

# Geas Anti-Harassment Policy

Enacted and Ratified on: 24 November, 2019

Updated: 21 March, 2021

To be reviewed by: 2022 Annual General Meeting

We have created these policies in line with the University's harassment guidelines and equality policies. For more information, please consult:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/respect/guidance/harassment>

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/about/legislation-policies/policies>

## Why do we have a policy?

Geas strives to make the spaces that we provide as safe and inclusive as possible for all people of all identities. This policy is not meant to silence or ostracize people but to hold people accountable for their actions and to act as a learning mechanism.

## Scope

1. Geas has a zero-tolerance policy towards harassment and bullying and the Committee will escalate all complaints appropriately within Society complaint and disciplinary procedures. Geas is committed to providing a harassment-free environment at its functions and on-line spaces.
2. This policy applies to all Geas functions (including weekly games, summer games, socials, delegations to the National Student Gaming & Roleplaying Championships and other conventions, and other events organised by the Society), on-line spaces (including Facebook groups, Discord servers, or other social media platforms), and any games directly organised by the Society.
3. Geas recognises that harassing behaviour can often be subtle and yet have a significant impact on an individual's wellbeing. We encourage members to speak to the Committee should they need support, even if they are unsure about the nature or seriousness of the incident.

## Definitions

4. §26 of The Equality Act 2010 defines harassment as "Unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual."

5. The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

6. Bullying is not defined by law, but Geas understands bullying as “Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour which intentionally or unintentionally undermines, humiliates, denigrates or injures the recipient.”

7. Geas understands harassment and bullying to include all forms, whether physical, expressed orally, in writing, or on any cyber or digital platform.

### **Examples**

8. Examples of harassment and bullying include, but are not restricted to:

- ableism, antisemitism, biphobia, classism, homophobia, islamophobia, misogyny, queerphobia, racism, sexism, transphobia, xenophobia
- unwelcome physical contact ranging from non-consensual touching to serious assault
- intimidating or threatening language or behaviour
- unwelcome attention or advances of a sexual nature
- disparaging, ridiculing or insulting behaviour, language, writing or gestures
- targeted gatekeeping, isolation, non-cooperation, and exclusion from games, social events or activities
- personal intrusion from pestering, spying, stalking, and non-consensual photography
- failure to safeguard confidential information
- cheating in a game to harass or gain an unfair advantage over another individual
- deliberate misgendering and/or use of deadnames
- mockery of access needs, or of adjustments made to meet such needs
- trolling, sealioning, and other forms of vexatious online behaviour

### **Implementation**

9. Individuals need not possess the relevant characteristic themselves but may be subjected to unacceptable behaviour because they are wrongly perceived to have a protected characteristic, or because of their association with a person who has a protected characteristic. In addition, they have the right to complain of behaviour that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them.

10. Members and/or attendees at Geas functions asked to stop any harassing behaviour by other members and/or attendees are expected to comply immediately.

11. The Committee reserves the right to ask any individual to leave an event.

12. If a society member or attendee at an event engages in harassing behaviour, the Geas Committee may take any action they deem appropriate as per the disciplinary procedures

outlined in §3.4. of the Geas Constitution. This includes a scale of escalation from the issuing of warnings to removal from the Society and/or barring from Society functions.

13. Where appropriate, the Geas Committee may report incidents of misconduct to relevant authorities, such as EUSA, the University of Edinburgh Complaints Procedure, or the police. In doing so, the Committee will only pass on confidential information with the consent of the parties concerned unless it is required to do so by statute because of a risk of harm.

14. If you are being harassed, notice that someone else is being harassed, or have any other concerns, please contact the Equality and Wellbeing Officer at [geas.welfare@gmail.com](mailto:geas.welfare@gmail.com) or any other Committee member at [geas.committee@gmail.com](mailto:geas.committee@gmail.com). For further details, please refer to our Complaints Procedure.

15. The Geas Committee, and the Equality and Wellbeing Officer in particular, will be happy to help you contact EUSA staff, venue security or the police as appropriate, and will be happy to go with you to seek support should you wish, or otherwise assist anyone experiencing harassment in feeling safe at Geas. Should you wish to escalate matters to make a formal complaint, the EUSA Advice Place will be able to fully support you in doing so. We value your attendance and we will do our best to ensure that Geas functions are a welcoming space free from harassment and bullying.