If informal processes have not worked, you can lodge a formal grievance. The process for lodging a formal grievance is in the Queensland Health grievance policy (IRM 3.5).

The allegations you have made in your grievance will be presented to the people you have complained about to give them a chance to respond. A decision will then be made about appropriate ways to resolve the grievance.

If the matter cannot be resolved locally or an investigation is required, the matter is referred to the WIU by the District CEO or equivalent.

Can the WIU give me advice?

The WIU can give employees, managers and their representatives advice about the correct procedures to follow and suggestions for resolving workplace conflict.

It is preferable for people in conflict to attempt to resolve their issues informally at the local level with the assistance of local management. Therefore, the WIU will generally only become involved in a matter if local resolution has not been successful.

If you need support, it is best to contact a Workplace Equity and Harassment Officer (WEHO), your Union or the Employee Assistance Service.

The WIU Process

If your grievance cannot be resolved locally and is referred to the WIU, the following process will apply:

1. When it has received a grievance, the WIU will make an assessment and may discuss the matter further with managers, the employee’s Union and the relevant people in the District including supervisors, HR and District CEOs with the view to facilitating a resolution.

2. The WIU may try to continue with informal methods, refer the matter back to the District if appropriate or start an investigation.

3. If an investigation is required the WIU will manage the process, appoint an appropriate investigator and outline the Terms of Reference of the investigation. The WIU will ensure the investigation is conducted in accordance with the Terms of Reference and the principles of natural justice.

4. The investigator will give the WIU a final investigation report.

5. The WIU will give the decision-maker a copy of the report and offer assistance if required. The decision-maker will make a decision and provide the relevant information from the report to the appropriate parties to the matter. The decision-maker will advise the WIU of the decision.

Further information is available from:
Your manager, local HR Department, WEHO or Union
Workplace Investigations Unit
07 3235 9455
WIU@health.qld.gov.au
qheps.health.qld.gov.au/workplaceinvestigations
Queensland Health’s commitment

Queensland Health employees are entitled to work in an environment that is free from bullying and harassment. Queensland Health has a zero tolerance policy to workplace harassment. The responsibilities of management and employees for ensuring our workplaces are harassment free are in IRM 3.1-2 Workplace Harassment – Standards of Appropriate and Ethical Behaviour in the Workplace.

What is workplace harassment?

Queensland Health defines ‘Workplace Harassment’ in accordance with the definition provided in the Prevention of Workplace Harassment Code of Practice 2004 as:

'A person is subjected to workplace harassment if the person is subjected to repeated behaviour, other than behaviour amounting to sexual harassment, by a person, including the person’s employer or a co-worker or a group of co-workers of the person that is:

- Unwelcome and unsolicited; and
- That the person considers to be offensive, intimidating, humiliating or threatening; and
- A reasonable person would consider to be offensive, intimidating, humiliating or threatening.

“Workplace harassment” does not include reasonable management action taken in a reasonable way by the person’s employer in connection with the person’s employment.'

Strategies for eliminating harassment from our workplace

Following the recommendations in the Relationship Interest-Based Bargaining group strategic paper, Workplace Bullying & Harassment, November 2005, the Director General established the Workplace Investigations Unit (WIU).

The WIU is an independent unit in Queensland Health which has been specifically set up to deal with workplace bullying and harassment. The WIU aims to eliminate bullying and harassment in our workplace by:

- Developing and promoting strategies to ensure Queensland Health is harassment free
- Helping Queensland Health managers and staff to resolve conflict at the local level in an informal and timely way; and
- Managing formal grievances regarding workplace bullying and harassment that cannot be resolved at the local level.

What we can all do to make Queensland Health harassment free

We all spend a lot of time at work. The nature of health care means that we often work in stressful, and at times, emotive environments that can negatively affect workplace morale.

1 Respect

It is important that all employees treat each other fairly and with respect, irrespective of whether you like a person or not.

2 Simple Actions

Simple actions such as saying hello, smiling or saying ‘Thank you’ take such little time and effort but can have an enormous effect on workplace morale.

What to do if you feel that you are being harassed

- Talk confidentially to someone about how you feel. You can contact local management, HR, a Workplace Equity and Harassment Officer (WEHO) or your Union to talk about issues and get further advice.
- Your issues need to be addressed informally at the local level in the first instance. This means you should approach your direct supervisor (or their supervisor if your problem is with them) to talk about your concerns. It is not necessary at this stage to put your concerns in writing but you can if you wish. At this stage, your supervisor may seek advice from HR, local management or the WIU about the best way to address the issue.

The HR Branch has released ‘Guide for the Resolution of Informal Complaints at the Local Level’, which may help in resolving workplace conflicts.

- If your supervisor is unable to resolve the matter, a more senior manager will become involved. At this stage you may be offered mediation, facilitation or other informal processes.