

## DIGNITY ADVISER - Role Description

Role Title: **DIGNITY ADVISER**

Reports to: **DEAN OF STUDENTS AND EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ADVISER**

### Purpose of the role:

To raise awareness of the Dignity at Work and Study Policy. The Dignity Advisers, appointed from the staff and student community at the University, will facilitate **informal resolution** in cases of harassment in line with SGUL's Dignity at Work and Study Policy and will advise complainants of the courses of action available to them, including being aware of the Harassment and bullying complaints procedure for students and the Harassment and bullying complaints procedure for staff.

To identify and refer serious allegations to the appropriate University authority. Dignity Advisers are provided with training which covers the law in relation to harassment, SGUL's policy and their role.

A Dignity Adviser network will meet for ½ day once a term with the Dean of Students, or Deputy Dean of Students and Equality and Diversity Adviser to facilitate mutual support and the sharing of experience. Dignity Advisers may also wish to see the Dean of Students or in her absence the Deputy Dean of Students and/or Equality and Diversity Adviser every 4 to 6 weeks for a supportive supervisory conversation. For more urgent conversations the Dean, Deputy Dean and Equality and Diversity Adviser are available on an ad hoc basis.

### Duties of the post:

The Dignity at Work and Study Adviser will:

1. Listen to members of SGUL staff and students who believe they are being harassed, or those accused of harassment, clarify the options open to them and guide them to the right resources in resolving the matter informally where possible. Student advisers will advise fellow students only. Staff may advise students or staff.
2. Respond promptly to all individuals who contact them for advice. As individuals may be in crisis, it is essential that Dignity Advisers are able to respond to all enquiries swiftly. In practice this means that Dignity Advisers will aim to establish initial contact with the individual within 24 hours of receiving a request.
3. The Dignity Advisers scheme is available to all. However the same Dignity Adviser will not advise both a person who believes they are being harassed, and a person accused or harassment if they are both involved in the same complaint. Instead they will each be able to access a separate Dignity Adviser.
4. Where requested, to provide **short-term** support to assist individuals to resolve their concerns at an **informal** level. This may include meeting with the individual concerned **not more than one or two times** to:

- discuss with the individual what s/he may wish to say or what s/he may write to the person whom s/he considers has harassed or bullied/her/him;
- accompany the individual to speak to the alleged harasser.
- (for staff) accompany the individual to seek guidance from a senior manager.
- Dignity Advisers will not represent or accompany individuals at the formal stage of the process.

(This list is not exhaustive. The Dignity Adviser acts to support and not represent the individual).

5. Deal with all cases with the utmost confidentiality except in cases where there is an unacceptable risk to a member of staff, student or SGUL.
6. Maintain summary records of any action taken in relation to cases and monitor these cases and their outcomes. These records will be stored by Equality and Diversity Adviser in the strictest confidence.
7. Support the annual monitoring of the Dignity at Work and Study Policy through recording (on an anonymous basis) the number of cases in which the Dignity Adviser is involved and the methods by which they were resolved, where known.
8. Refer individuals to another Dignity Adviser where necessary, or to other agencies or support systems where appropriate, in line with the parameters of the Adviser role.
9. Attend training in relation to the Dignity at Work and Study Policy and the role and participate in the regular sharing of experience and good practice in order to develop skills and experience relevant to the role.
10. Attend termly review meetings regularly to discuss ongoing cases and to explore any emotional feelings or conflicts as a result of working as a Dignity Adviser.
11. Help to raise awareness of the university's policies and procedures on bullying and harassment and promote the inclusive values of the institution.

*- It is envisaged that this role will take on average no more than 6 hours a month per adviser, excluding training. –*

**Person Specification:**

1. No particular seniority, status, educational, or professional qualifications are required. However, undergraduate students must be in year 2 or above of their degree programme. Likewise postgraduate students must have been a student at the University for at least a year.
2. A clear commitment to equality of opportunity in the workplace and a willingness to debate all aspects of SGUL's policy with students and staff.

3. Have sufficient time available to perform the role to the highest standards. This includes understanding the importance of responding swiftly to all enquiries and maintaining excellent communication links with all individuals who ask for help. This should be agreed with individual's line manager or in the case of students the Dean of Students.
4. An understanding of the nature of harassment and bullying and the ways in which it can affect those who are harassed/bullied in their workplace or place of education.
5. The courage and confidence to support staff and students in difficult situations.
6. Non-judgmental, with well-developed interpersonal and listening skills and an approachable style. The ability to advise colleagues in a non-directional way.
7. Excellent interpersonal skills that will enable effective communication with staff and students from a wide range of backgrounds and at all levels across SGUL.
8. The ability to treat all disclosures in a confidential and sensitive manner, except where there is an unacceptable risk to a member of staff, student or SGUL.
9. Committed to embedding practices which embrace diversity and promote equality of opportunity.
10. Willingness to work with staff and students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

### **Benefits**

Members of staff who serve as Dignity Advisers will be appointed for a 2 year term. Students will be appointed for 1 year initially. After that if they wish they can seek reappointment.

The role is voluntary and there is no remuneration for these duties. However, Dignity Advisers will be offered:

- Full training in the facilitation of informal resolution.
- Opportunities to attend Networking or Professional Development Events offered by the Equality & Diversity Adviser.
- Increased communication and negotiation skills, useful experience in managing difficult situations and insight and knowledge regarding good management practice.
- Student Advisers will accrue points towards the St George's Award.
- Role breaks of variable duration for advisers who are going through a busy time (such as new parents, high pressure work period, etc).
- An annual dinner.