

Bullying can lead to serious health consequences and individual distress for those affected, and cause organisational disruption with substantial consequences for the University.

Need to know more?

Further Information



If you feel you are being subjected to bullying, have been accused of bullying, or suspect bullying is occurring within your school or area of responsibility assistance is available to you.

Information regarding the University's policy and procedures, list of Specialist Contact Officers, and additional information is available on the Curtin website at: www.edusafe.edu.au/curtin/bullying.html



Remember: It is easier to prevent bullying than to intervene after an event or to mediate to break an established pattern. The University is committed to the prevention and management of bullying and further information regarding strategies and resources is available on the Curtin website. Bullying is not tolerated at Curtin.



Taking Care of Bullying

The Prevention and Management of Bullying @ Curtin



Bullying

It can happen anywhere, to anyone



Case Study

It began when she gave a paper at a conference which pointed out flaws in his research. He was out to get her from then on. He started a campaign of whispers and innuendo. He told people there have been complaints by students that her lectures were poorly presented, her marking questionable, that she was not approachable. He made sure that the people he told would pass the message on to the Dean or the head of department. At meetings he always made her seem inefficient or unreasonable, hinted that hormones made her behave irrationally, that she was hysterical, menopausal. Little things, all done so carefully that it wasn't easy to say who was behind it. But he was. (Alison, 37, lecturer) (Richards & Freeman, 2002)

Warning signs

To deal with bullying, we must be able to identify and respond to it immediately and effectively. To do so, it is important for all staff and students, especially managers and supervisors, to be aware of warning signs. A list of warning signs and more detailed information on bullying is available at www.edusafe.edu.au/curtin/bullying.html



Bullying – What is it?

Bullying is repeated, unreasonable or inappropriate behaviour directed towards a person, or group of persons, that creates a risk to health and safety (WorkSafe WA 2005).

A situation can be identified as bullying if a staff member or student is:

- harmed;
- intimidated;
- threatened;
- victimised;
- undermined;
- offended;
- degraded; or
- humiliated.

Bullying can be direct or indirect, verbal or physical or otherwise. It can occur within the workplace among managers, supervisors and workers; between staff; between staff and students; or between students.

Examples of bullying behaviour and information on sources of bullying is located at www.edusafe.edu.au/curtin/bullying.html



What constitutes bullying?

Examples of bullying are numerous and varied. By definition, the behaviours should be repeated to be called bullying, thus one-off behaviours do not normally qualify as bullying, however may still be considered inappropriate.

Bullying may be overt behaviour such as verbal abuse and the threat of physical violence; or covert behaviour including subtle intimidation through inappropriate comments about personal appearance, constant criticisms, isolation and/or exclusion, or unrealistic, embarrassing or degrading demands.

In the identification of bullying it is important to note that any form of bullying is unacceptable, it does not by default mean that people cannot disagree with each other or that managers cannot be directive.

What does not constitute bullying?

It is important to differentiate between a person's legitimate authority, as opposed to abuse or bullying. Supervisors have the right to direct and govern how work is done, a responsibility to monitor workflow and to manage performance. Disciplinary action taken against staff or students does not constitute bullying where the appropriate management protocols have been followed and communicated in a professional manner.

Constructive feedback and/or counselling on performance or professional behaviour are appropriate and reasonable management actions.

More information regarding what does or does not constitute bullying is available at www.edusafe.edu.au/curtin/bullying.html



What to do if I am being bullied

Any person who has concerns about bullying should refer to Curtin's policy and procedure,

which outlines options for prevention and resolution, and includes information and tools which may assist. This is available at www.policies.curtin.edu.au/documents/bullying-prevention_and_management.doc



- Complete a self-audit checklist
- Seek advice from a Specialist Contact Officer
- Keep a record
- Approach the person directly if possible
- Raise the matter with a supervisor
- Report the issue
- Proceed through options for resolution

What to do if I am accused of bullying

If a person is accused of bullying this can often be as stressful as for the complainant. A person accused of bullying should refer to Curtin's policy and procedure for information regarding support and



advice to reach an early resolution. In short, it is necessary to:

- Complete a self-audit checklist
- Seek advice from a Specialist Contact Officer
- Be prepared to discuss the situation to achieve resolution

