

Request Reference: 3241

FOI Request dated 06/09/2024 -

- The number of ONLINE harassment / abuse / misconduct complaints made by academic staff at the institution towards fellow staff members between January 2020 and July 2024.
- The number of ONLINE harassment / abuse / misconduct complaints made by academic staff at the institution towards students between January 2020 and July 2024.
- The number of ONLINE harassment / abuse / misconduct complaints made by academic staff at the institution towards members of the public between January 2020 and July 2024.
- The number of ONLINE harassment / abuse / misconduct complaints made by academic staff at the institution towards person or persons unknown between January 2020 and July 2024.
- What the outcome of any of these complaints was.
- If this information (or similar data) is routinely collected by your institution, and if so, for how long this information has been collected.
- The department responsible for managing any complaints of this nature.
- If this information is NOT routinely collected by your institution, why not?

Response

• Cases of harassment that have occurred via any means of electronic communication	Academic years unless stated			
	Jan 20 - Jul 21	21/22	22/23	23/24
1. Complaints towards fellow staff members	0	<5*	0	0
2. Complaints towards students	0	0	0	0
3. Complaints towards the public	0	0	0	0
4. Complaints towards unknown persons	0	0	0	0

* Section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) places two duties on public authorities. Unless exemptions apply, the first duty at Section 1(1)(a) is to confirm or deny whether the information specified in a request is held. The second duty at Section 1(1)(b) is to disclose information that has been confirmed as being held. Where exemptions are relied upon Section 17 of FOIA requires that we provide the applicant with a notice which: a) states that fact b) specifies the exemption(s) in question and c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies.

On this occasion, it is not possible to provide the information in the format request. The Act contains several exemptions that allow public authorities to withhold certain information from release. We have applied the following exemption to part of your request.

S.40(2), Personal Information - Disclosure of some of the requested information would be contrary to the requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation

In line with s.40(2) of the Act we have removed certain personal data from our responses in the tables above.

A report of online harassment made by any living individual, against a perpetrator and the specific sanction and outcomes of those reports, is the personal data of either the reporter or perpetrator.

The numbers of reports made of online harassment against a staff member, and the numbers of specific types of sanctions and outcomes to those reports were low and fell below five. We believe that disclosing the exact numbers of the requested information will make these living individuals identifiable. This information specifically constitutes the personal data of these living individuals, as defined by Article 4(1) of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Since disclosure of this information would make these living individuals identifiable it would be contrary to the requirements of Article 5(1)(a) of the GDPR to disclose this information; namely that information must be processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner. These individuals would have no expectation that this information would be made publicly available, and we have not identified a lawful basis that would allow or require us to disclose this information. Where information has been removed from the table, we have replaced the text with <5.

5. As per above exemption, due to the figures being low we are unable to provide outcomes as they may identify living individuals.

6. We have maintained records of all formal casework in a managed and systematic way since at least 2016. Prior to this casework was recorded and stored on individual personal files as appropriate.

7. If the complaint was against a member of staff, this would be managed through the relevant HR policy and procedure by the relevant manager and with advice from HR.

8. We do collect and deal with all complaints made against members of staff.

This is the definition of harassment in our Bullying and Harassment Policy, last updated April 2024: