



HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

# RULES OF PROCEDURE

## on the response to bullying and other types of violence at the University of Iceland

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Responsibility: Division of  
Human Resources  
Approved by the University  
Council on  
02 November 2017  
Case number: HÍ17110067

### 1. Article

#### *Objective.*

Bullying and other types of violence are strictly forbidden at the University of Iceland, and will not be tolerated in relations between staff, students, or others partaking in UI operations, i.e. contractors or guests.

The objective of these rules is to ensure that strategies are in place should incidents of bullying or violence occur at the University of Iceland. In addition, these Rules of Procedure are intended to promote the prevention of and measures against bullying and violence at the University and to standardise responses, in accordance with the [Act on Occupational Health, Safety and Safety at Work, no. 46/1980](#) as well as the [Regulation on bullying, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment and violence at the workplace, no. 1009/2015](#).

The Professional Council deals with sexual and gender-related harassment. A separate set of rules of procedure applies to such cases, see [Professional Council](#)

### 2. Article

#### *Terminology.*

Terminology definitions are in accordance with Regulation no. 1009/2015. The term bullying refers to repeated behaviour that generally causes dysphoria in the person subjected to it. This type of behaviour includes belittling, insulting, hurting, or threatening the victim or inducing fear.

Disagreements in views or disagreements arising due to differing interests do not fall under the scope of this definition. The term *violence* refers to any type of behaviour which leads to or may lead to physical or psychological harm or distress for the person subjected to it, as well as the threat thereof, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty.

### 3. Article

#### *Responsibility.*

Staff, management, and students share responsibility for promoting a good and safe work environment, positive work atmosphere, and tolerance.

Anyone who considers themselves to be the victim of bullying or violence and anyone who is aware of or has reasoned suspicion or knowledge of such an offence at the workplace, bears responsibility to report such behaviour, to ensure that the matter can be properly addressed, cf. Article 9 of the [Regulation on bullying, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment and violence at the workplace, no. 1009/2015](#). Reports shall be submitted and dealt with in accordance with Article 5 of these Rules of Procedure.

The University of Iceland Division of Human Resources establishes a policy on the issue and evaluates its status, such as by taking the results of job satisfaction surveys into account. A Response Team reviews and assesses issues presented to it, provides counsel, and investigates individual cases, as applicable.

Cases of bullying and violence shall be recorded by the Division of Human Resources, i.e. the type and how they are being handled. Individual cases shall be treated as confidential, cf. Article 8 of these Rules of Procedure.

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#### 4. Article

##### *Response Team for Bullying and Violence.*

The Head of the Division of Human Resources appoints a Response Team for Bullying and Violence. Its role is to process matters relating to possible offences committed at the University of Iceland. The Response Team shall comprise three individuals with knowledge and experience in handling matters of this kind. Two members shall be staff members of the Division of Human Resources, including one of the lawyers of the Division. The third member shall be an external party.

Care must be taken to ensure that the Response Team is appointed in compliance with the provisions of Article 15 of the Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men, no. 10/2008.

The role of the Response Team is to receive and investigate complaints regarding bullying and violence at the University of Iceland, provide supervisors of the victim's and perpetrator's academic or organisational units with a statement on these complaints, and propose solution strategies.

The Response Team shall provide counsel for the Head of the Division of Human Resources as well as all administrative staff and management regarding preventive measures against bullying and violence.

During the process, the Response Team shall comply with the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act, no. 37/1993, for example concerning the right to be heard, duty to investigate, equal treatment of parties and prompt handling, as applicable. Consideration shall also be given to the eligibility rules stipulated in the Administrative Procedures Act regarding the suitability of team members to address issues each time.

#### 5. Article

##### *Reports and complaints.*

Anyone wishing to report or submit a complaint regarding an offence of bullying or violence committed against them or anyone who has witnessed such an offence in their work or studies at the University of Iceland by a staff member, student, contractor, or guest, shall contact the human resources manager of the school in question, the University of Iceland Student Counselling and Career Centre, or the Division of Human Resources, so that the case may be brought to the attention of the Response Team for Bullying and Violence.

A formal complaint regarding bullying and violence shall be submitted on the applicable form, which will be forwarded to the Response Team for Bullying and Violence at the University of Iceland Division of Human Resources. Anyone receiving such a formal complaint shall immediately refer the matter to the Response Team.

The formal complaint must include:

- A description of the type of alleged bullying or violence encountered,
- The duration of the event(s),
- The name and organisational unit of the alleged perpetrator,
- The name and organisational unit of the alleged victim,
- The names of anyone who may have assisted in possibly resolving the situation,

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- Anything else considered of relevance to the case,
- The signature of the person filing the complaint, their name as well as academic or organisational unit.

#### 6. Article

##### *Report, process.*

When the Response Team for Bullying and Violence takes a case under review based on a written report, a decision on the continuation or dismissal of a case shall be taken. The Response Team records all reports and their outcome. If a report is filed by a person other than the alleged victim of bullying or violence, the Response Team shall summon the alleged victim to a meeting and review their position on the report. Following the interviews with the parties to the case, the Response Team decides whether the case shall be formally reviewed. If a formal review is done, the process shall be carried out in accordance with Article 7 of these Rules of Procedure.

#### 7. Article

##### *Formal complaint, process.*

The alleged perpetrator/s and respective superiors shall be informed that a formal bullying or violence complaint has been filed and that the case shall be formally reviewed and investigated. The alleged perpetrator/s shall receive a copy of the formal complaint.

An estimate of the presumed duration of the investigation shall be made and both parties as well as their superiors shall be informed of the likely time frame. Both parties as well as their superiors shall be made aware of how the process shall be conducted, that their reports shall be put on record, and the events specified in the complaint shall be presented to the other party as well as witnesses, if applicable. The parties shall, moreover, be informed, that a case report will be prepared, evaluating whether an act of bullying or violence has been committed or not.

The heads of the relevant academic or organisational unit(s) shall, having consulted with the Response Team, take any necessary measures concerning the academic or work arrangements of the victim and the perpetrator. Efforts shall be made to reach an accommodation regarding work arrangements whilst the matter is under investigation.

The Response Team shall meet with both the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator. It shall be determined whether the parties to the case wish to name any witnesses, which should be consulted. The Response Team shall meet with any witnesses proposed by the parties to the case. The manner in which witnesses are mentioned in the report shall be assessed. However, the Response Team is to ensure that statements cannot be traced back to individual witnesses, if at all possible. The Response Team shall, moreover, ensure equal treatment of all parties involved and always maintain the working practice to discuss matters with both parties twice. If witnesses are involved, the Response Team shall meet with them, where deemed appropriate, following the first conversation with the parties to the case.

Both parties to the case shall be offered support, professional assistance from a psychologist, social worker, or other therapist with specialist knowledge of the offences involved.

Before finalising the report, both parties to the case and any witnesses consulted shall have the opportunity to read over the sections pertaining to them and to make comments or corrections as needed. The final case report shall describe the circumstances, perspectives and views of the parties

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to the case, witness reports, conclusions, and key proposals. Special separate resolution meetings shall be held with the parties to the case as well as the heads of the respective academic or organisational unit. In these meetings, the report or relevant sections thereof, shall be handed over, the results of the investigation and next steps shall be discussed, or the closing of the case shall be announced. The case report shall be confidential and be treated as such.

Should the Response Team deem that an offence has been committed, it shall submit a proposal to the heads of the relevant academic or organisational unit concerning the appropriate response. These shall then determine the most appropriate course of action, in collaboration with the Division of Human Resources or the Student Counselling and Career Centre. Strategies shall be aimed at stopping the behaviour in question and prevent such behaviour from being repeated at the workplace or field of study. The Response Team shall furthermore assess whether there is a need for general action within the academic or organisational unit in question as a result of the case, and, if so, to propose such actions to the Division of Human Resources.

Within three months of implementing strategies for resolving the behaviour, the Response Team shall invite both parties to the case and their superiors to a meeting to assess the success of these strategies. If satisfactory results have been achieved, the case is deemed closed; otherwise the Response Team shall propose further actions.

#### 8. Article

##### *Confidentiality.*

Members of the Response Team for Bullying and Violence as well as others involved in cases addressed by the Team are required to treat individual cases as confidential. It is not permissible to share information on cases with unauthorised parties. All documents and information related to individual cases shall be treated in accordance with the Act on the Protection of Privacy as regards the Processing of Personal Information.

#### 9. Article

##### *Statistical information.*

The Response Team for Bullying and Violence shall record and maintain statistical data on cases it receives. This data shall be published annually.

#### 10. Article

##### *Review.*

After five years from the date of adoption of these Rules of Procedure, it shall be assessed, based on gained experience, whether these Rules of Procedure shall be combined with the Rules of Procedure on the Response to Gender-related and Sexual Harassment and Other Sexual Violence within the University of Iceland, approved by the University Council on 7 September 2017.