

Student Charter

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Related Documents

[Academic Freedom – Statement of Principles](#)

1. Context

Media Design School (MDS) has a student-centred approach to teaching, learning, research and scholarship and a commitment to the intellectual and personal welfare of its students. MDS aims to provide a safe, secure and inclusive learning environment that enables students to fulfil their academic potential and graduate to make a positive social, economic and cultural contribution to society. Consistent with its mission, MDS celebrates the diversity of its community. It supports the principles of fair treatment, respect of persons, integrity and procedural fairness and aims to produce graduates who are future leaders committed to social justice and human rights. MDS actively discourages behaviours and actions that are inconsistent with a safe, equitable and respectful environment in which to work and study. It expects all members of the MDS community to comply with anti-discrimination and equal opportunity laws and the provisions under this policy. Breaches falling within the parameters of this Charter may result in disciplinary action or other appropriate penalties or sanctions.

2. Definitions

Bullying: the persistent and ongoing ill-treatment of a person that victimises, humiliates, undermines or threatens that person.

Harassment: repeated, unwelcome and unsolicited behaviour or comments aimed at a person or group that makes that person or group feel offended, humiliated or threatened.

Exclusion: the cancellation of a student's enrolment and the termination of their rights and privileges as a student of MDS including the right to re-enrol in their programme or be admitted to another programme, for a defined period (two years). The student may re-apply for admission to any MDS programme at the end of the period of exclusion.

Expulsion: the permanent exclusion of a student with no right to re-apply for admission.

Media Design School (MDS) community: students, staff, agents, titleholders, alumni, officers, contractors, volunteers, and other people who are formally involved in an MDS-related activity, regardless of the location of that activity.

Procedural fairness: a fair and proper procedure appropriate to the circumstances, where decisions are made without bias and are supported by evidence and communicated with reasons.

Sexual assault: when a person is forced, coerced or tricked into sexual acts against their will or without their consent, or if a child or young person under 18 is exposed to sexual activities. Sexual assault is a form of sexual activity without explicit consent. Sexual assault is attempted or actual sexual contact performed without the active, verbal consent and positive physical cooperation of another individual.

Sexual harassment:

- *Physical behaviour, language or visual material of a sexual nature, which is unwelcome or offensive, and either repeated or significant enough to have a detrimental effect on the person subjected to it.*
- *A request for a sexual activity together with an implied or overt promise of preferential treatment or a threat of detrimental treatment.*

(Human Rights Commission citing the Human Rights Act 1993)

Suspension: the cancellation of a student's enrolment and the withdrawal for a specified time of the rights and privileges of a student, including the right to re-enrol as a student. Unless otherwise advised, the student has the right to recommence their studies at the end of the suspension.

Victimisation: subjecting a person to some form of detriment because that person has lodged a complaint or is associated with a person who has lodged a complaint, or has had a complaint made against them or is associated with a person who has had a complaint made against them.

Vilification: occurs when a person speaks or writes in an insulting, abusive or defamatory way about or to a person or group. Vilification is commonly associated with the incitement of hatred towards a person due to their race, religion, or beliefs.

3. Scope

The Student Charter applies to all students enrolled in an MDS programme, regardless of their location or mode of study. This policy applies at all locations where MDS students are participating in learning (such as at conferences, fields trips and professional placements) or representing MDS (such as at cultural or sporting events).

4. Principles

The Student Charter is fundamental to MDS in order to ensure the ongoing personal and professional development of all students. It is vital that every student is familiar with this code and adheres to commonly accepted behavioural practices whilst on the premises and/or representing MDS externally.

The contract between MDS and the student includes an undertaking by the student that they will at all times behave in a manner that is not offensive, abusive or threatening to other students, staff, guests or the general public.

This policy is based on the principle that all members of the MDS community benefit from:

- acting honestly and with integrity, demonstrating mutual respect
- the right to be heard in an environment free of bias and unfair treatment
- the proper use of MDS facilities and information
- practices that are inclusive and do not unreasonably prevent access to learning
- responsiveness to individual needs, whether they relate to age, gender, cultural or ethnic background, health, sexuality, employment, location or other personal circumstance
- adherence to relevant legislation and MDS policies and guidelines
- the right to make a complaint without subsequent detriment
- prompt resolution of complaints, according to the principles of procedural fairness.

5. Student Charter

All students have the right to be treated fairly, to study in a positive and safe learning environment that allows them to reach their full potential, and to have access to clear, consistent and timely information.

5.1. Fairness

Students can expect to:

- be treated with courtesy and respect
- learn in an environment free of discrimination, intimidation and harassment
- have access to fair and transparent complaints and appeals procedures
- have their rights respected, including intellectual property rights and their right to privacy
- be considered for admission on the basis of fair, consistent and transparent criteria
- have opportunities to provide feedback on their experience at MDS
- have opportunities to participate in the decision-making and cultural life of their institution
- have the freedom to voice alternative views in rational discussion and debate in line with the *Academic Freedom – Statement of Principles*.

5.2. Learning environment

Students can expect to:

- have access to a diverse range of high-quality learning experiences

- have access to up-to-date materials, equipment and other resources to pursue their programme-related goals
- have access to counselling, advisory and academic support services
- receive guidance, instruction and support from qualified staff
- study in a safe, productive and stimulating academic environment.

5.3. Timely and accurate information

Students can expect to:

- receive complete, clear and accurate information in relation to content, objectives, workload, timetable, costs and assessment of subjects
- receive timely and constructive feedback on assessment tasks
- have access to a clear statement of acceptable academic conduct by students
- have access to clearly stated policies and procedures
- have reasonable access to records held about them.

6. Student code of conduct

***Note:** The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to provide guidance on the standards of conduct expected of students. It does not address all possible issues concerning the conduct of students but provides a framework of appropriate behaviour. If a circumstance or situation arises which is not expressly covered by the Code, students must comply with the underlying principles of the Code.*

A breach of this Code may result in suspension, exclusion or expulsion from MDS under the *Student Discipline Policy*.

6.1. Honesty and integrity

Students are expected to:

- carry out their studies with honesty and integrity and not engage in academic misconduct
- inform themselves of, and comply with, MDS policies and procedures
- comply with the conventions of academic scholarship
- comply with all New Zealand laws
- participate fully in the learning process, attending classes and submitting assessments
- reasonably engage in the programme
- read and respond to all official MDS communications in a timely manner
- pay all MDS fees and charges for which they are liable by the set deadline.

6.2. Courtesy and respect

Students are expected to:

- treat all members of the MDS community with courtesy and respect
- refrain from behaviour that disrupts others in the safe pursuit of their work or study
- refrain from conduct that may be detrimental to the reputation of MDS

- contribute to the orderly and safe functioning of MDS
- respect the opinions of others and their right to express religious or political views
- refrain from behaviour that could reasonably be considered offensive to others.

6.3. Appropriate use of Media Design School's resource

Students are expected to:

- use the MDS resources in a manner that is considerate to others
- use the MDS resources for MDS purposes, unless otherwise expressly permitted
- not willfully damage or remove property belonging to members of the MDS community
- not participate in any learning activity while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs
- not use, possess or supply any prohibited drug, substance or weapon on MDS premises or while participating in learning activities or representing MDS in social or cultural activities
- not engage in fraudulent or corrupt conduct
- safeguard their own wellbeing by observing all workplace health and safety procedures
- obey all reasonable instructions by MDS staff.

6.4. Fair treatment

- All members of the MDS community are prohibited from engaging in the following behaviours whilst on the MDS premises or undertaking MDS activities, regardless of the location of the activities:
 - harassment, bullying or vilification
 - racial vilification or racist behaviour
 - sexual harassment
 - discrimination on the basis of a personal characteristic such as age, gender, relationship status, pregnancy, sexuality or race
 - discrimination on the grounds of disability or medical condition
 - discrimination on the grounds of religion, political opinion, criminal record (when irrelevant), freedom of movement or trade union activity
 - discrimination on the grounds of family responsibilities
 - discrimination because of an association with someone identified on the basis of a personal characteristic
 - victimisation of any member of the MDS community who makes a complaint under this Code.
- For the purposes of this document, harassment and bullying do not include:
 - reasonable direction from a staff member
 - fair application of appropriate teaching, including guidance and assessment feedback
 - implementation, with procedural fairness, of academic or non-academic misconduct procedures.

7. Student agreement

The Student Charter must be signed by each student prior to programme commencement and is kept on the individual student's file.

The contract between MDS and the student includes an undertaking by the student that they will at all times behave in a manner that is not offensive, abusive or threatening to other students, staff, guests, or the general public.

8. Complaints

The [Student Complaints Policy](#) may be used if a student feels they have been unfairly treated in regard to the Student Charter.

9. References

Children's and Young People's Well-being Act (1989) (NZ).

http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1989/0024/latest/DLM149466.html?search=sw_096be8ed818a515c_report_25_se&p=1&sr=3

Education Act (1989) (NZ).

<https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1989/0080/latest/whole.html#whole>

Human Rights Act (1993) (NZ).

http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1993/0082/latest/DLM304212.html?search=gs_act%40bill%40regulation%40deemedreg_human+rights+act_resel_25_h&p=1&sr=1

Human Rights Commission (n.d.). *Sexual Harassment*. <https://www.hrc.co.nz/our-work/women/sexual-harrasment/>

Privacy Act (1993). <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1993/0028/232.0/DLM296639.html>