

What to do in case of discrimination?

Information sheet for those who seek advice

These steps and their order are optional.

You can look for support in your work or study environment.

Talk to people in your environment whom you understand and to whom you can trust. It can be helpful to put feelings into words, share experiences and receive encouragement. Fellow students can support you, accompany you to conversations or corroborate your experiences when you feel insecure. Consider together whether it is possible in the first step to talk directly to the person from whom the discrimination originates. This will give them a chance to rethink their own behaviour or structures.

You can write down your memories.

Important information such as the time, names, but also the course of the situation can be forgotten. Writing down your memories is helpful to structure the essential information and to remember important details:

- Where and when did the situation occur?
- Who was discriminating you?
- Describe briefly what happened. Write down important statements and other important actions and procedures as precisely as possible and in chronological order.
- How do you identify discrimination?
- Who else was involved and/or can testify? Ask for contact details and ask the persons involved to write down their own memories.

You can seek individual support in your work or study environment.

All persons with teaching, management or training functions are responsible for a respectful and appreciative cooperation in their field of work or study. They are at your disposal as direct contact persons.

You can make use of a consultation (according to § 7 of the directive).

Various counselling centres at the University of Cologne are available to help you if necessary. You will remain anonymous. You will find a list of those on the website <https://vielfalt.uni-koeln.de/en/counselling-centres>

You or a trusted person can initiate the contact. The advisors:

- will listen to you,
- will discuss with you what you can and want to do and
- will be active on your behalf if required: accompany you to meetings, look for individual solutions with you and/or initiate a formal procedure together with you at your request.

You can submit an official complaint (according to § 8 of the directive).

You can do so by contacting one of the **complaint bodies** listed on the website: <https://vielfalt.uni-koeln.de/en/counselling-centres>. They will provide information on the procedure and accept your written comments. Your statement will be examined, other parties involved will be heard on the facts of the case, and then, if necessary, measures will be recommended to the decision-makers by the Human Resources Department, the Student Affairs Department or the Office of Legal Affairs.

If you wish, counselling centres can accompany you in the complaints procedure.

What does discrimination mean?

Discrimination means disparagement, contempt, disregard, exclusion or violence towards persons on the basis of actual or ascribed group-specific characteristics, such as:

- gender
- sexual orientation/identity
- origin
- disability/illness
- religion/belief
- age
- further individual distinguishing features, e.g. appearance, institutional affiliation in an organisation.

cf. § 2 of Antidiscrimination Directive of the University of Cologne

Usually, a consultation begins with a confidential conversation in which you can tell us what happened to you and which concerns you have. You can ask your questions and agree on the further procedure with the consultant.

The written complaint is presented in particular to the service.

cf. complaint (§8) and measure (§9) from the Antidiscrimination Directive of the University of Cologne