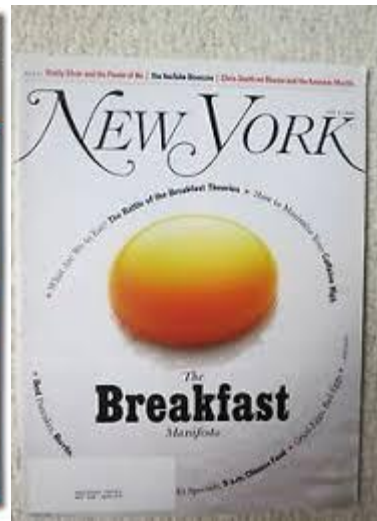
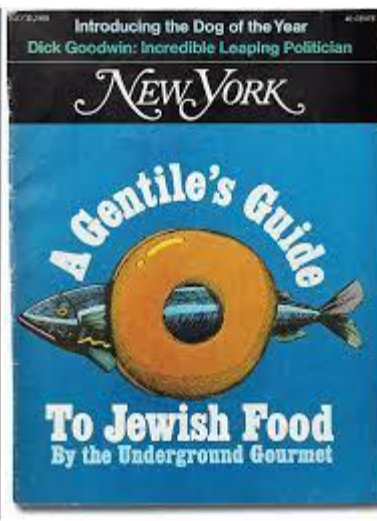
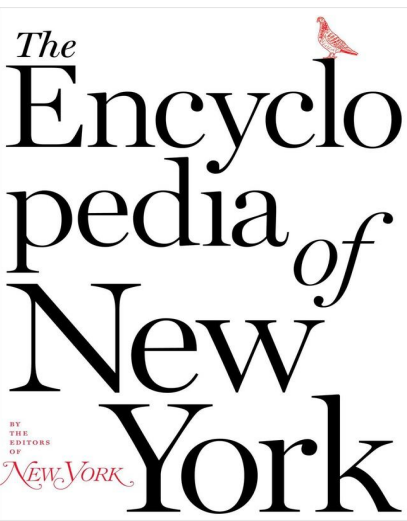


# Nature Careers: “News you can use”

David Payne, Managing Editor,  
Careers and Supplements, *Nature*

*“Whether you are a lifelong resident, a curious newcomer, or an armchair traveller, this is the guidebook you’ll need, straight from the people who know New York best.”*



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# DOES SCIENCE HAVE A BULLYING PROBLEM?

A spate of bullying allegations have rocked some high-profile science institutions. Here's how researchers, universities and funders are dealing with the issue.

BY HOLLY ELSE

Advice, technology and tools

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It's time to call time on bullies' attempts to humiliate, ridicule and undermine.

## HOW TO BLOW THE WHISTLE ON AN ACADEMIC BULLY

Standing up to a persecutor is tough, particularly if they are your supervisor. But you can take steps to report abuse and protect yourself. **By Virginia Gewin**

**B**ullying is endemic in academia, an environment riddled with hierarchies and hyper-competition, exacerbated by an over-reliance on temporary contracts and the pressure to land highly coveted tenured positions.

To give a sense of the size of the problem, in any 12-month period, on average, 25% of faculty members self-identify as being bullied, while 40–50% say they have witnessed others being bullied, according to a synthesis of studies published in 2019 (1). Keashly in *Special Topics and Particular Occupations*,

*Professions and Sectors* (eds P. D'Cruz et al.) <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-5000-0>; Springer, 2009).

A survey that year of 9,000 staff at the Max Planck Society, the German research organization, found that 10% had experienced bullying behaviour in the past 12 months, and 17.5% reported bullying events over a longer time frame (see *Nature* 571, 14–15; 2019). One in five of the graduate students who responded to *Nature's* 2019 global PhD survey reported experiencing bullying, and 57% of those reported feeling unable to discuss their situation without fear of personal

repercussions (see *Nature* 575, 403–406; 2019).

As universities around the world grapple with pandemic-related stressors, including cutbacks, layoffs and furloughs, an environment could emerge in which bullying behaviours increase, says Localiegh Keashly, a researcher at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan, who studies academic bullying.

A 2020 paper that she co-authored with Marziya Mahomed, a nanotechnologist at Michigan State University in East Lansing, suggests that the pandemic could fuel abusive



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Dorothy Okello teaches computing to displaced people, and launches programmes to get more women into science, technology and business.



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- Nature's 2019 survey of more than 6000 **graduate students** reveals the turbulent nature of doctoral research
- 2020 **postdoc** survey reveals disenchantment with working life
- Fieldwork for our 2021 salary/job satisfaction survey starts next month

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# Thank you

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