



2022 Annual Report on Sexual Misconduct – what you need to know

28 August 2023

Content warning: This email and the report it links to contain information about sexual assault and sexual harassment which may be distressing. If you would like to speak to somebody for support or information, please contact our Safer Communities Office on 8627 6808 or via email on safer-communities.officer@sydney.edu.au or 1800RESPECT (1800 737 732).

Dear student,

Today the University has released our first Annual Report on Sexual Misconduct. The University of Sydney is committed to creating a safer and more supportive environment for our community of students, staff and affiliates. Key to this is the prevention of sexual misconduct and enhancing our response to it. This report forms part of our University's commitment to improving transparency for victim-survivors. It is our hope that this will be a step towards reducing some of the barriers to reporting that they face.

We pledged to be transparent and share the full story about sexual misconduct in our community. Today, we are upholding this promise. Given the considerable doubt surrounding the University's efforts in this area, this report is a significant opportunity to reaffirm our commitment.

The University has zero tolerance for any behaviour that is intimidating, abusive, discriminatory, disrespectful or threatening, including any instance of sexual harassment or assault. Any such behaviour within our community or on any of our campuses is unacceptable.

Since 2017, we have undertaken significant work as part of this commitment, with continuous improvements to our policies, procedures and support services. This annual report bolsters our commitment to increased transparency and accountability as we prevent and respond to instances of sexual misconduct. It outlines disclosures and complaints made to the University in 2022 and offers insight into our community engagement efforts.

While it is reassuring to observe an increase in students seeking support and a growing awareness of where to find help and how to report incidents, we recognise that there is still much more that we need to do.

Report findings

All 2022 reports of sexual misconduct are reflected in the data. In total, 121 incidents of sexual misconduct were reported by victim-survivors. Of those, 55 were University related (involving conduct connected to the University) and 66 were non-University related (had no connection to the University, other than being reported by a student or staff member). All students and staff who reported incidents were offered or provided trauma informed support by the University's Safer Communities Office.

The comparatively high number of reports can be attributed to the following factors:

1. The return many of our students to campus after years of COVID-19 disruptions
2. Uplift in student engagement with support services, increased promotion of our Safer Communities Office, and increased resourcing of Student Life, all resulting in an increase in referrals relating to sexual assault and harassment.

Of course, one case is one case too many. Everyone has the right to feel safe and supported and to be treated with respect and dignity.

Our priorities for 2023 include a broad range of prevention initiatives as part of the Roadmap to the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct. They will be informed by the data in this report, and future community consultation efforts with our students and staff. Our priorities include:

1. Improving knowledge and awareness of reporting pathways for incidents of sexual misconduct for victim-survivors and bystanders
2. Improving transparency and accountability for victim-survivors
3. Updating our sexual misconduct policies and response procedures
4. Increasing visibility and awareness of support options available to victim-survivors and bystanders
5. Continuing to improve accessibility and inclusion for victims-survivors wishing to seek support from the Safer Communities Office
6. Expanding first responder and bystander training throughout the University and reviewing consent education.

The University actively seeks student collaboration opportunities to ensure student voices and experiences help shape this work. I encourage any student who is interested to contributing to this to reach out to the Safer Communities Office at safer-communities.officer@sydney.edu.au.

How to make a report of sexual misconduct

Students, staff and members of the public can report sexual misconduct via the University's [online reporting form](#) or by contacting our Safer Communities Office (SCO) to organise a confidential chat on 8627 6808 (available Mon to Fri 8:30 am–5.30 pm) or via email on safer-communities.officer@sydney.edu.au.

We know that it can be hard to speak up, and understand the importance of providing a safe and confidential reporting avenue for victim-survivors. I would particularly like to mention that the members of our Safer Communities team are trained and experienced in offering trauma-informed support. Specialist support is also available for any of our students who might need it from [other University and community services](#).

You can access a copy of the [2022 Annual Report on Sexual Misconduct](#) on our website. We know that there is more we need to do to ensure that everyone in our community feels safe and supported to report their concerns to the University in the future. We will continue to report on our ongoing work in this area in future annual reports.

Kind regards,
Mark

Mark Scott
Vice-Chancellor and President

Copyright © 2023 The University of Sydney, NSW 2006 Australia
Phone +61 2 9351 2222 ABN 15 211 513 464 CRICOS Number: 00026A

Please add university.communications@sydney.edu.au to your address book or senders safe list to make sure you continue to see our emails in the future.

[Disclaimer](#) | [Privacy statement](#) | [University of Sydney](#)