Introduction
The University of Southern Queensland is actively committed to protecting the rights of both students and employees to achieve their full potential in an environment which values and affirms diversity and is free from discrimination, harassment, victimisation and vilification. The University will take all reasonable steps and actions to ensure that employees and students will be treated fairly and with dignity and respect whilst working or studying at the University.

(Anti-Discrimination and Freedom from Harassment policy)

Identifying a workplace harasser
A person who engages in aggressive behaviour intended to physically or psychologically hurt another person, is often referred to as a bully:
- Bullies usually exploit the power attributed to their position, status or skills in the workplace and both men and women can be the victims as well as the perpetrators of bullying behaviour.
- People who bully often believe that what they are doing is legitimate behaviour under the circumstances. Some may believe that it is a requirement of their position or an expectation of their employer.
- Others bully because they are insecure about their work and fear that those who are skilled and good at their job may show them up.
- Sometimes bullies seek more power or hide their own shortcomings behind aggressive behaviour.
- Even when not openly identified or reported, bullies are usually known within an organisation and there is a general reluctance to work with that person or in that section.

People engaged in bullying may be unwittingly supported by management in their behaviour as they appear to have a firm hold on their staff and get results. However these results are often short-lived and the individuals being bullied soon find that the cost of compliance is too great. The result can be payments for worker's compensation, employees taking extended or regular personal leave, and a high turnover rate of staff in that section.

Identifying the behaviour
Workplace harassment (or bullying) is usually a repetitive behaviour, designed to wear down the recipient who eventually feels hopeless, demeaned and inadequate.
- Some harassers instil significant fear in the people they target resulting in regular absences from work or study.
- Workplace harassers who have positional power over their victims are usually managers or people in authority who are willing to abuse this power.
- Harassers who use personal power over their victims rely on their influence or physical presence to bully those who are junior, equal or senior to them. This may occur in either direct or indirect ways.

Direct methods of bullying include belittling a person in a group, spreading malicious rumours or lies about them, taking credit for their ideas or excluding them from conversations or relevant information.

Indirect forms of bullying may be very subtle and involve behaviours such as blocking or negatively influencing projects, reducing the other person's opportunities to express opinions; judging others' work in an unjust manner; openly dismissing the opinions of other employees or publicly questioning the other person's sense of judgement. It can also include threats to destroy someone's career, academic or work related outcomes by constantly undervaluing their effort or criticising their work.
Effects of workplace harassment on employees and students

People who harass others through bullying behaviour are often successful at this method because their intimidation silences their victims through fear. It is an extremely difficult situation to address as many employees and students fear that the repercussions by making the situation public will make matters worse and not better. In an academic situation, students fear that their work will be marked less favourably, that they may fail the course, or that they will be ostracized by their lecturer or supervisor so that they cannot get the help they need to pass the course. In other cases there is often a general fear that the victim will not be believed and no action will occur, leaving them worse off than before. Sometimes bullying can be hard to prove, however if not addressed at all, the problem is not likely to go away.

The resultant stress from withstanding the harassment can cause:
- Increased personal leave
- Changes to normal behaviour by victims
- Social withdrawal
- Changes to eating habits
- Alcohol or drug abuse or misuse
- Deterioration in normal work performance
- Depression and other mental health issues
- Fear of working in some situations or returning to work after an absence
- Increase turnover of employees
- Increased withdrawal of students from a course
- The need for compensation for stress related illnesses

Addressing workplace harassment

- Employees and students should be encouraged to report all instances of bullying behaviour, threats of violence and violent acts involving themselves, using the Discrimination and Harassment Policy and associated resolution procedures. By not addressing workplace harassment when and as it occurs, the problem cannot be resolved and other people may be subjected to conduct which may be unlawful and will not be tolerated by the University on any level.
- All employees are encouraged to undertake communication, conflict resolution and/or management development training programs offered by the University's Professional Development Program.
- Senior managers are asked to identify such behaviour amongst those that they supervise and provide them with an opportunity to change their behaviour through performance counselling.
- Students are reminded that workplace harassment applies equally to situations where email, telephone or written responses are provided to other students or employees. Bullying behaviour occurring in on-line environments including the use of email groups, online discussion forums or to personal email addresses by individuals or by groups of students will not be tolerated by the University and may result in disciplinary action under the University of Southern Queensland Statute No.3 (Student Discipline) 1999, Section 5 Misconduct.

The following USQ policies can provide further information:
- Anti-Discrimination and Freedom from Harassment
- Student Expectations and Responsibilities
- Code of Conduct
- Discrimination and Harassment Complaint Resolution for Students
- Discrimination and Harassment Complaint Resolution for Employees
- Work Health and Safety