

# Brookes Behaviour

## Introduction

We expect staff and students to abide by the rules and expectations set out by the University, just as we expect staff to abide by the staff code of conduct. Students can be seen as representing the University in a variety of contexts, e.g. in a seminar, wearing a Brookes hoodie around Oxford, on placement, or playing sport for the University. Therefore, we expect students' behaviour to accord with following standards at all times:

- Engage with your learning opportunities and any support services you might need.
- Treat other people with consideration and sensitivity, avoiding actions which are likely to cause them distress or harm.
- Value diversity and difference.
- Treat other people with respect, making sure you seek their [consent](#) for any actions you take towards them or in relation to them.
- Have care for other people's physical and mental health and safety.
- Respect privacy and confidentiality.
- Respect the University and its property.

Oxford Brookes University is a community aiming to provide a safe, equitable, inclusive environment, where students can learn effectively, develop themselves and live together respectfully. Whether actively studying, on temporary withdrawal, or on a work or study placement, the University expects that students treat each other and themselves with care and respect.

## Zero Tolerance

Zero tolerance<sup>1</sup> means that Oxford Brookes University will not tolerate any form of bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation and will always take appropriate, proportionate and timely action if this is brought to the University's attention. We recognise that being zero tolerant means different things in different situations; it could mean disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal/expulsion; while in other cases informal action may be more appropriate. The proportionality of action taken will be determined by factors such as severity, intent, and impact. Zero tolerance does not mean dealing with matters outside the formal policies or making hasty decisions: it means following a fair process, while treating everyone with dignity and respect.

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<sup>1</sup> The zero tolerance statement included in this document is a working version and is undergoing formal and informal consultation, with an aim to review this in 12 months. The University invites all members of its community - staff and students - to shape, challenge and comment on what zero tolerance means in relation to unwanted behaviour at Brookes. If you wish to contribute to this process, please get in touch with the Student Investigation and Resolution Team on [sirt@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:sirt@brookes.ac.uk)

All students are expected to maintain an appropriate standard of behaviour, for the benefit of all members of Oxford Brookes and the wider community. The following sections of this policy give examples of how you should keep this in mind in relation to different areas of your University experience.

## Relationships

You will meet a lot of new people at University and they might have different experiences, beliefs and expectations from you. Behaviour that is acceptable in one set of friends may be considered unacceptable in a different setting. Make sure you are respectful with behaviour and actions when interacting. If you are unsure about boundaries, please ask those you are interacting with and always seek [consent](#) for any interaction.

As noted above, the University takes a zero-tolerance approach to harassment, bullying, hate incidents and sexual harassment - more information can be found on the [Report and Support webpage](#).

## Diversity and inclusion

Oxford Brookes aims to promote a culture of respect and trust. Increasing diversity and inclusion, and ensuring everyone is treated with respect and dignity, is central to the University. The University takes a zero-tolerance approach to any form of harassment, hate incident, bullying or victimisation. These include, but are not limited to:

- Use of abusive or offensive language.
- Ignoring or belittling someone's views and opinions.
- Deliberately withholding information or excluding someone which may affect their performance or wellbeing.
- Setting unreasonable demands.
- Excessive supervision or misuse of power or position.
- Making negative comments about personal or physical characteristics or appearance, including teasing, insults or derogatory name-calling.
- The telling of homophobic, sexist, transphobic, ageist, 'ableist', religiously discriminatory or racist jokes and/or banter.
- Publishing, circulating or displaying pornographic, racist, homophobic, transphobic, sexually suggestive or otherwise offensive pictures or other visual or written materials, communications or images.
- Exclusion from normal work or study place, conversations, or social events.

You will come across people at University who have life experiences that are very different to yours, and who behave or express themselves in ways that you are not familiar with. University is a learning environment, and we would encourage you to approach these experiences with curiosity, respect, and an open mind.

If you experience or witness an incident that you feel violates someone's dignity, and you feel safe and confident to speak up, try to deal with the situation in a calm and patient manner. You can also report, anonymously if you prefer, through the [Report and Support tool](#). Reporting provides

valuable information, helps staff to understand what is happening on campus, and allows us to take disciplinary action if possible and appropriate. If you experience or witness an incident off campus, you can still report it to us and receive support.

If you are concerned that a University or Faculty policy or practice violates our commitment to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion, please raise your concerns with the [student support services](#).

We understand that submitting a report or a complaint might feel daunting, however we expect all students to raise concerns where they have them. You can access support in making a report or complaint through the [Brookes Union Advice Service](#), or by raising it with a representative such as a course rep or programme administration team.

If someone has raised a report or complaint about an incident in which you are alleged to have done something, Brookes Union Advice Service can also support you through any conduct procedures.

## Social media

By 'social media' we mean online interactive communication tools, e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. Social media is a tool used for a variety of purposes. The University is committed to freedom of expression and encourages students to exchange ideas and participate in debate. However, all social media communications that represent the University must comply with relevant University policies that address staff and student conduct. If you have 'Oxford Brookes University' identified on your social media, you will be seen as representing the University.

If members of staff or students or the wider community are subject to harassment, discrimination or threatening content via social media, it may be reported and investigated. Students and staff are expected to raise any issues directly with the University in an appropriate manner, e.g. if you are unhappy with something the University has done, raise this with a student representative or submit a complaint so we can take action quickly.

**REMEMBER!** Words or pictures shared via social media can be captured, shared widely and retained forever. Think carefully about posting a photo of yourself or someone else, or a comment that could be misinterpreted. Whether it is via a private thread or publicly available it can affect your future career or lead to investigations into your behaviour or your Fitness to Practise.

## Learning environment

Studying at university is likely to be very different from your previous learning environments. Overall, you will probably be given greater academic and personal freedom. You may have to learn how to organise your own time so that you get the most from your education and new opportunities.

Lectures, seminars, tutorials and lab sessions should start on time, and students should arrive punctually: late arrivals are disruptive to students and staff. Be respectful - mobile phones must be switched off or in silent mode in lectures or seminars (except in exceptional circumstances, where you should seek permission from the lead staff member). Students should not talk amongst themselves when others are speaking to the whole group. Disruptive behaviour impacts on learning, and will not be tolerated by staff. University staff have a right to ask disruptive students to leave the session or teaching room, or refer them to the [student conduct procedures](#).

# Libraries

Our libraries provide communal spaces for students to study and we ask that you are considerate of fellow students when you use our space and services. We want you to enjoy time spent in our libraries and the library teams look forward to welcoming you as regular visitors during your time with us.

In some libraries there are clearly marked spaces that indicate what sort of behaviour and level of noise is acceptable. A traffic light system indicates whether talking is allowed, or whether silent study is in place. Please respect fellow students by behaving appropriately in the designated zones.

Space in the libraries is always in demand so students are encouraged to take their belongings away from the library if they are taking a longer break or attending teaching sessions. Students should clear up their space once finished. If you leave your personal belongings (bags, coats, laptops) unattended, they may be cleared away.

Students not behaving considerately will be asked to leave or move to an alternative location. Student ID cards should be carried at all times.

# Assessments

In order to progress through your degree course, you will need to demonstrate your learning through assessments. The University expects you to engage with all assessments and, if you are finding it challenging, that you actively seek support from the range of student services available to you. There are various [support and wellbeing services](#) available to help you with your work, as well as your Academic Advisor, your module leaders, the [Student Support Coordinators](#), the [Centre for Academic Development](#), and Subject Librarians.

If you think you need reasonable adjustments, e.g. for a physical health condition, mental health condition or Specific Learning Difficulty, please register with the [Inclusive Support Service](#). Students are expected to familiarise themselves with the support available, and to take responsibility for seeking help when they need it.

If something unexpected impacts on your ability to study or carry out an assessment, you are expected to use the [Exceptional Circumstances](#) procedure.

Cheating is not tolerated by the university; allegations of [academic misconduct](#) will be actively investigated by the university and may incur a penalty.

# Communication with the University

The University will send important information via your University email account, so make sure you are reading everything that is sent from all departments of the University as well as specific staff on your course. It is your responsibility to check your University email account regularly so you are aware of information and updates.

Please be respectful when communicating with staff. Remember that they are dealing with queries from hundreds of other students, so be patient and do not expect an immediate response. Staff are not expected to work outside of normal working hours, and they will respond as soon as they can.

There is a lot of information available on the Brookes webpages, designed to answer any queries you have about student life at Brookes. Please check all relevant sources of information - e.g. the [University Handbook](#), your Student Information pages, programme and module handbooks, [Student Central FAQ pages](#), the [Student News webpage](#) and regular Student News emails - before contacting individual staff with queries.

## Residences

All students and staff who live and work in University accommodation have the right to feel comfortable and secure and enjoy their experience, provided this does not adversely impact upon other students or staff.

Occasionally other students will have differing ideas of what communal living involves and they may be incompatible with your own views or experience. Living in University accommodation will often mean having to compromise. To do this, it is important to be respectful and try to understand others.

If you experience behaviour from other residents that displeases you, it is important to try to deal with the matter in a calm and patient manner. First try to speak to the others in your accommodation with the aim of coming up with an agreement. If you are unable to resolve a particular dispute, you should report the incident to the hall warden, or hall manager.

Illegal drugs will not be tolerated by the University. Anyone caught in possession of the restricted drugs will be investigated and, if necessary, penalised through the student conduct procedures and / or police procedures.

We are working hard to ensure that we have all the required and necessary measures in place for arrivals into our halls. Social distancing will be in place and it is important that we all adhere to these rules.

It is important that if you are unsure of what is expected of you in our accommodation that you refer to the hall conduct regulations specifically. We want you to enjoy your university experience, feel safe and protected and get the most from your learning too and moving away from home is a huge part of that. Things will look slightly different this year with controlled flow of traffic in our buildings, but the same friendships and learning experiences await you.

## Health and safety

We want our students to flourish at University and that means being as well as possible, both physically and mentally. We expect students to adhere to all health and safety guidelines the University puts in place and any government advice that may be amended to take into account any current circumstances.

Being part of a University community often means hundreds, or thousands of students living in one large area. Therefore it is necessary that everyone respects health and safety. For this reason, you must not interfere with equipment provided for safety reasons. Smoking is prohibited inside any building operated by the University, including residences (including corridors, foyers, toilets and

entrances etc). You should make sure that you do not smoke near doors and outside areas where it is clearly designated as no smoking.

## **Life in the community**

Oxford Brookes University campuses are based in Oxford and Swindon, so many of our students live, study and socialise within urban residential areas. The relationship with our neighbours is important to us and we are proud of the contribution we make to the local community. We work with residents to help establish an environment where students feel part of the community and are able to live harmoniously alongside permanent residents. We recommend that students living in the private rented sector introduce themselves when they move in and get to know their neighbours, as any disputes that occur are more likely to be resolved between yourselves where you have established contact.

### **Noise**

Be mindful of your surroundings and keep noise levels to a minimum. It is particularly important during the hours of 11.00pm and 7.00am, so be careful about loud music and gatherings in private rented accommodation and disruption when you are travelling home late at night. Current responses to the coronavirus situation have resulted in more people having to work from home, so try to keep noise at reasonable levels at all times.

### **Waste management**

Respect where you live, your housemates and your neighbours. You are collectively responsible as a household for the actions of each other and your guests. Familiarise yourselves with the waste management system in place in your area and be sure to put the bins out for collection on the correct day.

### **Parking**

We strongly encourage you not to bring a car to Oxford. Car parking is extremely difficult in Oxford and many residential roads around campus are subject to parking restrictions (such as double yellow lines and controlled parking zones).

Parking is available at our Swindon campus and we encourage students to park on site to avoid congestion in the neighbouring streets.

## **What can be done if you think someone has behaved unacceptably?**

Unacceptable behaviour is behaviour that is experienced as inappropriate, unreasonable, offensive or against the University rules. This could include bullying, discrimination, harassment, threatening behaviour, cheating in assessments and malicious posting on social media. Breaches of the University regulations will be investigated and a penalty may be applied. Some behaviour will also be a breach of the law and the police could take action. For a lot of instances of unacceptable behaviour, we will expect students to take responsibility for their actions and to equip themselves with the tools and support to be able to resolve minor issues themselves.

## Addressing the issue directly

If you are finding another student's or a staff member's behaviour unwelcome or disturbing, try initially speaking with them directly. It may be possible that they are unaware that their behaviour is having the impact that it is. If this is not possible or appropriate in the circumstances, there are other routes you may wish to pursue, which are listed below.

Remember there may be a valid reason for their behaviour and why it appears they are breaching rules, so be respectful in any attempt to remind others of requirements.

## Advice from family or friends or University staff

You could try speaking to staff at the University, e.g. the [student support and wellbeing](#) teams, [Student Support Coordinators](#), [Brookes Union Advice Service](#), a Brookes Union elected representative; or speak with your friends and family. They might have advice about how to manage the situation, or about extra support you can receive.

## Report to the University

If an incident has occurred in your university accommodation you can report it to the hall warden, who will be able to discuss next steps. If you experience or see an incident occur on campus and need immediate help, contact the [Security](#) team on 01865 483060.

You can report sexual violence, harassment or a hate crime to our [Report and Support](#) tool. You can do this and give your contact details, or you can do this anonymously.

You can make a [student conduct](#) report if it is about a student, or make a [complaint](#) if the behaviour relates to a staff member. The University will consider your report fully and then take the appropriate actions. These may include:

- An individual investigation into the matter.
- Communication to the individual to state that concerns have been raised about their behaviour.
- A wider campaign if the matter raised is happening on more than one occasion.
- A penalty to an individual, or a group of people.

Sometimes we might not be able to take any direct action. For example, the University is limited in what action can be taken in relation to moderate disputes in private sector houses, or certain behaviour over social media, so in some occasions you will need to work out how to manage the situation between yourselves or will need to report the matter elsewhere. There are likely to be people available to help you. We would also encourage you to use the support services mentioned previously that are available to you to discuss the impact, even if we have not been able to take any action against the individual you have reported.

## Being challenged

Do expect staff at University, or other students to tell you if they think you are breaching any University guidelines. They will be doing this to encourage you and help themselves or others feel safe. They should challenge your behaviour in a polite constructive manner. Please be respectful in your response and consider your behaviour.

# What happens if someone's behaviour is reported to the University?

Experience shows that most Oxford Brookes students behave well, engage with the University and follow the rules. However, on occasion some students do not and so students and staff are able to use the Report and Support tool, the Student Conduct procedures and the Harassment and Bullying procedure to raise formal concerns about behaviour. If conduct rules are found to have been broken, there are a range of penalties which the University can issue: these penalties range from a warning to dismissal from the University, depending on the severity of the breach.

## Students in the community

The [Community Engagement Team](#) provides advice and recommendations to help prevent the occurrence of further complaints. When there are persistent breaches of the rules, we can apply penalties, including formal warnings, written apologies, community service, fines and student conduct orders which place restrictions on students' access to services, facilities and/or their participation in events.

## Report and Support

The [Report and Support tool](#) allows anyone to make anonymous or non-anonymous reports of behaviour they find concerning or threatening. The Student Welfare Team contacts each of those who report with contact details, offer support and also explore further reporting and investigation options, including to the police and/or to the student conduct process. The Report and Support mechanism enables students to think through how they wish to proceed with the incident and whether they want to start more formal processes.

## Resources

- If you are concerned someone has broken the law or a crime is about to be committed, or you are concerned about your, or someone else's, safety, call the Emergency Services on 999.
- If you are on or around campus and need immediate assistance, please contact Brookes [Security Services](#) on 01865 483060.
- [Brookes Union](#) has support, resources and an advice service available to help you with your life at University.
- If you would like more detail about student conduct and making a report, please see the [Student Conduct Procedures pages](#).
- If you would like more detail about how the University deals with harassment and bullying, by staff members or students, please see these pages [Harassment and Bullying Policy](#).
- Other Support available can be found on the [Student Support and Wellbeing page](#)



# **Your time at Oxford Brookes**

Oxford Brookes University aims to provide a safe, equitable, enjoyable, and inclusive environment for you so you can engage with your learning and extracurricular activities and reach your full potential. We value all staff and students and want to ensure they are supported as well as possible and do not experience negative behaviours from other students or staff. We hope this guidance will help you and those you interact with to develop skills that will stay with you long after you have left Oxford Brookes.

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