Role of Harassment Advisers

The role of a Harassment Adviser is to support individual members of staff and students who are concerned that they are the subject of harassment or bullying. The aim is to facilitate informal resolution in cases of harassment in line with the Code of Practice. The harassment advisory service is co-ordinated by the Equality and Diversity Unit:

**Email:** harassment.line@admin.ox.ac.uk  
**Telephone:** 270760

Main elements of the role

1. To listen to staff and students who believe they are being harassed, to clarify the options open to them and to assist them in resolving the matter informally where possible.

2. To provide similar support to those accused of harassment.

3. Where requested to support individuals throughout the resolution of their concerns. This may include discussing with the individual what s/he may wish to say or write to the person whom s/he considers has harassed or bullied her/him; accompanying the individual to speak to the alleged harasser or accompanying the individual to seek guidance from a senior member of staff. This list is not exhaustive, but includes empowering and supporting the individual. They must not, however, act as a representative of the complainant (or person being complained against). If someone wants a person to speak for them at a meeting (e.g. as part of an investigation) the complainant (or person complained against) may be accompanied by a union representative, if a member, or by an accredited staff representative, or by a colleague of choice from within the University.

4. Advisers should not make statements to those to whom they are providing support to the effect that particular behaviour definitely constitutes harassment that will lead to disciplinary action. Such statements can only be made after investigation of all of the facts – the harassment adviser’s role is not to investigate but to support in the way set out in the code. Harassment advisers should not purport to provide legal advice to complainants or to those accused of harassment.

5. To deal with all cases with the utmost confidentiality except in cases where there is an unacceptable risk to a member of staff, student or to the institution.

6. To maintain summary records of any action taken in relation to cases and to store them in conditions of strict confidence.

7. To support the annual monitoring of the Code of Practice on Harassment through recording (on an anonymous basis) the number of cases in which the adviser is involved and the methods by which they were resolved, where known.

8. To refer individuals onto another adviser where necessary or to other agencies or support systems where appropriate, in line with the parameters of their role.
Those undertaking this role do not need to demonstrate any particular seniority, status, educational, or professional qualifications but must have a clear commitment to equality of opportunity in the institution.

They need to have an understanding of the nature of harassment and bullying and the ways in which it can affect those who are harassed/bullied in their workplace, and have the confidence to support staff in difficult situations.

They need to be non-judgemental, with well-developed interpersonal and listening skills and an approachable style, and have the ability to advise colleagues in a non-directional way.

They must be able to treat all disclosures in a confidential and sensitive manner.