

## MIR Program - Civility and Safe Space

2023 - 2024

The MIR program engages a variety of challenging and controversial issues related to work and employment relations. This includes unions and conflict and the workplace to evidence of systemic racism and gender-based violence at work. We have designed the program to promote discussion and the exchange of opinions. At times, these issues may be very controversial in nature and students may hold very different opinions on a range of subjects. Learning happens best when we debate issues that we care deeply about. At the same time, a learning environment requires a safe space in which everyone feels free and comfortable to express their opinions. While this document is not an official university policy, many of the materials do refer to official Queen's Policy and the program faculty and staff take the issue of safe space very seriously.

The University Senate has adopted the Queen's Harassment and Discrimination Policy and Procedure which clearly states that every individual is entitled to work and study in an environment that is free from harassment and discrimination. In order to advance the goals of this policy, the Human Rights Office provides education to members of the community with regard to their rights and responsibilities in the area of human rights.

“Queen's University values maintaining an environment free of, and will not tolerate, Harassment, Discrimination and Reprisal. This includes Harassment and Discrimination on the basis of race, gender identity, ancestry, gender expression, place of origin, age, colour, record of offences (employment only), ethnic origin, marital status, citizenship, family status, creed, sexual orientation, sex, and disability.

It is the responsibility of all members of the [University Community](#) to strive to create an environment free of Harassment and Discrimination in their areas of responsibility and in their interactions with others. Included within the ambit of that responsibility is the pursuit of an awareness of what constitutes Harassment and Discrimination, a knowledge of the procedures that are in place for dealing with allegations of Harassment and Discrimination, and cooperation in the processing of Complaints and Reports made under this Policy.

Excellence in teaching, learning, research, scholarship, and the service of the University and that of its graduates in and to the community at large, the nation, and the community of nations can only be achieved when all members of the University Community are free to work, live and learn in an environment which does not Harass or Discriminate against them or tolerate Reprisals.

Every member of the University Community needs to understand that behaviours influenced by or that demonstrate evidence of conscious or unconscious bias, prejudice, negative stereotypes, etc., are often the root cause of Harassment and Discriminatory conduct.

Whether or not conduct meets the threshold for the definitions of Discrimination or Harassment in this Policy, conduct influenced by conscious or unconscious bias, prejudice, negative stereotypes, etc., can nevertheless impact participation by a member(s) of the University Community in the University's living, learning, or working environments.

The University's approach to combatting such conduct will often be remedial and will include education and initiatives to advance equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, and indigenization on campus. Queen's will foster respectful and inclusive living, learning, and working environments for all University Community members."

Sexual harassment is not a joke. Neither is any kind of harassment based on race, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability. All create feelings of uneasiness, humiliation and discomfort and are an expression of perceived power and superiority by the harasser over another person. Some forms of harassment may not violate the law or University policy. But such harassment does violate the basic principles of civility and academic dialogue. Examples include name-calling, repetition of behavior that others consider offensive, and any kind hostile communication inside and outside of class.

In addition to issues of race, gender, sexual orientation, age, and disability we are committed to make the MIR program safe space for a variety of perspectives, thoughts, and feelings. Given the diversity of backgrounds of program participants, and the discussion-based and small-group format that we use, this creation of safe space is even more important. At its foundation safe space is based on respect for other students, faculty members, and staff members.

Every member of this community has the right to express their opinion free from interruption, ridicule, or other adverse consequences. At the same time, viewpoints should be expressed in a civil fashion, and should not be made repeatedly. We must all strive to participate, yet not dominate discussion. Here we must be particularly sensitive to gender, race, and age, as well as personal style, to create a fully inclusive environment. This includes rotating facilitating, note-taking, and reporting back responsibilities in all small group activities.

Furthermore, all students must feel free to bring up different points of view in class. Students should know that their comments or perspectives, offered in the spirit of learning, will not become the subject of public discussion outside the classroom. The classroom should be a place for the free exchange of ideas, including people sometimes changing their positions, without fear that these discussions will have a larger impact. Civility requires respecting personal and political perspectives that differ from one's own.

In addition to classes themselves, our commitment to inclusion and safe space extends to all activities in all locations where the class participants interact and gather. Whether in small groups, or informal gatherings, we hope that participants will strive to include, understand, and reach out to people different from themselves.

The goal of this policy is, whenever possible, to mediate and resolve minor issues within our community in an amicable and non-adversarial manner. Anyone who has a question or concern about possible violations of our policies on civility and safe space, as well as the university policy on nondiscrimination and sexual harassment should contact one of the two primary staff members for the course -- Rob Hickey and Anne-Marie Bergman -- to discuss the issue confidentially. In cases where violation of University policy is clear students should speak directly to the class instructor, Rob Hickey, and seek assistance from the Office of Human Rights.