

Respectful learning environment FAQ for students

BCIT's [Harassment and Discrimination Policy](#) prohibits discrimination and harassment in the learning and working environment on the basis of personal characteristics, as well as personal harassment (bullying). The policy applies to all staff and students. BCIT's [Student Code of Conduct \(Non-Academic\)](#) also prohibits harassment, bullying, discrimination and other conduct that is alleged to have an adverse impact on another person's reasonable participation in the program, activities, or employment at the Institute.

Do these policies only apply in class?

No. These policies apply to all BCIT related activities including those outside of class, off campus, as well as online communications. This includes but is not limited to behaviour when on school trips, when working on group projects off campus, email and text messages, and online comments such as on school related Facebook groups or discord servers. Remember that anything to do with learning at BCIT is an extension of the learning environment.

What exactly is considered discrimination, harassment, or bullying?

[Discrimination](#) occurs when a person experiences an adverse impact (i.e. denied an opportunity or had a burden imposed) and their personal characteristic was a factor in that adverse impact. Discrimination also includes failure to provide reasonable accommodation for needs related to a personal characteristic.

[Harassment](#) refers to comments or conduct that a reasonable person would find unwelcome, that are based on a personal characteristic, and create an offensive environment. This includes [sexual harassment](#).

[Personal harassment](#) (sometimes called bullying) includes unwelcome remarks or behaviour that misuses power and is seriously abusing, threatening, demeaning, or intimidating, and interferes with the educational environment.

If I am being bullied, harassed, or discriminated against do I have to tell someone to stop?

Although you are not obligated to tell a person to stop, generally, if you feel safe doing so you should consider letting them know their comments or behaviour are unwelcome as a first step. Often a person may not be aware of the harm they are causing until they are told. Bringing your concern to their attention by relaying the impact their comments or behaviour are having on you is often the simplest, and quickest way stop the behaviour.

Personal Characteristics

- Age
- Ancestry
- Colour
- Family Status
- Sex
- Gender Identity
- Gender Expression
- Indigenous Identity
- Marital Status
- Mental or Physical Disability
- Place of Origin
- Race
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation

The British Columbia Institute of Technology acknowledges that our campuses are located on the unceded traditional territories of the Coast Salish Nations, of [xwməθkwəy̓əm](#) (Musqueam), [Skwxwú7mesh](#) (Squamish), [salilwataʔ](#) (Tsleil-Waututh).

What should I do if I see someone being bullied, harassed or discriminated against?

If you feel safe doing so you can be an “active bystander” by using one of the four D’s of bystander intervention.

- **Direct** - Call out the negative behaviour directly by telling the person to stop, indicating you don’t think their behaviour is appropriate, or asking the target of the inappropriate behaviour if they are okay.
- **Distract** – Interrupt the situation by distracting the parties with an unrelated matter. For example, by asking for directions.
- **Delegate** - Delegate to a third party with more authority. For example, alert an instructor to what you have witnessed and ask for assistance.
- **Delay** - If you do not feel safe or comfortable intervening you can check in with the target later and ask how you can support them.

What if I’m only joking and someone else takes offense?

When determining whether harassment, bullying, or discrimination occurred it is not the intent of the person who made the comments that is relevant. Rather it is the impact on others that matters. If someone tells you that your behaviour is unwelcome you should consider their perspective and respond appropriately.

What are the consequences for students who bully, harass, or discriminate against someone?

When appropriate and the parties agree, concerns of this nature can often be resolved informally with a focus on using it as a learning opportunity to address the harm caused and change future behaviour. However, if requested, an investigation may occur. If an investigation finds a student did violate BCIT’s policies, consequences may include a variety of disciplinary measures.

Where can I report concerning behaviour?

If you think you have experienced or observed harassment, discrimination, or bullying at BCIT, you are encouraged to report your concerns. Reporting the concern does not mean you are filing a formal complaint. Rather, you can get support and information about your options on how to address the matter. You can report to any of the following:

- Your Instructor, Program Head, or Associate Dean
- [The Student Life Office Student life@bcit.ca Student Conduct Report Form](mailto:life@bcit.ca)
- [Student Wellness Advocate from the Student Association advocacy@bcitsa.ca](mailto:advocacy@bcitsa.ca)
- [The Respect, Diversity, and Inclusion \(RDI\) Office respect@bcit.ca](mailto:respect@bcit.ca)

Please note that the RDI office is not an advocacy office but rather acts in a neutral capacity to assist individuals with addressing concerns informally, and can provide information and resources. We can also accept formal complaints for mediation or investigation. You can find additional information at www.bcit.ca/respect .