UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

Physics and Astronomy

CODE OF **CONDUCT** AND **INCLUSIVITY**

October 2022

KEY POLICIES
FOR **CONDUCT**

RESPECT
AND **COURTESY**

- Behave with integrity and professionalism
- Treat others with respect and courtesy
- Act with kindness, care, and compassion
- Be open-minded in your views and in how you react to others' behaviour
- Respect confidentiality
- Communicate with respect and kindness

INCLUSIVITY
AND **ACCESSIBILITY**

- Be considerate of others
- Treat everyone fairly
- Value and celebrate diversity and cultural differences
- Act to improve accessibility and the environment for all
- Engage in open communication
- Support others in achieving their objectives and goals

RESPONSIBILITY
AND **ACCOUNTABILITY**

- Promote responsibility and accountability of actions
- Reflect on your behaviour, educate yourself and, if necessary, change your behaviour
- Be aware of unconscious biases
- Set a good example to others and lead by example
- Act against unprofessional conduct and call out inappropriate behaviour
- Discuss attitudes and behaviour

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FOREWORD

From the Physics Inclusion Group

The culture of a department is fundamental to its success. As a group, we want the Physics and Astronomy Department we work within to be one in which each member of its community is valued, respected, and can thrive. Key to this goal is having a shared understanding of how we should behave, and that is the purpose of this document. We all have a right to dignity and respect at work, and we all have a corresponding responsibility to treat others in the same way. Please read this Code of Conduct and Inclusivity, but more importantly, act on it and help us build an even better culture.

The Physics Inclusion Group, 2022

The Physics Inclusion Group

We are a group of staff and students committed to maintaining an inclusive environment in the Physics and Astronomy Department at Exeter University. We work alongside other groups and networks at the University to improve equality, diversity and inclusion and promote good practice within the wider physics community.

For many years, we have worked within the framework of **Project Juno**, a scheme developed by the Institute of Physics to recognise and reward physics departments that have taken action to address gender equality and create an inclusive working environment for everyone.

This document forms part of our action plan to address the sixth Juno principle: an environment where professional conduct is embedded into departmental culture and behaviour.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Code of Conduct and Inclusivity developed by the Physics Inclusion Group in the Department of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Exeter.

This document is part of the group's constant drive to improve inclusivity and wellbeing for all in our Department and enable everyone to focus on the most important thing: doing and enjoying great science!

In this document, you can find information on the professional conduct expected of everyone in the Department and the mechanisms for dealing with problems. The document refers to many existing policies at the University of Exeter and includes additional guidance to promote best practice and inclusivity across a range of topics that are relevant to the Physics community. The information in this document is not intended to override existing University policies but to bring them together into a helpful summary, and you are encouraged to follow the links we have provided to read the policies in more detail.

Please note that if you are reading a printed version of this document, a more up-to-date version may be available online.

Who should read and follow the code?

The Code of Conduct and Inclusivity applies to everyone within the Physics and Astronomy Department at Exeter University. This includes all staff and students working in, or associated with, the Physics and Astronomy Department.

Many people work in or visit our Department. Respect should extend across and between all groups, including:

• Academic staff
• Professional Services staff
• Cleaners
• Undergraduate students
• Postgraduate students
• Post-doctoral researchers
• Honorary and associate staff and students
• Visitors (e.g. applicants, outreach guests, colloquium speakers, contractors).

YOU REPRESENT THE DEPARTMENT, AND EVERYTHING YOU SAY AND DO REFLECTS ON US AS A COMMUNITY.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

Unacceptable behaviour includes many things, some of which fall into the categories of bullying, harassment, intimidation, and discrimination.

- Bullying is repeated behaviour that causes physical or emotional harm.
- Harassment is unwanted behaviour which intimidates or offends you.
- Intimidation is behaviour which persuades you to do something through fear.
- Discrimination is behaviour which treats you less favourably than others.

Some specific examples include being aggressive towards others, making personal insults, excluding or isolating others, stalking, unwanted physical contact and spreading malicious rumours or offensive material.

Unacceptable behaviours may be more subtle or not fall into the above-defined categories. Many problems stem from **everyday behaviours** such as making inappropriate or discriminatory jokes and comments or **unreasonable demands**. It is important to remember that what may be acceptable to you may not be acceptable to others.

Behaviour and the law

The **Equality Act 2010** gives legal protection against discrimination to people with specific characteristics called protected characteristics. It is unlawful to discriminate, directly or indirectly, against anyone who has a protected characteristic. It is also unlawful to subject them to harassment or victimisation. You are responsible for your behaviour and can be personally liable in law if you discriminate against, harass or victimise another person.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR IS NOT DEFINED BY YOUR INTENTION; IT IS DEFINED BY HOW IT MAKES THE OTHER PERSON FEEL.

Protected characteristics

The **protected characteristics** defined in the Equality Act 2010 are listed below. Some of these, particularly around sex and gender, are outdated and should be interpreted more holistically.

- Age
- Gender reassignment
- Being married or in a civil partnership
- Being pregnant or on maternity leave
- Disability
- Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Religions or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

REPORTING PROBLEMS

We hope this document helps you understand the behaviour expected of everyone in the Physics and Astronomy Department.

But, what should you do if you need more help or if you see, hear or experience anything you feel is unacceptable, including bullying or harassment?

There are many ways to get more help and advice or report an incident. A brief overview is given below; more detail on the support mechanisms and reporting pathways available to students and staff can be found on the Exeter Speaks Out **webpages.**

Help and Advice

- You may like to talk informally with a colleague, academic lead or tutor within the Physics and Astronomy Department
- You can talk to a **Dignity and Respect Advisor**, who can provide informal and confidential advice and support, including how to report problems
- You can contact many other support services within and external to the University – see the **Help and Advice** section on the SpeakOut webpage for a list of support available to students and staff
- You can contact the **Physics Inclusion Group** if you have concerns about inclusivity or suggestions for improving departmental culture

Reporting incidents via the SpeakOut platform

You can report bullying and harassment to the University in three different ways through the **SpeakOut platform**: **formally**, **informally**, or **anonymously**. The reporting pathways differ slightly between students and staff; flowcharts showing the options available for **students** and **staff** can be found on the SpeakOut webpages.

- Formal reports will be investigated in line with University policy. Reports made by students will follow the Student Complaints Procedure, and staff reports will follow the University's Grievance Procedure.

- Informal reports will result in a member of the **University Equality, Diversity and Inclusion** team contacting you to discuss the incident and advise on available support. The information you provide will remain confidential unless you agree for it to be shared or, in exceptional circumstances, it suggests that there is an unacceptable risk to an individual or the University.

- Anonymous reports will not result in direct action, but they will raise the problem with the University and be used to inform the University's Inclusivity work.

Reporting hate crime

Hate crime can be committed against a person or their property based on disability, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any part of someone's personal identity.

Hate crimes can include things such as:

- being called names or other forms of verbal abuse;
- being sent offensive letters, emails or text messages;
- being attacked or threatened with violence;
- having property interfered with or damaged.

BY REPORTING PROBLEMS YOU ARE NOT ONLY HELPING YOURSELF BUT ALSO POTENTIALLY HELPING PREVENT OTHERS FROM EXPERIENCING THE SAME PROBLEMS.

REPORTING HATE CRIME

You can report crime, including hate crime, to the **police** and, if you are in the middle of an incident, you can call Estate Patrol **(01392 723999).**

INCLUSIVITY

Inclusivity is concerned with ensuring that everyone is treated fairly and has equal access to opportunities and resources. It is also concerned with ensuring no one in the Department is excluded or marginalised. Part of being inclusive is to recognise and consider everyone's diversity.

Diversity is concerned with the different characteristics of everyone in the Department. Diversity is important and beneficial to the Department and should be encouraged and celebrated. To maintain an inclusive environment for everyone, we need to ensure that we are not biased against some people because of their characteristics. Consideration of these factors can help maintain an inclusive environment for everyone.

The **Equality Act 2010** gives legal protection against discrimination to people with specific characteristics called protected characteristics. These nine **protected characteristics** cover many aspects of diversity. However, it is important to consider that there may be other factors that have the potential to lead to bias and discrimination against others.

Unconscious Bias

Unconscious bias occurs when we make assumptions or associations about people without being conscious that we are doing it. This can have a negative effect on inclusivity. It is difficult to remove your own unconscious bias but becoming aware of it is the first step in reducing its effects. You can identify your own unconscious biases by taking an **online test**. You can also find out how to reduce the effects of your biases by taking online courses offered by the **University of Exeter**, and external bodies such as LinkedIn and **Microsoft.**

ACCESSIBILITY

All staff and students should be able to participate fully and utilise the facilities and services provided at Exeter University. Everyone, including those without a disability, has some form of accessibility requirement. Similarly, everyone has a responsibility to make anything they do accessible to as many people as possible. We should strive for accessibility by design to reduce the number of individual adjustments required.

MAKE THINGS ACCESSIBLE BY DESIGN RATHER THAN APPROACHING THINGS ON AN AD-HOC BASIS.

Circumstances preventing access to the University and its facilities can include situational (personal circumstances), institutional (lack of or inappropriate provisions) and dispositional (attitudes and perceptions) barriers. In line with our goal of making as many things accessible by design as possible, it is best practice to perform an **Equality Impact Assessment** to consider factors that can affect how well people can engage with University activities: financial barriers, childcare commitments, travel issues, physical and mental health, and time commitments.

Making reasonable adjustments

'Reasonable adjustments' refers to positive steps taken to ensure no disabled person is at a disadvantage because of provision criterion or practice. The University has a legal duty, under the Equality Act 2010, to make reasonable adjustments for those that need them to remove or avoid the disadvantage.

Within the Department, we need to encourage others to seek support if they need it and to help deliver any reasonable adjustments that are required.

Students can seek support from the **AccessAbility** team, who can create an Individual Learning Plan (including the reasonable adjustments needed) and help with specialist support and equipment. Staff can seek support from **Occupational Health**, who can help with identifying and implementing reasonable adjustments.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO GIVE INDIVIDUALS THE OPPORTUNITY TO SAY WHAT THEY REQUIRE, DON'T ASSUME THAT YOU KNOW.

If you are unsure about implementing a reasonable adjustment, speak to **Occupational Health** or **AccessAbility**, who can advise and make recommendations.

DEPARTMENTAL BEHAVIOUR

General advice for everyone

- Treat everyone with respect
- Don't talk over others; allow everyone to speak
- Try to engage with other people's points of view
- Respect people's pronouns (she/he/they)
- Make criticism constructive
- Apologise if you are in the wrong or have upset someone
- Thank, acknowledge, and support people via an appropriate method. If you don't say it, they won't know it!
- Be aware that others may not know or understand the concepts and language you use
- Be aware of everyone's needs and difficulties when interacting in different environments (i.e. in-person, virtual environment)
- Be aware of what you share and its appropriateness – avoid discussing private issues in public places
- Remember the academic **code of conduct**
- It is easy to give attention to those that we are most familiar with and identify with, or those who are most vocal – this can lead to real and perceived unfairness within a group

- Be considerate of everyone's time demands
  - Be mindful of other people's workloads and how this reflects their capabilities and what you ask of them
  - Consider how you expect critical work to be done in the greater context of their behaviour
  - Avoid setting hard deadlines for others without prior consultation
- Be aware of how power imbalances may affect your requests and interactions with other people
- Think about the appropriateness of relationships, especially where there is a power imbalance
- Be a role model; lead to inspire students and colleagues to be better
- Be an ally; understand the struggles of other people and help them
- Speak out if you see or hear inappropriate behaviour
- Encourage others to come to the Department; be positive!

Advice on emails and messages

Flexible working has become increasingly normal, and this is to be celebrated. However, there is one area where flexible working can cause stress, and that is contacting other people. As such, the following applies to emails and other electronic messages.

- Don't expect people to respond to email outside of their normal working hours
- Do not send emails labelled "URGENT", "PLS. RESPOND" or flagged as high importance unless absolutely necessary
- Please add a note to your signature along the lines of: "I respect flexible working; please only respond during your working hours"
- Make it clear when you are available
- Please try to respond to relevant emails within a week
- Please remember to set an out-of-office message when you are away
- Please try to keep email requests of staff and students to a minimum when you know they are on holiday

RESPECT THAT EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO SWITCH OFF

Finally, it is up to you to manage your email availability. In the world of smartphones, many of us access email on our phones or have our home computer automatically show emails. In these cases, it is up to you, the individual, to decide what you are comfortable with and take breaks for your wellbeing.

Flexible working

The University has developed a range of **flexible working** arrangements for staff, and in the Physics and Astronomy Department, we welcome staff and students working unusual hours and at times that suit them where this is practicable. University scheduled activities often need to occur at specified times (e.g. timetabled teaching), and many departmental activities need to occur during core hours. However, if you are organising a meeting or event, consider finding a time that suits as many people as possible to maximise participation.

Our departmental activities should allow as many people to participate as possible.

MANAGING INTENSE DISCUSSIONS

Discussion and debate are an essential part of research and education in science. However, some discussions can become intense and emotionally charged, leading to one or both parties becoming angry, anxious or upset.

The best solution in these cases is to pause the conversation until all parties have calmed down and then resume later. Regardless of this, remember these tips to help keep disagreements a discussion and not an argument. These points are designed to help you with these discussions; they are not compulsory and remember that it is also important to **challenge inappropriate behaviour.**

- Focus on the issue at hand and do not engage in personal slurs or insults about the other person or their capabilities
- Repeat the other person's argument back in your own words before you start with your side – this helps reduce conflict and can help spell out to the opposing party the point of contention
- Consider stating what points would change your mind – if nothing would change your mind, then it is best to leave the discussion

- Shouting suggests that the argument has become too heated – if you start to shout, apologise for shouting and then consider leaving the conversation and resuming later
- If you cannot reach an agreement, then consider postponing until you can bring a third party to mediate
- Think about how your argument/discussion looks to others

Other difficult conversations

If you see or hear something that may be bullying, harassment or abusive behaviour, you can report it as a third party to SpeakOut. In addition, there is guidance online on what to do if you receive a **disclosure about an assault**.

You can also find advice for **staff** and **students** on dealing with other issues, such as someone becoming upset or anxious.

MEETINGS, CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

Attending meetings, conferences and workshops
- Prepare for meetings in advance and arrive on time
- Listen when others are speaking
- Contribute positively and constructively to the meeting
- Encourage the development of ideas and discussion
- Follow up on actions you need to complete

Organising meetings
- Schedule meetings at times which are considerate of the attendees' normal working hours
- Circulate meeting information in advance of the meeting
- Let attendees know in advance if you are planning to record the meeting
- Have a mechanism to prevent or stop unacceptable behaviour
- Minute meetings and circulate for those who cannot attend the meeting

Organising conferences
- All conferences must have a code of conduct
- Try not to schedule conferences during **religious or cultural events**

- Be aware that travel and some destinations are difficult or unsafe for some people and consider alternative methods of participation
- Encourage attendance from under-represented groups (consider facilitating this via remote/virtual attendance, bursaries, childcare etc.)
- Encourage early-career researchers to gain experience of attending and organising conferences and provide appropriate mentoring
- Be aware of unconscious bias when selecting speakers, session chairs, and abstracts
- Consider reviewing selections to ensure broad representation
- Ensure session chairs are enabled to prevent or stop unacceptable behaviour
- Provide conference information to attendees well in advance of the conference
- Choose venues with appropriate facilities to maximise accessibility
- Consider providing facilities that promote inclusivity (e.g. quiet spaces, gender-neutral toilets)
- Provide the opportunity for attendees to say if they have additional requirements
- Include the option for attendees to give their pronouns and preferred name on their name badges
- Listen to attendees' complaints and deal with them promptly and fairly.

ONLINE INTERACTIONS

We want to prepare you to make the most of your digital interactions with staff and students. 'Netiquette' (short for 'net etiquette') refers to rules of good online behaviour. The principles of online communication are similar to face-to-face conversation, but there are important differences too. Many of us are used to communicating online using email, and private and informal platforms.

Remember, all your online interactions reflect on the University, and the University treats all forms of abuse, bullying, intimidation, sexist and racist behaviour very seriously. Anti-social behaviour or abuse of any kind towards others is not tolerated, and you should take note of the University's **social media policy** and **guidance on dealing with online abuse or harassment**.

Online messaging platforms and emails

- Be mindful of your emails and posts on social media – these can be easily shared with lots of people, and you represent the Department (if you are not sure if it is appropriate, check before posting or sending)
- Consider your tone and how you express emotion online; remember, people cannot see your non-verbal communication
- Avoid writing in capital letters; it looks like you're SHOUTING!

- Consider if your approach could be perceived as confrontational - if you think you will upset the other person, don't post it and arrange an alternate means of discussing it
- Remember that what you intend to say/do is less important than how the person on the receiving end perceives it; think before you speak/post/act
- Pause before posting – 5 seconds can make a post more readable and less aggressive
- Be mindful not to share personal information (both yours and others)
- Posts online can cause unintentional harm; consider seeking clarification of context before reacting
- Long emails and posts online can be hard to read and tend to get ignored and emailing too often creates a burden – try to be concise, avoid excessively long emails, and avoid sending to people who don't need to see the email

YOU ARE NOT OBLIGED TO SEND OR RESPOND TO EMAILS OUTSIDE OF YOUR NORMAL WORKING HOURS.

Online meetings and live sessions
- Stay within agreed meeting times to minimise conflicting demands from activities
- Remember to schedule breaks when doing online meetings to reduce fatigue
- Set rules and expectations at the start of sessions and stick to them!
- Ask participants for their consent before you start recording a meeting or live session
- Ensure that everyone can participate, remember you cannot see everyone
- Consider using live captioning software where available
- Watch out for participants who aren't 'joining in' – it might be worth dropping them a note/email/private message outside the session to see if they are happy
    - Be aware that some participants may be concerned about joining in online, and being recorded, out of concern for who will have access to what has been said
    - However, be aware that others may have a good reason for not participating

- Keeping your camera on is good for others as it helps signal engagement; however, don't feel obliged to if you feel uncomfortable for any reason and remember that others may feel similarly
- Consider personal and family safeguarding when using video; check what you have around you that can be seen
- When sharing your screen, close all sensitive documents, open applications and browser bookmarks
- Please try to stay on mute when not speaking to avoid distracting others
- Consider using the hand raise function to prevent people talking over each other
- Do not take photographs of your screens or share any images of the online session without permission
- Moderating online discussions requires extra care from the organiser – if you feel uncomfortable in that role, ask a colleague to help moderate or try to avoid sensitive topics where possible.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

RESEARCH

For teachers (lecturers, tutors, demonstrators)

- Consider inclusivity and accessibility issues in teaching
- Use inclusive and gender-neutral language
- Consider how you can help decolonise the curriculum by improving the representation of historical and contemporary people from all cultures
- Be open to questions and discussion (e.g. advertise office hours)
- Don't trivialise students' questions
- Remember, it's okay not to know all the answers
- Be aware all people learn at a different pace and in different ways
- Make your expectations clear to all students
- Ensure resources are accessible to all participants

For learners

- Respect your teachers and peers
- Be responsible for your own learning
- Engage with activities and resources provided
- Make any accessibility requirements known
- Seek help if you need it

Accessibility and inclusivity

The University's Education Toolkit contains information and guidance on creating an inclusive curriculum and making it accessible to all users. The inclusivity and accessibility Toolkits can be found within the Education Toolkit on the **University of exeter sharepoint sites**.

Decolonisation and representation

"Decolonisation refers to a process of critiquing and dismantling power structures that were inherited from colonisation. It highlights the ways in which colonisation imparted forms of knowledge, social structures and cultures that benefited the colonisers, often by violent means. By raising the consciousness of these structures, decolonisation aims to dismantle power structures that value colonist knowledge practices over the practices of the colonised."

The Education Toolkit contains a page about **Decolonising the Curriculum** that includes practical advice and questions to ask yourself when designing a curriculum.

Research involves a complex mix of people, practices, and methods. There are several existing codes of conduct, noted below, that cover the planning, doing, and dissemination of research and indicate best practise concerning the development of researchers.

- Follow an accepted code of good practice in research
- Follow all relevant legal, ethical, and safety guidelines
- Follow the principles of the Researcher Development Concordat (see right)
- Know how to recognise and deal with academic misconduct
- Consider good laboratory etiquette (see right)
- Consider inclusivity and accessibility issues across all aspects of research
- Remember that nicknames and terminology can have cultural insinuations – research it before you name it!
- Work to decolonise research – see the Doctoral College's **webpage** for information

Codes of Practice and Resources

- **Code of Practice for Research** from the UK Research Integrity Office
- **Researcher Development Concordat** which sets out the expectations for the employment conditions and professional development of researchers in the UK
- Doctoral College Researcher Development and Research Culture **hub** containing links to funded initiatives, interdisciplinary events, resources and career support

Laboratory etiquette

- Define the role and responsibility of everyone working in a lab and make sure this is clearly signposted
- Be considerate of others by looking after the facilities you are working in

LINKS AND REFERENCES

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Physics and Astronomy

CODE OF **CONDUCT** AND **INCLUSIVITY**

Other Resources

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Exeter University exeter.ac.uk/departments/inclusion

Physics Inclusion Group emps.exeter.ac.uk/physics-astronomy/inclusivity

Diversity and Inclusion at the Institute of Physics iop.org/about/IOP-diversity-inclusion#gref

Exeter Speaks Out exeter.ac.uk/speakout

Wellbeing (students) exeter.ac.uk/students/wellbeing

Wellbeing (staff) exeter.ac.uk/staff/wellbeing

Student Guild advice exeterguild.org/advice/portal

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