

# LIMUN Harassment Policy

## The Policy Statement

The LIMUN Foundation (Charity number: 1159324) is committed to providing a safe environment for all stakeholders - event delegates, volunteers, staff and Trustees - free from discrimination on any ground and free from harassment including but not limited to those pertaining to sexual orientation, religious, racial, cultural, gender and/or political identity. These encompass acts including but not limited to sexual harassment, verbal abuse, cyberbullying, verbal and non-verbal actions engendering an environment of discomfort. The LIMUN Foundation will not tolerate any form of harassment at any of its activities and functions. We treat all incidents seriously and will promptly investigate all allegations of harassment. Any person found to have harassed or discriminated against another will face disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from the Foundation's conferences and events, and submission to the authorities for further action.

Complaints of harassment will be taken seriously and treated with respect, discretion and in confidence. The LIMUN Foundation places the security, safety, and comfort of its participants as its highest priority, and no one will be discriminated against, harassed or bullied in retaliation for their actions for making such a complaint.

This policy does not supersede the law and is meant to serve as a guide within the activities of the Foundation.

## General Harassment

We define harassment as any verbal or physical conduct designed to threaten, intimidate or coerce a delegate, chair, secretariat, trustee, or any other member affiliated with the LIMUN Foundation at any events organised by or in partnership with LIMUN.

### **Verbal and nonverbal harassment**

The following examples of harassment are intended to be guidelines and are not exclusive when determining whether there has been a violation of the policy:

- Verbal harassment comprises of remarks that are offensive or unsolicited regarding a person's protected characteristics such as their race, ethnicity, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy and maternity, and gender identity. Harassment may also related to a person's appearance or political identity\*. This can

be expressed through derogatory language, epithets, slurs, and negative stereotyping amongst other forms of applicable verbal abuse.

- Nonverbal harassments includes the exhibition, distribution, or discussion of any written or graphic material that denigrates, insults, ridicules, or shows hostility, abhorrence or disrespect toward an individual or group for their origin, race, ethnicity, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, appearance, disability, gender identity, pregnancy and maternity, political identity\*, or expression.
- Single or multiple acts may constitute harassment.

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\*As the LIMUN Foundation is dedicated towards promoting cultural empathy, understanding of international affairs and knowledge of the United Nations among young people, we recognize that many discussions held as part of LIMUN's activities involve topics, events, and/or concepts that may be contentious or otherwise subject to various interpretations. Though LIMUN seeks to simulate the workings of the United Nations and its affiliate organizations and thus urges participants to represent the viewpoints of their assigned nations rather than their personal views, we acknowledge that many of our members and participants may hold deep affiliations with certain political identities as a reflection of their beliefs and/or personal backgrounds. The Foundation is committed towards respecting our participants' political identities and strives to take all necessary measures to maintain a safe and comfortable environment where their political identities, views and interpretations may be presented in an appropriate and respectful manner. Please view our freedom of speech statement for further information.

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*The LIMUN Foundation reserves the right to final interpretation in the situation, context, and background of the simulation, in order to ensure the role play derived from a realistic situation is within the framework of ensuring a safe and comfortable environment for all participants at LIMUN.*

Examples in this category include professional, collegial, and culturally sensitive acts. The LIMUN Foundation will strive for and actively provide a safe and comfortable environment to best accommodate the complainant's concerns. Efforts will be made to ensure diversity (such as, *inter alia* gender, ethnic, religious, social-economic background) on the Board of Trustees to provide options present for any preference that the complainant may have in availing themselves of this complaint procedure.

## **Sexual harassment**

Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature which makes a person feel offended, humiliated and/or intimidated, often without active consent and may be a result of external undue pressure, both explicit or implicit. It includes situations where a person is asked to engage in sexual activity as a condition of that person's success in any activity, as well as situations which create an environment which is hostile, intimidating or humiliating for the recipient.

Sexual harassment can involve one or more incidents, and actions constituting sexual harassment may be physical, verbal and non-verbal. Examples of conduct or behaviour which constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

### **Physical conduct**

- Unwelcome physical contact including patting, pinching, stroking, kissing, hugging, fondling, inappropriate touching, and placement of hands, and/or other body parts
- Physical violence, including sexual assault

### **Verbal conduct**

- Comments on a person's appearance, age, private life, etc.
- Sexual comments, stories and jokes
- Unwanted sexual advances
- Unwanted social invitations for dates or physical intimacy
- Offensive or otherwise unwanted comments based on the gender and/or sex of the individual
- Condescending or paternalistic remarks
- The use of job-related threats or rewards to solicit favours

### **Non-verbal conduct**

- Display of sexually explicit or suggestive material
- Sending sexually explicit or suggestive messages in writing and/or material
- Sexually-suggestive gestures
- Whistling at an individual/individuals, where such attention may be unwanted
- Leering

Anyone can be a victim of sexual harassment, regardless of their sex or gender identity or that of the perpetrator. Sexual harassment can occur between people of the same sex. What matters is that the sexual conduct is unwanted and unwelcome by the person against whom the conduct is directed. Single or multiple acts may constitute harassment.

**Abuse of power:** LIMUN recognises that sexual harassment can also result from or exacerbated by an abuse of established power dynamics. Additionally, power dynamics and

abuses of those positions of power (Chairs, Secretariat, Trustees, etc.) will be carefully considered when the Foundation acts on a complaint. It is important that all participants at LIMUN are aware of the potential dangers of unintentionally exercising this.

All attendees at a LIMUN event – Delegates, Secretariat, Chairs, Volunteers, Press, Faculty Advisers and Guests – who sexually harass any other participant will be reprimanded in accordance with this policy. This includes actions that take place during LIMUN ceremonies, conference sessions, social activities or official gatherings.

## **Complaints procedures (for all types of harassments)**

LIMUN will take appropriate and immediate action in response to complaints or knowledge of violations of this policy.

### **1. Report the incident**

Anyone who is subject to harassment, or witnesses the harassment of others, should, if possible, inform the alleged harasser that the conduct is unwanted and unwelcome. LIMUN recognises that harassment may occur in unequal power relationships (i.e. between a Chair and a Delegate), and that it may not be possible for the complainant to inform the alleged harasser. This policy applies to all LIMUN activities and platforms, including in-person or virtual ceremonies, conference or training sessions, social activities, and/or any other official gatherings.

If a complainant cannot directly approach an alleged harasser, he/she can approach their Head Delegate (if they feel comfortable in doing so). In the case where the complainant is an individual delegate or the Head Delegate is unable to proceed with this complaint with the urgency and importance it requires or the complainant does not feel comfortable going via them, they can approach, either directly, via email or another form of communication such as “helpbox email”:

- the Under-Secretary-General for Applications
- the current Secretary-General
- a member of the Board of Trustees (whose profiles and emails are publicly available on the LIMUN website)
- other LIMUN organizer(s) should they feel more comfortable doing so,
- other LIMUN staff members, should they feel more comfortable doing so, with the explicit understanding that such staff member will be obligated to inform the Secretariat and other Foundation Board members per this Policy

### **2. Record the incident**

When the approached designated officer receives the complaint of harassment, they will:

- Record the dates, times and facts of the incident(s)
- Ascertain the views of the complainant as to what outcome they seek
- Ensure that the complainant understands LIMUN's procedures for dealing with the complaint
- Discuss and agree the next steps: either informal or formal complaint, on the understanding that choosing to resolve the matter informally does not preclude the complainant from pursuing a formal complaint if they are not satisfied with the outcome
- Alert the Board of Trustees that a complaint has been made
- Keep a confidential record of all discussions
- Respect the choice of the complainant
- Ensure that the complainant knows that they can lodge the complaint outside of the foundation through the relevant country/legal framework

Throughout the complaint's procedure, a complainant is entitled to be helped by a representative within the Foundation. This role will be fulfilled by a member of the Board of Trustees at first instance, or a member of the Secretariat. LIMUN recognises that because harassment often occurs in unequal relationships, complainants often feel that they cannot come forward, and understands the need to support complainants in making complaints.

In the event where both parties' account of the alleged offence creates ambiguity, the Foundation will strive to examine both parties' testimonies and/or accounts in an equal and fair manner prior to reaching a judgement. Examples in this category include professional, collegial, and culturally sensitive acts.

### **3. Decide on informal or formal mechanism (complainant should be given the options and opportunity to decide)**

#### **Informal Complaints Mechanism**

If the complainant wishes to deal with the matter informally, the approached designated LIMUN representative will:

- Give an opportunity to the alleged harasser to respond to the LIMUN representative regarding the complaint
- Ensure the alleged harasser understands the complaints mechanism
- Facilitate discussion between both parties to achieve an informal resolution which is acceptable to the complainant, or refer to a designated mediator to resolve the matter
- Ensure that a confidential record is kept of what happens
- Follow up after the outcome of the complaints mechanism to ensure that the behaviour has stopped
- Ensure that the above is done speedily and before the conclusion of the event or two weeks after the complaint was filed

### **Formal Complaints Mechanism**

If the complainant wants to make a formal complaint or if the informal complaint mechanism has not led to a satisfactory outcome for the complainant, the formal complaint mechanism should be used to resolve the matter.

The designated person who initially received the complaint will refer the matter to the Chair of the Board of Trustees to instigate a formal investigation. The Board of Trustees will be responsible for dealing with issues of this matter to reflect the importance therein. The Chair may deal with matters him/herself, refer the matter to another member of the Board, refer it to a committee constituted by the Board for this purpose or in serious cases, request an external investigator address the situation.

The person carrying out the investigation will:

- Interview the complainant and alleged harasser separately
- Aim to provide anonymity for the complainant at first contact with the harasser, and seeking confirmation from the complainant to proceed if subsequent communication and investigation is impossible with the harasser without their identity being divulged
- Interview any relevant third parties separately
- Review the evidence and see if it matches the examples specified in this document
- Produce a report detailing the investigations, findings and other recommendations
  - If the harassment took place, decide what the appropriate remedy for the complainant is, in consultation with the complainant. This may range from committee reassignment to expulsion and barring from all programs of the LIMUN Foundation. Pending on the gravity of the situation, a statement may be issued by the Board of Trustees to this effect, and efforts will be made by the Foundation to ensure that all participants are made to feel safe at the event
  - Follow up to ensure that the recommendations are implemented, the behaviour has stopped and the complainant is satisfied with the outcome
- If it cannot determine that the harassment took place, he/she may still make recommendations to ensure proper regulation of such activities at the event
- Keep a record of all actions taken
- Ensure that the records concerning the matter are kept confidential
- Ensure that the process is done as quickly as possible and in any event within the event timeframe or two weeks after the complaint was filed

#### **4. Decide on whether to escalate externally**

### **Outside Complaints Mechanism**

A person who has been subject to harassment can also make a complaint outside of the Foundation. They can do so through filing a police report, as LIMUN activities are legally

bound by the laws of the United Kingdom. LIMUN will provide a copy of the report for any investigations conducted.

## **Sanctions and Disciplinary Measures**

Anyone who has been found to have harassed another person under the terms of this policy is liable to any of the following disciplinary measures:

- Suspension from their role and suspended access to any ongoing LIMUN events
- Expulsion from the Event and all future Foundation activities
- Anonymised public statement issued stating the summary of the report into the incident
- Submission of the person to the relevant local authorities where appropriate

In considering the sanctions to be applied, the Trustees shall consider, but are not limited to, the following-

- Nature of the incident: number of complainants and patterns established
- Trauma inflicted: determined by statement reports and the severity of the actions
- Power dynamics and possible abuse of position: determined by level of engagement with the Foundation

## **Implementation of this policy**

LIMUN will subsequently ensure that this policy is widely disseminated to all relevant persons. It will be included in the Foundation Constitution as an Appendix, distributed to all volunteer staff and posted on the website. All Trustees, Secretariat, Chairs, and involved Foundation Staff must be appropriately trained on the content of this policy, as well as its execution, as part of any induction or briefing prior to formally performing duties within or on behalf of the Foundation. These trainings are the preserve of the Secretariat, but will in all cases involve an appropriate and accredited external organization or individual.

Every year, LIMUN will require all volunteers and Trustees to re-familiarize themselves with the contents of this policy as it is subject to change. It is the responsibility of the Trustees to ensure the Secretariat/Foundation volunteers are aware of and capable of executing the policy.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

LIMUN recognises the importance of monitoring this policy and will ensure that it anonymously collects feedback and data as to how it is used and whether or not it is effective. Further, we openly welcome any feedback or complaints about our procedures. Should you have any queries, comments, or suggestions on this policy handbook, please contact the Deputy Secretary-General at [dsg@limun.org.uk](mailto:dsg@limun.org.uk), or a member of the Board of Trustees, whose contact information can be found on the LIMUN website ([www.limun.org.uk](http://www.limun.org.uk)).

Staff and Trustees responsible for dealing with sexual harassment cases will report on compliance with the policy and evaluate this policy and make recommendations for any changes to be made. This will be done during an annual policy review.