and activities are recognised and celebrated.

The College also has a legal obligation to ensure all of its staff work in an environment free of discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation. The Equality Act of 2010 outlaws such behaviour if it is grounded in any of the following characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The College's approach to respect for others goes beyond the statutory requirements by setting guidelines for day to day conduct and behaviours that impact on everyone.

Identifying respect

On the following pages we outline examples of respectful behaviour, together with examples of behaviour which fall short of that expected from Imperial staff.

8,000

Number of staff in 2014/15

111

Number of countries of origin for Imperial staff

16,500

Number of students in 2014/15

131

Students come to Imperial from over 131 countries

Imperial's standards of behaviour

The College Strategy sets out a commitment to an inclusive community and the creation of an environment which is respectful and collaborative, with a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment.

The Respect for Others Pledge outlines the standards of behaviour that Imperial expects of its staff to deliver this commitment. It also explains what the College will do to uphold these standards.

Imperial Expectations

Imperial Expectations are a set of seven statements which were introduced to promote a positive working environment and articulate how the College expects its leaders, managers and supervisors to behave. Many of the Expectations relate closely to Imperial's Respect for Others Pledge, and so are applicable to all members of staff, not only leaders, managers and supervisors. For example:

IMPERIAL EXPECTS ENCOURAGEMENT OF INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION AND ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION

For all members of staff, promoting inclusive participation and eliminating discrimination means being aware of the College's policies and the law around equality and diversity. It requires a rejection of stereotypes or assumptions based on factors such as disability, gender, race or religion, and an approach to work that welcomes multiple voices and opinions.

For leaders, managers and supervisors, meeting this expectation might additionally involve challenging behaviour, actions and words that do not support the promotion of equality and diversity. It also requires ensuring that all colleagues comply with legal requirements and College policies.

“ One of my most challenging conversations as a manager was with a team member who had been disparaging about a pregnant colleague's impending maternity leave. We discussed the College's policies on discrimination, and our legal obligations; the team member agreed to undertake training in this area, and fed back that it was really helpful.”

IMPERIAL EXPECTS STAFF TO BE SUPPORTED AND DEVELOPED TO OPTIMISE TALENT

For all members of staff, supporting others means recognising and celebrating the skills and contributions of colleagues, and ensuring they are utilised effectively.

For leaders, managers and supervisors, providing support and development means setting realistic targets that have been discussed and agreed upon, providing feedback designed to enhance performance, and fostering an environment where all staff can make the best of, and develop further, their abilities.

“ In a previous job I found myself side-lined: my manager took credit for work I'd done, and then gradually reduced my job to very routine tasks. So when I moved to Imperial, I was determined to avoid behaving the same way with people I supervise. I place a lot of emphasis on training and development, and if there is a problem with performance, I try to ensure I give clear, constructive feedback.”

Imperial Expectations

IMPERIAL EXPECTS CONSIDERATION OF THOUGHTS AND EXPECTATIONS OF OTHERS

For all members of staff, consideration of the thoughts and expectations of others would mean avoiding sarcastic or snide remarks or 'jokes' that could offend. Consideration of others also means communicating in a clear, measured, respectful way, whether face-to-face, over the phone or in writing. It is each member of staff's responsibility to manage their own emotions, and identify what their triggers are, to avoid venting anger or frustration on their colleagues.

An individual might perceive they are not being treated with respect if they are made to feel invisible or are not recognised for their contribution. For example, not introducing a junior member of staff in a meeting.

For leaders, managers and supervisors specifically, consideration might involve discussing and agreeing what is expected of team members and what they can expect of you. It should also involve giving people opportunities to express their views and provide feedback.

“ When I first joined my team, I thought that I could chat to my colleagues in the same way I chat to my friends. But my team is quite diverse, and I soon realised that certain conversations made my colleagues uncomfortable. I think being mindful of this has allowed me to integrate better into the team: we all get along really well.”

Imperial expects its leaders, managers and supervisors to:

- Champion a positive approach to change and opportunity
- Communicate regularly and effectively within, and across, teams
- Consider the thoughts and expectations of others
- Deliver positive outcomes
- Encourage inclusive participation and eliminate discrimination
- Support and develop staff to optimise talent
- Work in a planned and managed way



Identifying unacceptable behaviour

Some forms of unacceptable behaviour in the workplace may seem obvious and easy to identify. If someone is openly abusive, aggressive or threatening to a colleague, it would be clear to most that this behaviour would need to be addressed (for more information on how to address such behaviour, turn to page 11). Similarly, uncontrolled use of obscenities or drunken behaviour (which can be intimidating or offensive for others) are clearly unacceptable in a respectful professional environment.

But it is not always the case that unacceptable behaviour is so easy to identify. The groups below, which relate broadly to legislation in England, are helpful to understand these sorts of disrespectful actions. If any of us witness inappropriate behaviour, it is wrong to pretend that we have not heard or seen what was said or done. If we ignore disrespectful or discriminatory comments or actions, it could appear as if we are condoning them.

Discrimination

Discrimination in its direct form is when a person is treated differently and worse from his or her peers because of one of the protected characteristics listed on page 5. Indirect discrimination may also be at play if an apparently fair policy has a different impact on an individual, meaning that they are disadvantaged; or if a person's disability creates a barrier or a disadvantage for them.

Imperial is committed to ensuring that all its staff work in an environment free of discrimination, and it will take action to ensure that discriminatory behaviour is addressed and eliminated.

Victimisation

Like discrimination and harassment, victimisation is unlawful under the Equality Act of 2010. Victimisation is when an individual is treated badly or subjected to a detriment because they complain about discrimination or help someone who has been the victim of discrimination. At Imperial clear channels for reporting unacceptable behaviour exist, and the College recognises the importance of ensuring that those who report such behaviour do not experience negative consequences.

Harassment

Harassment is when an individual is made to feel distressed, humiliated or threatened by the way someone else behaves. Some of the behaviour described at the top of this page, such as threatening or abusive behaviour, clearly falls into this category. However, less extreme behaviour, such as persistent insults and name-calling, ridicule, shouting, or unwanted and persistent attention may also fall into this category. Such behaviour can take place face-to-face, over the telephone or on email. Along with bullying (see below), harassment is considered unlawful for all staff by Imperial.

Bullying

Though bullying is not a behaviour covered by the Equality Act of 2010, it is unacceptable behaviour that Imperial takes very seriously. Bullying could involve spreading malicious rumours, regularly undermining a colleague (for example, by constantly interrupting or ignoring him or her, or by misusing a position of power), denying training or promotion opportunities, or deliberately picking on or excluding someone. Bullying can often have the same effect as harassment: it can create feelings of distress and humiliation.

Unacceptable behaviour

The following are examples of behaviour that should be avoided:

- making disrespectful or derogatory comments about others
- swearing in a professional environment
- losing your temper or raising your voice in frustration or anger
- sending emails that are aggressive in tone
- spreading rumours or backbiting.



Support available

Imperial values respect, and this creates a welcoming and inclusive environment for work and study.

However, we recognise that at times, the behaviour of individuals or small groups of people can fall short of what the College expects. In such situations, a range of options are available to staff.

Training and development

The College offers a full programme of training and development relating to equality and diversity. All staff are encouraged to explore the courses available. Areas covered include harassment and bullying, mental health, religion and belief, transgender awareness and disability equality. Several courses are designed specifically for managers.

Staff networks and committees

Imperial is home to a range of staff networks. Three of these – Able@Imperial, Imperial as One and Imperial 600 – are particularly focused on issues relating to equality and diversity, representing disabled staff (and staff who support disabled dependents); staff from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups; and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender staff respectively.

Alongside these staff networks, several committees exist to promote a working environment which allows all members of the Imperial community to thrive, including the Disability Action Committee, the Equality and Diversity Committee, and the Academic Gender Strategy Committee.

When something goes wrong

If you feel that you have been subjected to inappropriate behaviour, or if you have witnessed a colleague or student experience such behaviour, there are several ways of addressing the problem.

TALK TO SOMEONE

If you feel able to approach the person with your concerns then this may resolve the situation. If you do not feel confident about having this conversation then you may wish to discuss the problem informally and confidentially with your line manager, your HR representative or the Equality and Diversity Unit.

Alternatively, the university has a fully trained network of Harassment Support Contacts (HSCs). Members of this network are trained to provide informal, confidential support in matters relating to discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation. An HSC can help you explore your options, including whether you wish to address the problem formally.

You can also make use of our advice and counselling service, Confidential Care.

The College's Occupational Health Unit, its trade union representatives, and the Chaplaincy may also be able to provide guidance.

MEDIATION

Mediation is a confidential process in which a neutral third party brings conflicting parties together to facilitate open and honest dialogue. Mediation is not a formal dispute or grievance procedure: both parties enter into it voluntarily.

Your line manager or HR representative can provide guidance on mediation and help to begin the process.

RAISE A GRIEVANCE

If you decide that the problem should be raised formally, the College has a grievance procedure. The first step in reporting a grievance is to contact your line manager. Your HR representative can talk you through the process.



Further resources

There are a range of resources online to help you find out more about respect at work. Below we list a few of these, together with key contacts within the College who are available to offer advice and guidance.

College resources

The Imperial staff pages, at www.imperial.ac.uk/staff, provide a comprehensive guide to the support available to staff. In particular, you will find information on:

- Training and development
- Staff networks
- Trade unions
- Harassment Support Contacts (HSCs)
- Policies and procedures relating to discrimination, harassment, victimisation and bullying
- Coaching and mediation
- Equality and diversity.

You may prefer to speak to someone in the first instance. Your line manager or HR representative may be able to help, or you can contact someone from the Equality and Diversity Unit by emailing equality@imperial.ac.uk or calling 0207 594 0867/2887.

Support for students

The guidance here is aimed predominantly at staff, but students at the College benefit from similarly comprehensive support in dealing with issues relating to their study environment. All students are assigned a College tutor and should be made aware of the support available within their departments.

The Student Hub and Student Counselling Service can also provide guidance. Imperial College Union offers free, confidential and independent advice to students on academic, financial, legal, employment and many other issues.

The student support pages (www.imperial.ac.uk/students/student-support) and the welfare and advice section of the Imperial College Union website (www.imperialcollegeunion.org/welfare-and-advice) provide useful information on where to turn for guidance.

Other resources

Citizens Advice provides a comprehensive set of resources on discrimination on its webpages, and it can also provide tailored advice by phone or in person. www.citizensadvice.org.uk/discrimination

The UK Government provides an overview of the Equality Act of 2010 on its website: www.gov.uk/equality-act-2010-guidance

It also has more information on discrimination and your rights as an employee: www.gov.uk/discrimination-your-rights

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas) provides a range of materials online covering rights and responsibilities, good practice at work and resolving disputes (www.acas.org.uk). The Acas helpline also offers free and impartial advice for employees, who can call 0300 123 1100.

www.imperial.ac.uk/hr