University Policy 321: Respectful Workplace

Category: 300 Human Resources
Sub Category: General
Covered Individuals: Benefited Employees
Responsible Executive: Vice President for Business and Finance
Policy Custodian: Office of Human Resources, Executive Director of Human Resources
Last Revised: 2020/03/13
Previous USU Policy Number: Not applicable

321.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Utah State University (USU) is committed to maintaining a work environment that encourages mutual respect and facilitates collegial relationships. To build and promote trust, all USU employees are collectively responsible to set a positive example and to avoid behaving disrespectfully, including behavior that would reasonably offend, intimidate, embarrass, or humiliate others, whether deliberately or unintentionally.

321.2 POLICY

University related interactions should be conducted with courtesy, civility, decency, and a concern for personal dignity. Disrespectful behavior or abusive conduct, including but not limited to, mistreatment, bullying, humiliation and/or intimidation will not be tolerated. Expectations include, but are not limited to, using professional language, not recording interactions without all parties consent, and not providing unrelated third parties unauthorized access to university and/or employee information (see USU Policy 319: Employee Privacy and Confidentiality and Policy 556: Information Privacy for more information).

Employees violating this policy are subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment per USU Policy 311: Corrective Action, which applies to benefited non-faculty employees, and USU Policy 407: Academic Due Process: Sanctions and Hearing Procedures, which applies to faculty.

For issues regarding sexual harassment, please refer to USU Policy 339: Sexual Harassment. For issues regarding discrimination, please refer to USU Policy 303: Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity.

This policy does not limit USU leadership’s right to manage. Performance management, work assignment and evaluation, and disciplinary measures taken by USU for any valid reason do not constitute disrespectful behavior, abusive conduct, and/or bullying. Such management actions should be done in ways that are consistent with the intent and expectations of this respectful workplace policy.

2.1 Reporting and Resolution of Disrespectful Behavior or Abusive Conduct

If an employee is subjected to or observes disrespectful or abusive conduct of another by an individual or group of individuals, the employee should first attempt to resolve concerns within their own area per USU Policy 325: Employment Grievance Procedures. This should be done by discussing their concerns or observations with their immediate supervisor. Their immediate supervisor will then initiate a process to determine the nature and extent of the issue and initiate an effective resolution.
If an employee does not feel comfortable contacting their immediate supervisor, the employee may contact another level of management within their reporting chain or the Office of Human Resources, who will meet with the employee to discuss their concerns or observations. Human Resources will then initiate a process to determine the nature and extent of the issue and collaborate with the appropriate leadership and employee(s) to initiate an effective resolution.

**321.3 RESPONSIBILITY**

3.1 Supervisors

Supervisors have an obligation to set expectations in their areas to ensure a safe, collegial, and respectful workplace for all employees and address issues as they arise. If a supervisor becomes aware of a situation within their area that may violate this policy, the supervisor should take appropriate steps to resolve the problem on an informal basis. If informal processes are not adequate to address the situation, then formal disciplinary procedures should be utilized per USU Policy 311: Corrective Action, which applies to benefited employees (non-faculty) and USU Policy 407: Academic Due Process: Sanctions and Hearing Procedures (faculty).

3.2 Employees

All employees have an obligation to promote and preserve the reputation of the University by demonstrating respect toward all members of the campus community, including students, faculty, and staff. Employees are responsible for responding to and reporting perceived disrespectful or abusive conduct in accordance with this policy.

3.3 Office of Human Resource

The Office of Human Resource may investigate, make determinations, advise, assist, and/or mediate between employees and departments in resolving possible violations of the policy.

**321.4 RELATED USU POLICIES**

- Policy 303: Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity
- Policy 311: Corrective Action
- Policy 319: Employee Privacy and Confidentiality
- Policy 325: Employment Grievance Procedures
- Policy 339: Sexual Harassment
- Policy 407: Academic Due Process: Sanctions and Hearing Procedures
- Policy 556: Information Privacy

**321.5 DEFINITIONS**

5.1 **Abusive Conduct** – Verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of one party to another that, based on its severity, nature, and frequency of occurrence, a reasonable person would determine that it is intended to cause intimidation, humiliation, or unwarranted distress or harm.

5.2 **Bullying** – Conduct that seeks to harm, intimidate, coerce, persecute, or torment; often repeated or habitual.

5.3 **Employee** – Any individual legally employed by Utah State University in any capacity.
5.4 **Formal Disciplinary Procedures** – Corrective action as set forth by USU Policy 311: Corrective Action which applies to benefited employees (non-faculty) and Policy 407: Academic Due Process: Sanctions and Hearing Procedures (faculty).

5.5 **Humiliation** – Conduct that would reasonably be expected to cause undue embarrassment, shame, disgrace, or dishonor.

5.6 **Informal Processes** – Any process that does not follow the formal corrective action set forth by USU Policy 311: Corrective Action or USU Policy 407: Academic Due Process: Sanctions and Hearing Procedures (e.g. conversation, letter of expectation).

5.7 **Intimidation** – Conduct that would reasonably be expected to cause undue fear and distress.

5.8 **Reporting Chain** – Levels of supervisory roles within a department or unit.

5.9 **Supervisor** – A person employed by Utah State University who has hiring authority and/or holds a position that directly supervises an employee of Utah State University.

5.10 **University Related Interactions** – Any job function that pertains to Utah State University.

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**RESOURCES**

*List resources to aid in compliance or indicate “None.”* [Arial Narrow 10]

**Procedures**

- None

**Guidance**

- None

**Related Forms and Tools**

- None

**Contacts**

- Human Resources Solution Center, hr@usu.edu, (435) 797-0122

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**POLICY HISTORY**

Original issue date: 1997/01/24

Last review date: 2020/03/13

Next scheduled review date:
Previous revision dates: 2015/03/06, 1997/01/24