

Prevention of Inappropriate Treatment and Bullying of Students at JAMK University of Applied Sciences

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1 Introduction

JAMK University of Applied Sciences wishes to focus on providing a safe studying environment, communality, and the wellbeing of the students. The reduced wellbeing of students has been emphasised in many sectors in the health study of higher education students (2016), carried out by the Finnish Student Health Service. Almost one in ten UAS students had experienced bullying during their studies, and symptoms of mental ill health and loneliness have increased every year.

JAMK does not approve of any kind of inappropriate treatment or bullying. Every member of the academic community is responsible for their own behaviour, which is expected to be appropriate, respectful of others, ethically sustainable, and in accordance with good practices. JAMK aims to provide an equal, fair, safe, inclusive and inspiring studying atmosphere. (JAMK University of Applied Sciences Rules and Regulations, Ethical principles and the Equality and non-discrimination plan).

A working group made up of representatives from JAMK and JAMK's Student Union has drafted a document describing the forms of inappropriate treatment and bullying, and the important actors and their roles in preventive work. At the end of the document, there is an operating model for situations where a student faces inappropriate treatment or bullying.

2 Forms of inappropriate treatment and bullying

Inappropriate treatment refers to repeated bullying, harassment, discrimination, or other negative behaviour. In an academic community, it may occur between students, students and teachers, colleagues, or an employee and their supervisor.

Bullying refers to name-calling, scolding, talking behind another person's back, spreading rumours, embarrassing, insulting, mocking based on personal features, unjustified criticism, and exclusion from a group. All of these forms of bullying can also occur on social media channels. Bullying can also be manifested as physical pushing, hitting, strangulation, or holding.

Harassment is the deliberate or de facto infringement of the dignity or integrity of a person or a group of people. An intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment is typical of a harassment situation. Gender-based harassment is unwanted behaviour related to the gender of the person, such as speaking in a degrading and demeaning tone about the gender of the other person. Sexual harassment includes sexual jokes, propositions, demands, and physical touching, as well as rape and the attempt thereof.

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Discrimination means treating a person or group of people differently to others in the same situation without a justifiable reason. According to the Non-discrimination Act (1325/2014, Section 8), no one may be discriminated against on the basis of their age, origin, nationality, language, religion, belief, opinion, political activity, trade union activity, family relationships, state of health, disability, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics.

3 Preventing inappropriate treatment and bullying and addressing them

Every member of the academic community has a responsibility to prove through their attitude and actions that inappropriate treatment and bullying will not be tolerated, and to address them. Addressing a particular situation and solving it require an active and determined attitude. The sharing and documentation of such experiences are essential for reducing bullying and inappropriate treatment, and for preventing them from happening in our community and operating culture.

Students may not always recognise or be aware of the shortcomings or have the resources to carry them forward. Every member of the academic community has a responsibility to bring up any concerns they observe, applying the *early intervention principle*. This means that the person who observes the concern brings the matter or situation up in conversation with the object of the concern. Nobody can bring up concerns observed by others; the 'owner' of the concern must always be present in the situation where the concern is brought up. The matter must be brought up in a confidential and appreciative manner, protecting the privacy of the parties. In situations where the concerns are acute, the observer of the concern considers their resources to deal with the situation insufficient, or there are several people who share the concerns, the concerns must be brought up in the presence of several parties involved.

The personnel and individuals presented in the chapter are key actors in ensuring student wellbeing, and their job assignments mean they have a role in the prevention of inappropriate treatment and bullying. The operating model presented at the end of this document creates shared practices for resolving various situations in the mediation phase, for example. Those with special training for the task will function as mediators. These include the harassment contact person (JAMKO), career tutor (max. 5 per unit), study counsellor, school pastor, and study psychologist. Updated information on the mediators is available on the student and personnel intranet. If the internal rules and operational guidelines of the university of applied sciences cannot be applied to the situation, for example in cases where the situation satisfies the criteria of a crime, the student is instructed to contact the appropriate authorities.

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3.1 Student community and peer support (JAMKO)

The role of the Student Union of JAMK University of Applied Sciences is to create a collaborative atmosphere which promotes equality throughout the university of applied sciences together with the tutors, mentors, and study field student organisations. The Student Union organises services that acknowledge the versatility of the student body, support students in terms of educational and social policies, spreads information on support services, and ensures an equal study environment. JAMKO acts as the supervisor of the interests of the students and ensures that the rights of the students are implemented. A harassment contact person has also been appointed by JAMKO to support students in more difficult instances of harassment.

Every year, JAMKO trains peer tutors and mentors whose role in creating a good group spirit and a safe study environment and atmosphere is essential. In the training courses, these individuals are trained to act in instances of bullying, and they are also responsible for reacting to any inappropriate behaviour and to set an example to new students. They are a low threshold contact for students who observe bullying or wish to share their own experiences. The tutors and mentors help to settle the matter and, if necessary, can refer the student to various support measures. The tutors support new students to integrate into the university at the beginning of the academic year. It promotes the creation of a confidential atmosphere and good group spirit. The tutors are encouraged to talk to their groups openly about bullying and its various forms, to ensure that the students are able to pay attention to it in their own actions and the actions of their group. The tutors can also help define rules for the group, discussing the equal and democratic treatment of others. The students are also bound by the shared plans and regulations of the institution.

The student community is essential for the creation of a safe study environment and the approval of the peer group. The various groups related to the studies should acknowledge and accept the different students and their backgrounds, as well as their learning and working methods, and pay attention to their responsible behaviour, such as equal treatment, acknowledging and engaging others, giving constructive feedback, and appreciating the work of other people. The students should also feel that raising problems and concerns is a natural part of their lives.

3.2 Harassment contact person (JAMKO)

A harassment **contact person** is a person appointed by the Student Union JAMKO to support students in situations where harassment, discrimination, or inappropriate treatment is suspected. The harassment **contact person** acts in a confidential and impartial manner and examines whether the JAMK rules and operating models were followed in a given situation. The harassment

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contact person can also participate in discussions between the parties and help resolve the matter, or if necessary, instruct the parties on how to advance the matter through official operating models. All actions are decided on together with the student.

The harassment **contact person** only acts when requested by the student. However, the harassment **contact person** may instruct students, tutors, or study field student organization, who have observed harassment, discrimination, or unequal treatment of or by their fellow students or staff members. If the harassment **contact person** is informed of similar situations in a certain field on several occasions, for example, they should inform the management of the unit in question. If the harassment incident requires immediate intervention, the harassment **contact person** instructs the student to contact the security manager, student health care organisation, or the police, but the student always carries the ultimate responsibility for deciding to proceed with the matter.

3.3 Career tutor

One of the most visible and significant actors in JAMK's guidance services is the career tutor. A career tutor is appointed for each student and student group. The career tutor must aim to form an open and confidential relationship with their students to ensure that more sensitive matters are brought to their attention. The annual PLP and career guidance discussions with the career tutor enable students to talk about many personal and confidential matters. It must be easy for the student to bring up any incidences of bullying, whether they are targeted at the student or they are observations of another student or member of staff bullying or being bullied. Suspected instances of bullying may also be shared with the career tutor by another student or a fellow teacher or other member of personnel. Such concerns and observations should be brought up as soon as they come to light, and further actions should be agreed on to settle the matter.

The career tutors are trained in various themes and approaches to face-to-face interactions, raising concerns and networking. An everyday tool for analysing instances of bullying or any other concern is the *zones of worry* perspective, which the career tutor may utilise in a bullying case brought to their attention. The career tutor must investigate the actual situation and hear the various parties separately and together and seek solutions for removing the bullying situation(s) through cooperation. If necessary, the career tutor can consult with the study counsellor of the unit, JAMK study psychologists, or the JAMKO harassment **contact person**.

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3.4 Study Counsellor

Each unit has a study counsellor whose assignment is to support and instruct students who need more extensive guidance with their studies due to a challenging life situation, shortcomings in life management abilities, an individual need for support with learning, or problems with studying motivation, for example.

In addition to the career tutor, study counsellors can, in accordance with the model for bullying and inappropriate treatment prevention, act as natural representatives for the concerned parties to talk to if necessary.

3.5 HyPe Team

JAMK has a student wellbeing group called the HyPe Team, which works to promote students' health and study ability, improve the wellbeing of the learning community, and prevent social exclusion. The HyPe Team provides a forum for dialogue about topics related to the wellbeing of the students, brings up the latest research results, and uses them to develop a learning community that is able to prevent, recognise, and address bullying and discrimination.

The HyPe Team consists of a study psychologist, a school pastor, study counsellors, and representatives of the student services, international services, library, student health care, Academic Sports, and the Student Union of JAMK University of Applied Sciences.

3.6 School pastor

The school pastor works to prevent bullying, discrimination and loneliness by developing and supporting communality, participation, and wellbeing at JAMK.

The role of the school pastor includes meeting students individually to recognise and talk about bullying, harassment, or discrimination. In most cases, the bullying, discrimination, or previous experiences of bullying are brought up by the student concerned. The school pastor should help the student to process their experiences, to provide support in cases of bullying, and to address bullying in cooperation with the other networks. The school pastor can be asked to participate in dealing with bullying in a study group at a group level or between the individuals concerned.

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3.7 Study psychologist

Study psychological guidance is part of JAMK's guidance system. The study psychologist guides and develops student wellbeing work at JAMK, and study psychological services are part of student welfare services.

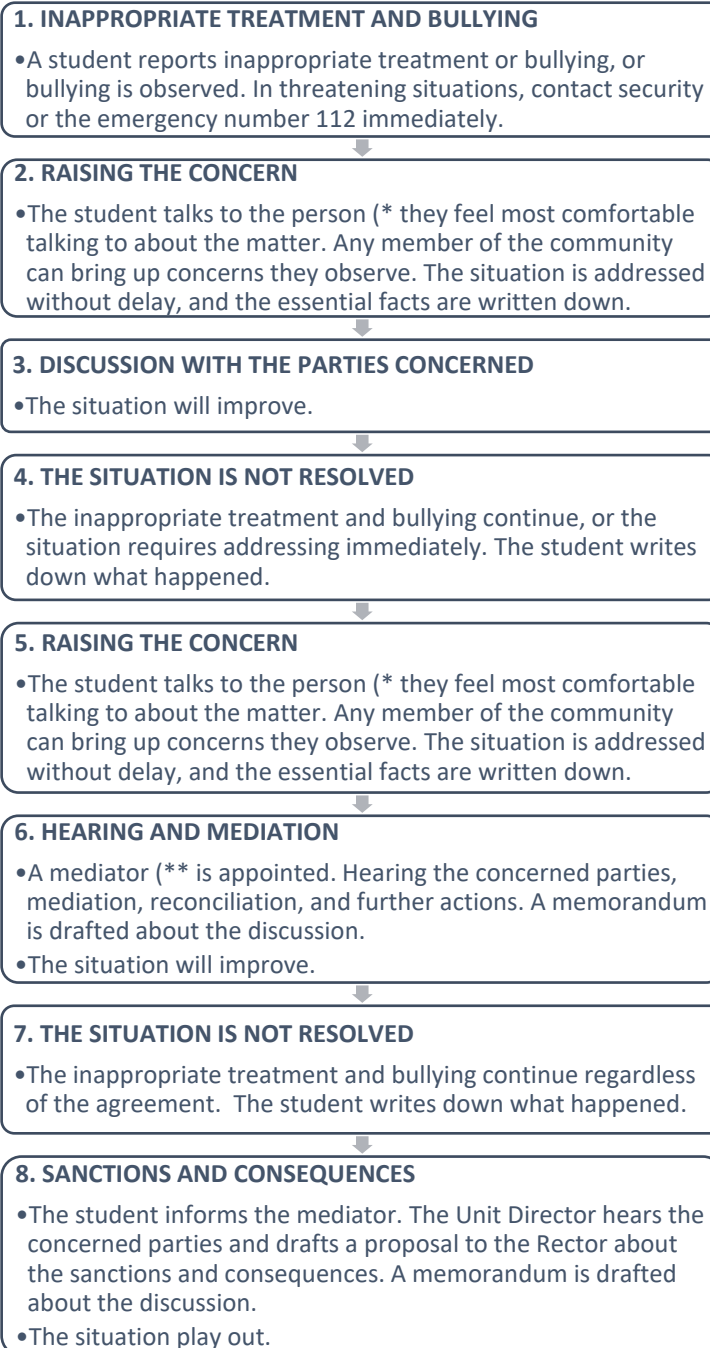
Students and personnel at JAMK may consult with the study psychologist in cases of bullying concerning students. In addition, students at JAMK may ask for support for dealing with bullying experiences in individual appointments with the study psychologist. In acute cases of bullying, the situation should be defused by taking a network-like approach. Previous experiences of bullying or discrimination may harm the student's view of the self concept and their self-esteem. A student who has been bullied before may find it difficult to settle in a new study group, and they may feel cautious and insecure in their social interaction.

3.8 Student health services

Being bullied is one of the most traumatic experiences in the life of a young person, and recovery is not automatic. A person who has been bullied needs reconstructive support to aid their recovery. Student health services offer support and information on the consequences of bullying for mental, physical and social wellbeing. Increased understanding increases self-knowledge and may help the student to seek the help they need. Student health services may offer discussion support from nurses, doctors, a psychologist, a depression nurse, or a psychiatric nurse to those who have experienced bullying.

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4 Operating model for addressing inappropriate treatment and bullying



*) The matter can be brought up with any member of the academic community. The focus is on tutors, mentors, career tutors, study counsellors, student services secretaries, the school pastor, study psychologist, student health services, a harassment contact person, student union, and the library.

**) The mediators include the career tutor, study counsellor, school pastor, and the JAMKO harassment contact person. Another Monitoring, evaluating, and updating the operating model.

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5 Monitoring, evaluating, and updating the operating model

The educational development services are responsible for evaluating the functioning of the operating model for addressing inappropriate treatment and bullying and, if necessary, updating it annually in cooperation with the Ethical Committee of JAMK University of Applied Sciences and the HyPe Team. The evaluation utilises the documentation available and possibly the experiences of the concerned parties and feedback from the students. In addition, the educational development services evaluate the sufficient number of mediators and training them for the task. The operating model is available and information spread about it in the students' ELMO intranet and the personnel's intranet.

Any documentation created in connection with processing the operating model for addressing inappropriate treatment and bullying is processed and archived electronically in the JAMK case management system (TWeb) according to the information management plan. If individuals from outside JAMK personnel participate in the mediation, the documentation is delivered to JAMK on paper and attached to the case management system in electronic form. Separate instructions will be created on the process and the processing of documentation.

6 References

[Zones of worry](#) (In Finnish, AVI) (PDF)

[JAMK Rules and Regulations](#) (ELMO intranet)

[Ethical Principles for JAMK University of Applied Sciences](#) (PDF)

[Equality and non-discrimination plan of jamk university of applied sciences 2017–2022](#) (ELMO intranet) (PDF)

[Student Health Survey \(2016\)](#) (FSHS Finnish Student Health Service) (PDF)

[The Act on Equality between Women and Men 609/1986](#) (Finlex)

[The Non-discrimination Act 1325/2014](#) (Finlex)