

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Anti-racism Code of Conduct for staff, students, PGRs and placement providers

Purpose of this document

As set out in the [student](#) and [staff](#) policies on preventing and addressing bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct, the University will not tolerate unacceptable behaviours such as bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct. This Code of Conduct gives supplementary guidance to these Policies, outlining the School's stance on racial harassment specifically, and to support our implementation of the [BMA Charter on Racial Harassment](#). This Code of Conduct sets the School's expectations of behaviour and conduct of staff, students and postgraduate researchers. It is also intended to clarify to placement providers the expectations that we have for their staff who interact with our students, and the standards to which they should hold our students.

Our commitment to anti-racism

We strive for the University to be a welcoming and inclusive environment where everyone's behaviour is professional and respectful. We acknowledge however that racial inequality exists within higher education and within our University. We promote equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), and strictly prohibit discrimination and harassment based on race, including skin colour, nationality, ethnicity, national origins, accents and dress codes. It is not enough to simply condemn racism. Only through being anti-racist, actively challenging race inequality, can we make meaningful and sustainable change. We are committed to actively opposing any form of racism and promoting an anti-racist environment to ensure all individuals are treated with fairness and respect. Your experiences matter. We encourage inclusive language. You can find the University's Inclusive Language guidance here: [Inclusive Language Guidance](#).

Our journey to anti-racism

Being anti-racist requires ongoing action. This Code of Conduct is a step towards embedding anti-racism in our School. Our anti-racism work is part of our broader strategy to become more inclusive and accessible to ensure equality for students and staff. Details of our anti-racism work and progress are available on the [BMA Charter SWAY](#).

Understanding racial discrimination and harassment

Under the [UK Equality Act 2010](#), discrimination on the basis of a range of protected characteristics, including race, is unlawful. Discrimination arises when someone is unfairly disadvantaged because of their protected characteristic.

Racial discrimination may be direct, for example, withdrawing an offer of a job after someone discloses their ethnicity. It can also be indirect, for example, in order to be eligible for a job role, a candidate's first language must be English.

The Act defines [harassment](#) as unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. This might include what someone does (physical touch, gesture and/or violence), what they say (threats, insults), as well as other ways that they communicate (writing, images, music).

Understanding racial microaggressions

Microaggressions are brief, everyday interactions that express a prejudiced attitude toward a member of a marginalised group (e.g. people from racially minoritised heritages). They are subtle and can be unintentional. Microaggressions are based on automatic assumptions or stereotypes, prejudices and biases. If left unchecked, they can cumulatively have an adverse impact on people's physical and mental health, sense of belonging, career, and overall wellbeing. Microaggressions contribute to feelings of invalidation, stress and unease. Microaggressions can make those who experience them feel devalued or 'othered'. If the behaviour persists or increases, it can amount to harassment.

The School of Medicine is committed to respecting freedom of expression in line with the values and policies of the University of Leeds, including the [Freedom of Expression Policy and Code of Practice](#).

The School promotes an environment where ignorance is not an excuse for microaggressive behaviour. Therefore, **this Code of Conduct includes intentional or unintentional racial microaggressive actions and behaviours.**

Racial microaggressions

These include, but are not limited to:

- **Assuming someone's competence or lack of competence based on their ethnicity.**
 - Say something in Chinese.
 - You speak English so well, you're so articulate.
- **Supposing someone's cultural background or religious beliefs.**
 - Are you doing medicine because you want to, or did your parents pressure you into it?
 - You can't eat or drink anything all day? Not even water?
- **Implying that aspects of their character (their intelligence, how confidently they communicate) are associated with their race or ethnic origin (actual or assumed).**
 - Asian women are so shy and quiet. Be more vocal, speak up.
 - Why are Black people so loud?
- **Refusing to accept someone is British, or by asking where they are 'originally' from in a way that implies they don't belong.**
 - Where are you really from?
 - Where are your parents originally from?
- **Dismissing someone's experiences of racism.**
 - It was just a joke, why are you overreacting?
 - Everyone has an equal chance to succeed in this University.

The Anti-racism Code of Conduct:

Students, staff, PGRs and placement staff **will not** engage in:

- Verbal abuse, both spoken and written (including threats, insults, racist jokes, offensive name-calling or other racist remarks and comments)
- Racist physical acts (from insulting gestures to intimidation, unwanted touch, or violence)
- Denial of opportunities or exclusion from conversations or activities
- Production or display of racially offensive material (whether written, drawn, or performed)
- Encouragement of others to engage in acts of racial harassment
- Any form of microaggressive behaviour or comments

Students, staff, PGRs and placement staff who work with our students **are** encouraged to:

- Challenge racist behaviour, comments, or remarks
- Report experiences of racism (whether against themselves or another person)
- Provide support to those who have experienced racism (whether from another student, a member of staff, or patients) and to encourage them to report incidents to the School
- Engage with the School processes to address racism
- Examine their own behaviour and reflect on their biases and assumptions

Working together against racism: SPEAK OUT

Your experiences matter. We **strongly encourage** you to **speak out** by reporting experiences or observed incidents of racial harassment and microaggressive behaviour. Incidents between or among students, staff, PGRs and placement staff, and incidents in person, online, via social media, emails or WhatsApp should all be reported. Even if you believe an incident is a microaggression and/or you do not want to take any further action, please report it. The School can provide support to you and tackle racial harassment that is reported. Incidents can be reported via:

- The [Faculty of Medicine and Health Freedom to Speak Up Guardians](#) (for students) or [NHS Freedom to Speak Up Guardians](#) (for students and placement provider staff) – they will discuss your experiences in a confidential, safe, and impartial space. They will help you explore options and make an informed decision about the best next steps for you. You can decide to take no further action or to escalate your concerns with complete confidentiality unless there are concerns about your or others' safety.
- The [Report & Support](#) website (for students and staff) – this will enable you to report incidents anonymously, or by speaking with an advisor, who will provide support, information and advice, in a safe and confidential space. Anonymous reporting may not result in action being taken, but it is important because it allows us to better understand what is happening in the School and to use this information to inform our anti-racism work.
- The Clinical Placement Reporting Tool (for [students on placement](#) and [placement provider staff](#)) – this offers a formal route to reporting any unprofessional behaviour experienced while on placement. All reports will be treated confidentially, and after speaking to a member of the team you will have the option of escalating your concern to an investigation or asking for no further action.
- Your line manager, head of service or [Human Resources](#) (for staff).

All reported incidents will be taken seriously, investigated and actions taken.

Intersectionality

Racial harassment can be linked to other protected characteristics, for example, age, disability, gender reassignment, religion, sex, and/or sexual orientation. We acknowledge these interactions and encourage you to **speak out** even if you are unsure about the type of harassment experienced.

Consequences of breaching this Code of Conduct

Consequences of breaching the Code of Conduct will vary depending on (a) whether the individual is a member of staff, a student, or employed by a placement provider, and (b) the severity of the incident and its impact. Incidents of racial harassment can constitute gross misconduct. Serious breaches could result in suspension and removal from the course for students or dismissal for staff.

Review: This document is reviewed annually.

Doing nothing promotes inequality. Speak out and make a difference.