

How to...

...recognise bullying

Bullying is a form of harassment as defined in the Equality Act 2010 to be unwanted behaviour which causes offense or makes an individual feel intimidated or humiliated.

Bullying can cause low confidence, an increase in anxiety and fear and a feeling of isolation. It can cause the individual to feel hopeless as they feel they are not able to do anything to change the situation. Added to this, the individual being bullied may feel anger.

It is self-defined – if a member of the Students Association feels bullied or harassed they may make a complaint, either to the Association and/or the Open University. The Association operates under the [OU's Dignity and Respect Policy: *Bullying and harassment between students or students and staff.*](#) The Association will support anyone who feels they are a victim of bullying and if a complaint is made it will be investigated.

Accordingly, the OU's Dignity and Respect Policy states that action may be taken where bullying and harassment have been proved.

There are many types of bullying, some are obvious to spot while others can be more subtle.

Here are some types of bullying:

Physical bullying includes hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching and pushing or damaging property. Physical bullying can cause both short term and long term damage.

Verbal bullying is saying or writing mean things intended to hurt someone's feelings. This could include name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse.

Social bullying is often harder to recognise and can be carried out behind the bullied persons back. sometimes referred to as relational bullying, which involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships.

Cyber bullying is the same as verbal bullying and is carried out on social media, forums and other internet platforms.

The above list of examples is not exclusive or exhaustive; harassment can occur based on any personal attribute that makes the individual different from the majority, or from the person who harasses them.