

[Inquiry Guide for Developing an Action Plan to Disrupt Academic Bullying](#)

The purpose of this guide is to help leaders establish the framework for an action plan that will create an environment conducive to preventing and disrupting academic bullying. This guide will facilitate the development of an action plan aimed at supporting departments, student groups, labs, or any setting where there is consistent interaction among a group of individuals. Integrating the voice of members that represent all levels within the group can help provide a higher level of buy-in through the creation of a shared understanding of the purpose and means for preventing and disrupting academic bullying. The specific elements of an action plan to prevent and disrupt academic bullying could be identified by discussing the prompts below. Ultimately, it is up to your group to determine what might be most effective for your environment. If you would like to discuss the elements of this guide, or if you would appreciate an impartial facilitator for this discussion, please feel free to reach out to Bryan Hanson, Ombudsperson for the Graduate School (bryanh76@vt.edu).

Goals of the action plan conversation:

1. Set the expectations for appropriate conduct within the group.
2. Establish adequate channels for raising issues when academic bullying is experienced or observed.
3. Determine constructive interventions when academic bullying occurs.
4. Create expectations for responses to academic bullying that are consistent and transparent.
5. Identify a range of approaches to mend environments that may be affected by academic bullying.

Target components of the action plans:

- This is how we strive to be defined as a community **(Prompts 1-3)**:
- Here are the proactive measures we will employ to maintain this type of community **(Prompts 4-8)**:
- Here are the channels for voicing concerns within our community **(Prompts 9-10)**:
- Here are the expectations for addressing concerns that are shared **(Prompt 11-12)**:
- Here is the protocol for ensuring transparency, while maintaining proper confidentiality **(Prompts 13-15)**:
- Here is the evaluative criteria for measuring the impact of our efforts **(Prompts 16-17)**:

Prompts for discussion:

1. What is the purpose for our group?
2. How would we describe our community to those external to our group?
3. What are the characteristics of a community that constructively disrupts academic bullying?
4. How can we best support each other as a group to achieve individual and shared goals?
5. What are some of the challenges that hinder our ability to fully support each other as a group?
6. What would be some indicators that our group is working effectively with each other?
7. What would be some indicators that our group is not working effectively with each other?
8. What guidelines for conduct will allow us to encourage an environment that honors civility?
9. What channels would be most effective for sharing experiences where academic bullying was exhibited?
10. If behaviors related to academic bullying were exhibited in our group, what would be an effective way to address them?
11. What responses or interventions would feel safe for all individuals when concerns for academic bullying were raised?
12. What resources will help ensure we are adequately addressing concerns related to academic bullying?
13. How can we ensure that there is a fair process for all parties when academic bullying concerns are shared?
14. What approaches would be effective to heal our environment following the voicing of concerns with academic bullying?
15. How will our community respond to the needs of those involved to constructively move forward?

16. How would we know our efforts to disrupt academic bullying are successful?
17. How can our findings inform our continued efforts to disrupt academic bullying?