Tackling Misogyny, Sexism, Harassment and Sexual Violence Against Women

1. The University of Essex is committed to providing a safe and inclusive environment where every member of our community will feel welcomed, respected, and treated in a fair and non-discriminatory manner.
2. Misogyny, harassment, sexism, and sexual violence against women are very real and immediate challenges to our society. They have a pervasive and detrimental impact, and they have no place on our campuses or wider working and studying spaces. To tackle these challenges, we have developed and published our [Tackling Misogyny, Harassment, Sexism, and Sexual Violence Against Women Policy.](https://www.essex.ac.uk/staff/diversity-and-inclusion/equality-and-diversity-policy-and-strategy) This document provides some information on what is meant by misogyny, how you can report inappropriate behaviour that you may experience or witness, and how you may be able to get the support that you need.

Definitions

Misogyny

1. Misogyny is defined as the conscious or unconscious feelings of hatred towards, aversion to, contempt for, or prejudice against women or girls. It can also refer to social systems, structures or environments where women face barriers, hostility, sexism, discrimination and hatred because they’re women[[1]](#footnote-1) in a world created by and for men which keeps women at a lower social status than men.
2. Women face a combination of discrimination, harassment, and structural barriers at work and during study. Women are also likely to experience barriers to progression created by recruitment and promotion processes, conflict between external responsibilities (including caring roles) and current models of working, and hostile and isolating organisational cultures, including issues of sexual harassment and stereotyping.
3. Whilst historically more likely to occur face-to-face, in our dispersed and often virtual hybrid world, it is important to recognise, and be alert (in ourselves and others) to the fact that misogyny can occur as easily in remote and virtual environments.
4. Examples of misogynistic behaviours include, but are not limited to:

**Silencing or belittling** through sexism, ignoring women, or appropriating their contributions creates an intimidating/oppressive atmosphere for those confronted with them.

**Sexist jokes and ‘banter’** or insults masquerading as jokes can intimidate and silence people and they trivialise sexist behaviour.

**Devaluing women’s views or voices.** This includes men interrupting or talking over women, men over-explaining things as if women have no knowledge of the issue (‘mansplaining’), and women feeling as if their views are not heard or supported until re-stated by a man.

**Gendered expressions**, like ‘running like a girl’, ‘man up’, or ‘boys will be boys’, perpetuate gender stereotypes.

**Examples of sexism in language and communications**. Language and communication matter, because they make people visible or invisible and recognise or demean their contribution to society. Examples of gendered or discriminatory language and communications include the generic use of the masculine gender by a speaker (‘he/his/him’ to refer to an unspecific person) and the cover of a publication depicting men only.

**Role stereotyping**. This includes making assumptions about suitability for roles and tasks based on gender. For example, women at meetings being expected to organise and bring refreshments to meetings and take minutes when those tasks are not in their job description.

**Preoccupation with physical appearance**. This includes comments made about body shape, size, physical characteristics, or dress over skill and competence.

**Ascribing different value** **judgements** to the same behaviours by men and women. For example, such as criticising women for behaviours that are seen as positive leadership behaviours for men, such as being focused or competitive.

**Gender-related microaggressions** can be intentional or unintentional comments or actions directed against a person that signal disrespect and inequality. S

**Benevolent Sexism** is attitudes, practices and actions that seem positive – such as aid, flattery, and rewards – but that undercut their goal of supporting women at work, often under the pretence of providing them with help, protection, compliments, and affection.

**Internalised Misogyny** is when women subconsciously project misogynist views onto other women and even onto themselves.

**Intersectionality and Misogyny** – Some women may face specific behaviours or be the target of specific stereotypes and microaggressions when they have intersecting identities and characteristics. It is not just that some women may face more sexist or misogynistic behaviour, but that particular assumptions will be made because of their gender and race, age, culture, sexuality, etc.

**Structural Misogyny** occurs when institutional systems are designed in a way that assumes a typically masculine approach, and as a result exclude or discriminate against women.

**Gaslighting** is a manipulative tactic in which a person denies that harm another individual is experiencing is genuinely happening to them, in order to gain power and control over that individual.

1. Understanding and recognising misogyny, and the social and institutional structures based on masculine assumptions, is hugely important so that we can create a more equitable environment where conscious, implicit or unconscious bias is interrupted and minimised, and where individuals feel able to speak out against misogyny and feel safe and respected.

What you should do if you experience or witness misogyny, harassment, or sexism

Report and Support System

1. Any employee, worker, contractor, student, invitee or visitor to any of our campuses who experiences or observes misogyny or experiences or observes any inappropriate behaviour is encouraged to report it through our Report and Support system. Incidents that can be reported via the system include microaggressions and more serious incidents of bullying, harassment, sexism, and sexual violence.
2. The Report and Support system allows you to make a report and ask for contact from a Harassment Support Worker or to make an anonymous report.
3. Harassment Support Workers undergo specialist training and can help signpost you to appropriate services and channels. Whether you are reporting an incident involving an employee, worker, contractor, student, invitee or visitor, Harassment Support Workers can guide you through informal and formal reporting processes and can also help you get the support and advice that you need. Visit the [Report and Support](https://reportandsupport.essex.ac.uk) system online for more details.
4. Where reports are made anonymously, the University is less likely to be able to take any action. This may be because we have not been given details about the alleged perpetrator or victim and survivor or because we do not have sufficient information to investigate fully.
5. You can report an incident through Report and Support at any time during or after an incident or series of incidents occur. You can use the system alongside informal or formal discussions with other individuals if you wish.

Advice and support if you experience or witness misogyny, harassment, or sexism – Emergency and Security Services

If you experience or witness misogyny, harassment, or sexual violence, there are a number of channels to report the incident and to get the support you need. **If an assault has just taken place and you are not in a safe place, feel at risk, or have any injuries that require urgent attention, call the emergency services on 999.**

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| **Emergency and Security Services** | |
| **Service** | **Contact details** |
| Emergency Services | 999 |
| NHS Emergency Line | 111 |
| University Medical Practice | Phone: 01206 794484  Email: [hcentre@essex.ac.uk](mailto:hcentre@essex.ac.uk) |
| Campus Security – Colchester | Phone: 2222 |
| Campus Security – Loughton | Phone: 5983 |
| Campus Security - Southend | Phone: 01702 328400 or 07872 7988085 |
| Safeguarding Team | Phone: 01206 872984  Email: [safeguard@essex.ac.uk](mailto:safeguard@essex.ac.uk) |
| Security | Phone: 2125/3148  Email: [patrol@essex.ac.uk](mailto:patrol@essex.ac.uk) |
| Colchester Police Station | Phone: 01206 762212 |
| Loughton Police Station | Phone: 01279 641212 |
| Essex Police | Phone: 01245 491491 |
| Police – non-emergency | Phone: 101 |

Advice and support if you experience or witness misogyny, harassment, or sexism – Students

If you experience or witness misogyny, harassment, or sexual violence, there are a number of channels to report the incident and to get the support you need. **If an assault has just taken place and you are not in a safe place, feel at risk, or have any injuries that require urgent attention, call the emergency services on 999.**

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| **Student Help and Support Services** | | |
| **Service** | **What they do** | **Contact details** |
| Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity Service (SWIS) | SWIS provides support to students to ensure that they can achieve their full potential. SWIS can signpost students to the support available for mental and emotional health, disability support, academic concerns, financial worries, and accommodation issues. | Phone: 01206 873133  Email: [wellbeing@essex.ac.uk](mailto:wellbeing@essex.ac.uk) |
| Report and Support | An online system that allows staff and students to all forms of bullying, harassment, abuse, and violence. Reports can be made anonymously or can be assigned to a trained Harassment Support Worker, who will help the reporter get the support they need and help escalate the issue if the reporter wishes to. | [Website and online form](https://reportandsupport.essex.ac.uk/)  Email: [harass@essex.ac.uk](mailto:harass@essex.ac.uk) |
| Student Services Hub | A place for students to get advice, information, and support related to all aspects of university life. The Student Services Hub can signpost students to services and procedures related to health, wellbeing, and access. | Phone: 01206 874000 (for all campuses)  [Live chat](https://v4in1-ti.click4assistance.co.uk/DefaultChat.aspx?AccGUID=d778a52e-092e-442e-b0e0-00f5dc07caed&ScriptID=10&ExpGUID=896e47b2-9064-45bb-b312-4b5b0c7c2a31&ToolType=1&SID=a3c0aa4f-023f-4b66-8096-867753ee9894&PushD=null)  **Ask the Hub** [online enquiry form](https://www.essex.ac.uk/myessex/AskTheHub.aspx)  **Email:**[askthehub@essex.ac.uk](mailto:askthehub@essex.ac.uk) |
| Students’ Union Advice Centre | Students can get free, confidential, and impartial advice related to a range of topics from the Students’ Union, including but not limited to harassment, hate incidents, and complaints about the university. | Located in SQ3 on Colchester Campus  **Phone:** 01206 863211  Email: [su@essex.ac.uk](mailto:su@essex.ac.uk) |
| Student Progress Team | The Student Progress team handles complaints made by students about fellow students or staff members at the University of Essex. | Email: [studentprogress@essex.ac.uk](mailto:studentprogress@essex.ac.uk) |
| Faith Centre | The Faith Centre provides a confidential listening ear, pastoral support, and spiritual support. There is a Faith Centre on each of the campuses. | Phone: 01206 873952  Email: [faithcentreadmin@essex.ac.uk](mailto:faithcentreadmin@essex.ac.uk) |

Advice and support if you experience or witness misogyny, harassment, or sexism – Staff

If you experience or witness misogyny, harassment, or sexual violence, there are a number of channels to report the incident and to get the support you need. **If an assault has just taken place and you are not in a safe place, feel at risk, or have any injuries that require urgent attention, call the emergency services on 999.**

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| **Staff Help and Support Services** | | |
| **Service** | **What they do** | **Contact details** |
| People and Culture | The People and Culture team can signpost managers to various support services and procedures that are available to them. | [hremployee relations@essex.ac.uk](mailto:staffing@essex.ac.uk) |
| Report and Support | An online system that allows staff and students to all forms of bullying, harassment, abuse, and violence. Reports can be made anonymously or can be assigned to a trained Harassment Support Worker, who will help the reporter get the support they need and help escalate the issue if the reporter wishes to. | [Website and online form](https://reportandsupport.essex.ac.uk/)  Email: [harass@essex.ac.uk](mailto:harass@essex.ac.uk) |
| Inclusion Team | The Inclusion team sits within the wider People and Culture team. The Inclusion team own this policy, run the Harassment Support Worker network and can signpost students and staff to the required support services. | [diversity@essex.ac.uk](mailto:diversity@essex.ac.uk) |
| UCU | UCU is a trade union that represents all staff at grades 7 and above. They can be contacted for assistance and support. | Keser Richardson-Dawes, UCU Office Manager at Colchester Campus  Phone: Phone: 01206 874967  Email: [krichardson-dawes@ucu.org.uk](mailto:krichardson-dawes@ucu.org.uk)  General Email: [ucu@ucumail.essex.ac.uk](mailto:ucu@ucumail.essex.ac.uk) |
| Unite | Unite is a trade union that represents all staff. They can be contacted for assistance and support. | Branch Chair: Colin McAuley  Phone: 01206873974 Email: [ccmcau@essex.ac.uk](mailto:ccmcau@essex.ac.uk)  General Email: [unitetheunion@essex.ac.uk](mailto:unitetheunion@essex.ac.uk) |
| Unison | Unison is a trade union that represents all professional services staff. They can be contacted for assistance and support. | Branch Chair: David English  Email: [dengli@essex.ac.uk](mailto:dengli@essex.ac.uk)  UoE General Email: [uoe.unison@gmail.com](mailto:uoe.unison@gmail.com) |
| Faith Centre | The Faith Centre provides a confidential listening ear, pastoral support, and spiritual support. There is a Faith Centre on each of the campuses. | Phone: 01206 873952  Email: [faithcentreadmin@essex.ac.uk](mailto:faithcentreadmin@essex.ac.uk) |

Advice and support if you experience or witness misogyny, harassment, or sexism – External Help and Support

If you experience or witness misogyny, harassment, or sexual violence, there are a number of channels to report the incident and to get the support you need. **If an assault has just taken place and you are not in a safe place, feel at risk, or have any injuries that require urgent attention, call the emergency services on 999.**

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| **External Help and Support Services** | | |
| **Service** | **What they do** | **Contact details** |
| Synergy Essex | Synergy Essex is a partnership of rape and sexual abuse centres in Essex: Centre for Action on Rape and Abuse (CARA), South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre (SERICC) and Southend-on-Sea Rape Crisis (SOSRC). They have a first contact team who can provide and signpost to support services, and Synergy Essex can also provide advocacy, support, and specialist counselling. | Phone (Helpline): 0300 003 7777 |
| Centre for Action on Rape and Abuse (CARA) | CARA provides independent and specialist advice for victims and survivors of sexual violence and child sexual abuse. | Phone: 01206 769795  Email: [info@caraessex.org.uk](mailto:info@caraessex.org.uk) |
| South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre (SERICC) | SERRIC provides support to anyone in the South and West Essex area who has experienced or is experiencing any form of sexual violence or abuse. | Phone (Helpline): 0300 003 7777  Office: 01375381322 E [sericc@sericc.org.uk](mailto:sericc@sericc.org.uk) |
| Southend-on-Sea Rape Crisis (SOSRC) | SOSRC provides support for all victims and survivors of sexual violence and rape. They provide support to anyone who is experiencing sexual violence or has experiences it in the past. They provide services in Southend-on-Sea, Castle Point and Rochford. | Phone (Helpline): 0300 003 7777  Office: 01702 667590  [info@sosrc.org.uk](mailto:info@sosrc.org.uk) |
| Essex Compass | Essex Compass is a partnership of several domestic abuse support agencies including Safe Steps, Changing Pathways and The Next Chapter and provides support for domestic abuse victims and survivors across Southend, Essex, and Thurrock. It is a single point of access for victims and survivors of domestic abuse to get the help and support they need, and the staff are trained to be able to direct people to the appropriate services where needed. | Phone (Helpline): 0330 333 7444 |
| Safe Steps | Safe Steps provides assistance and support to victims and survivors of domestic abuse in the Southend and wider Essex area. | Southend Phone: 01702 302333  Wider Essex (Helpline): 0330 3337444 |
| Changing Pathways | Changing Pathways provides support to victims and survivors of domestic abuse and stalking in Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rochford, Thurrock, Harlow and Epping Forest. | Phone (Helpline): 0330 333 7444  Email: [referrals@changingpathways.org](mailto:referrals@changingpathways.org) |
| Next Chapter Colchester | Next Chapter Colchester works with victims and survivors of domestic abuse and provides help and support. They are able to signpost to different services and can also provide refuge and accommodation to those who may need it. | Phone (Helpline): 0330 333 7444  Office: 01206 500585  E [info@thenextchapter.org.uk](mailto:info@thenextchapter.org.uk) |
| Oakwood Place - Sexual Assault Referral Centre in Essex | Oakwood Place offers support and advice to victims and survivors of sexual violence and/or abuse. They are also able to offer medical assessments and treatments for some cases. An appointment is needed to access their services and can be made through the given phone number or email address and will be set up within 24-48 hours of making contact. | Phone: 01277 240620 Email: [Essex.sarc@nhs.net](mailto:Essex.sarc@nhs.net) |
| Colchester/Southend Samaritans | Samaritans is an organisation that provides a listening and support for people, not matter what issue they are facing. Their aim is to reduce the risks that can lead to suicide and provide support for those that are at higher risk of taking their own lives. | Phone: 116 123 (free from any phone, national helpline)  Colchester Branch Phone: 0330 094 5717 Email: [jo@samaritans.org.uk](mailto:jo@samaritans.org.uk) |

1. or perceived to be women [↑](#footnote-ref-1)