

2022



Annual Report *on Sexual Misconduct*



Content warning

This report contains information about sexual assault and sexual harassment which you may find distressing. If you would like to speak to someone for support, please contact the below internal or external supports.

University of Sydney Safer Communities Office

Available Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5.30pm

Phone: +61 2 8627 6808

or 1800 SYD HLP (1800 793 457)

Email: safer-communities.officer@sydney.edu.au

Website: sydney.edu.au/about-us/vision-and-values/making-a-safer-community-for-all.html

University of Sydney Mental Wellbeing Support Line (for currently enrolled students)

Available 24/7

Phone: 1300 474 065

Text: +61 488 884 429

NSW Sexual Violence Helpline

Phone: 1800 385 578

Website: www.fullstop.org.au

1800 Respect

Phone: 1800 737 732

Website: www.1800respect.org.au

Beyond Blue

Phone: 1300 22 4636

Website: www.beyondblue.org.au

About this report

This is the inaugural Annual Report on Sexual Misconduct published by the University of Sydney. The University of Sydney is committed to publishing a report on sexual misconduct annually.

The term **sexual misconduct** is used in this report to cover a range of unacceptable sexual behaviours that are in breach of University codes of conduct and policies, including sexual assault and sexual harassment. In line with the wider community's understanding of the term, we use **sexual assault** to describe non-consensual sexual intercourse, oral sex, and sexual touching. Other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, including the recording or distributing of intimate images, is reported as **sexual harassment**. The term **victim-survivor** is used in this report to describe people who have experienced sexual misconduct, acknowledging those with lived experience of the ongoing impact of trauma, while also recognising their strength and resilience.

Please refer to the Glossary on page 28 for an explanation of other terms used in this report.

The statistics published in this report include University related and non-University related incidents of sexual misconduct. University related sexual misconduct is conduct that is connected to the University, such as conduct that occurs at or in connection with a University campus, accommodation, residential college or event (whether sanctioned or organised by the University or not), including events run by or affiliated with student clubs and societies. Non-University related conduct has no connection to the University, but may be reported by a student or staff member seeking trauma-informed care and support.

In total, the University received 121 reports of sexual misconduct in 2022. There were 21 reports of University related sexual assault and 34 reports of University related sexual harassment (55 in total). The other 66 reports were of non-University related conduct.

Please refer to pages 18-23 for additional details about 2022 Reports of Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment.



Acknowledgements

The University of Sydney's campuses and facilities sit on the ancestral lands of many of Australia's First Nations peoples, who have for thousands of generations exchanged knowledge for the benefit of all. These include the Gadigal, Gamaraygal, Dharug, Wangal, Tharawal, Deerabbin, Darkinyung, Guringgai, Gamilaraay, Barkindji, Bundjalung, Wiradjuri, Wiljali, Ngunawal, Gureng Gureng and Gagudju peoples. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded. In respectfully acknowledging the ancient learning cultures and traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the University of Sydney declares its commitment to the continuation of this sharing through the agency of our work.

In acknowledging Country, we call for a reflection on the unique reality of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their lived experiences.

Always was, always will be Aboriginal land.

We also acknowledge the strength and resilience of victim-survivors who have experienced sexual assault or sexual harassment. We acknowledge that although anyone can experience sexual assault or sexual harassment, it is disproportionately experienced by women, people who identify as part of the LGBTIQ+ community, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and those with lived experience of disability. The root cause of this is societal attitudes and power imbalances. We acknowledge and applaud the courage of those who have come forward to speak to staff at the University and seek support, and those who have not. We also acknowledge and applaud the courage of anyone with lived experience of sexual assault or sexual harassment who continues to recover from the impacts of trauma. We acknowledge the important role we must play in the prevention of and response to sexual assault and sexual harassment.



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Introduction

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 preventing sexual misconduct and, where it occurs, enhancing our response to it. Since 2017, we have undertaken significant work as part of this commitment, with continuous improvements to our policies and procedures, support services and preventative education initiatives.

It is encouraging to note that the action we have taken to date has led to improvements in some areas. More students are seeking support and there is greater awareness about where to obtain support and how to make a disclosure or complaint. However, many issues of great concern remain. One case is one too many. To every person who has experienced sexual assault or sexual harassment, we are deeply sorry. Every member of our community has the right to feel safe and supported and to be treated with respect and dignity, whether on campus, online or offshore. Anything less is unacceptable.

The release of the [2021 National Student Safety Survey \(NSSS\)](#) results in March 2022 highlighted the ongoing issues we face in preventing and responding to sexual misconduct. We identified an opportunity to broaden and strengthen our prevention interventions for sexual misconduct in our community and on our campuses, and work began on the creation of a [Roadmap into the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct](#).

The Roadmap outlines a series of projects to be undertaken by our Safer Communities Office, in partnership with various internal and external stakeholders and with our students at the heart of all major initiatives. It has been encouraging to see a notable increase in referrals recorded by the Safer Communities Office since the Roadmap was initiated – notably, a 34 percent increase in referrals relating to

sexual assault and a 105 percent increase in referrals relating to sexual harassment in 2022, compared to 2021. This increase aligns with the return of many of our students to campus after years of COVID-19 disruptions, increased promotion of our Safer Communities Office taking effect, and increased resourcing of our Student Life Portfolio.

We are committed to increased transparency and accountability in addressing issues of sexual misconduct within our community. This Annual Report presents data regarding disclosures and complaints made to the University in 2022 and details our many and varied actions to educate and engage with our community to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct. As this is the first such report we have delivered, we will seek feedback from our community to inform future reports.

It is important to note that this Annual Report presents data collected from 2022 only regarding disclosures and complaints made to the University. In 2022, a total of 98 disclosures and 23 complaints were received.

In presenting this Annual Report, we reiterate our commitment to strengthening our framework of safety and support, reflective practice, continuous improvement, and working with compassion, care and a trauma-informed approach that consistently prioritises the health, safety and wellbeing of victim-survivors.



We also acknowledge the continuing and traumatic legacies of colonialism, including increased likelihood of sexual assault, and we honour the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim-survivors.

And we recognise the courage of all the victim-survivors who have shared their experiences and helped us to better understand the prevalence and nature of sexual misconduct at the University of Sydney.

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.



Professor Mark Scott AO
Vice-Chancellor and President



Professor Annamarie Jagose
Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor



Professor Joanne Wright
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)

Background and context 2017-2021

The University has prioritised and implemented a range of initiatives and programs in response to the recommendations of the Australian Human Rights Commission's Change the Course: National Report on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at Australian Universities (2017) and the findings and recommendations of the 2021 National Student Safety Survey (NSSS) Results (2022).

Formation of the Safer Communities Advisory Group

Chaired by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Student Life), this group was formed to provide the opportunity for regular consultations between the University and representative student associations. Consultations are held every two months, with the student experience at the centre of all discussions. The group is a channel to consult with students on policy matters, programs and education/awareness campaigns relating to the student experience of sexual misconduct and domestic and family violence. It includes representatives from a broad cross-section of the University community, including the Office of the Vice-Chancellor and President, the Student Affairs Unit, Student Wellbeing Services, Protective Services, Sydney Uni Sport and Fitness, and the residential colleges.

Establishment of the Safer Communities Office

This office, established in 2017, provides trauma-informed case management and support to victim-survivors of sexual misconduct, domestic and family violence, bullying and harassment, and issues relating to modern slavery (see **Figure 1**). The purpose of case management is to establish goals alongside the victim-survivor, which can vary significantly depending on individual needs. Practical support is then offered on a short- to medium-term basis to assist the victim-survivor to achieve their goals. The team members have a range of professional experience, including social work, counselling and case management backgrounds. In 2020, the scope of the support provided by the team expanded to include former and current students, former and current staff and affiliates.





Figure 1: Trauma-informed case management and support framework

The Safer Communities Office also designs and delivers preventative education initiatives across the University. Since its establishment the team has expanded from two Student Liaison Officers to include a Manager, a Team Leader, a Preventative Education Specialist, a Project Officer and four Student Liaison Officers.

Rollout of University-wide mandatory online module Consent Matters

Developed by online course provider Epigeum, this module covers important topics including sexual consent and bystander intervention. It was piloted in 2017 and made mandatory for all commencing students from 2018, with more than 110,000 students having completed the module to date. A robust exemption process is included to ensure that any student concerned about experiencing distress due to past trauma can easily request an exemption and seek support from the Safer Communities Office.

Establishment of a single point of contact helpline

1800 SYD HLP (1800 793 457) is available 24/7 to support survivors and bystanders of any incident of sexual misconduct and to improve accessibility to support services. The helpline facilitates access to Protective Services, the Safer Communities Office, the Student Affairs Unit and the Student Counselling Service.

Launch of the Student Sexual Misconduct Policy and Response Procedures

This policy and the response procedures were launched in 2018, following more than six months of consultation with key stakeholders including the University of Sydney Union (USU), Students' Representative Council (SRC), Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association (SUPRA), Sydney Uni Sport and Fitness (SUSF), and student support services, faculties and schools. The policy prohibits sexual misconduct and sexual harassment by members of the University



community, and makes clear that behaviour that is intimidating, abusive, disrespectful or threatening is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. Together with other initiatives, the policy and procedures are designed to protect the safety and welfare of current and former students who make a disclosure or complaint about sexual misconduct or sexual harassment, to encourage safe active bystander intervention, and to empower victim-survivors by outlining their reporting and resolution options. They incorporate trauma-informed and procedurally fair complaints resolution processes, with both complainants and respondents given clear information about the likely duration of the process and what to expect, and offered support throughout the process by the Safer Communities Office. The Safer Communities Office also works collaboratively with the Student Affairs Unit and Workplace Relations to act as a key point of contact for the victim-survivor if this is their preference.

Launch of the Student Sexual Misconduct Online Reporting Form

This form was launched in 2018 alongside the Student Sexual Misconduct Policy and Response Procedures, to address the under-reporting of sexual misconduct. It aimed to improve accessibility and provide an alternative confidential pathway for students to make a disclosure or a complaint to the Safer Communities Office. All reports made are received only by the Safer Communities Office and treated confidentially. If contact details are provided by a student, contact is made by the Safer Communities Office within two business days.

Establishment of a Staff and Historical Sexual Abuse Reporting Working Group

This working group was established in 2019 to build on the work of the Historical Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Working Group, whose responsibilities included considering the 2017 recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and assessing those aspects of the University's operations that might fall within the scope of the associated National Redress Scheme.

The Staff and Historical Sexual Abuse Reporting Working Group met on a regular basis over the course of nine months to develop an internal process for responding to claims of historical sexual abuse, including child sexual abuse, as well as a policy and process for improving the University's response to staff complaints of sexual misconduct. It included representatives from the Student Affairs Unit, Student Support Services, Workplace Relations and the Office of General Counsel, and reported to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Life).

Launch of the Guiding Principles for Responding to Claims of Historical Sexual Abuse, Staff Sexual Misconduct Policy and Response Procedures, Staff Sexual Misconduct Online Reporting Form, and Sexual Misconduct Online Reporting Form for members of the public

In 2020 the University developed a set of guiding principles to underpin its handling of all claims of historical sexual abuse. These principles make clear that the University is committed to resolving claims of historical sexual abuse in a compassionate, transparent and fair manner, and within an environment that promotes respect

and dignity for claimants and treats respondents fairly. The adoption of these principles created a pathway for anyone connected to the University community to report to the Safer Communities Office about their experiences. Accordingly, in 2020 the Safer Communities Office's remit expanded to include support for former and current students, and former and current staff and affiliates.

Partnership with Royal Prince Alfred Hospital

In 2017, the University formed a partnership with Royal Prince Alfred Hospital to provide priority outreach sexual assault counselling to current students. Initially this partnership provided five counselling sessions per week during semester. In 2020, following the adoption of the [Guiding Principles for Responding to Claims of Historical Sexual Abuse](#), this service was extended to include former students. Counselling was initially provided on campus, but following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic it was provided by phone until the end of 2022.

The Safer Communities Office also works collaboratively with the Sexual Assault Counselling Service to provide case management and counselling to those students who wish to engage with both services. This means that students are provided with holistic care and supported to address and mitigate the impacts of trauma.

Currently ten counselling sessions are offered per week due to increased demand.

Provision of effective first responder training to all student leaders and student-facing staff

In 2017 the University committed to ensuring that all student leaders and student-facing staff are provided with training in how to be an effective first responder. This training, called Responding with Compassion, is currently delivered by Full Stop Australia, and is tailored to meet the needs of each cohort. In 2020 the University also introduced an online module option for staff, which has since been completed by 393 staff members.

Launch of the MATE (Motivating Action Through Empowerment) bystander training program

In 2018 the University piloted this four-hour interactive workshop designed to equip students with the

knowledge and skills to safely intervene in critical situations to help prevent violence and problematic behaviour. The pilot session was delivered by Griffith University to student representatives and the Faculty of Engineering. This program has since continued to be rolled out to students in residential colleges and University-owned student accommodation, with more than 800 students having completed it to date.

Development and delivery of in-person consent education workshops

These workshops were developed by the Safer Communities Office in response to feedback from student representatives. The first round of workshops was launched in Semester 2, 2018, to residential advisers and student leaders within University-owned student accommodation and some residential colleges. In 2020 the workshops were made mandatory for all student leaders and first-year students residing in University-owned student accommodation and residential colleges.



Initiatives completed in 2022

Roadmap to Prevention of Sexual Misconduct

The Roadmap to Prevention of Sexual Misconduct was launched in March 2022 in response to the release of the 2021 National Student Safety Survey (NSSS) results. A snapshot of the NSSS results as they relate to the University of Sydney can be found on our website. While the University has undertaken strong action to prevent and respond to incidents of sexual misconduct over the past several years, the Roadmap's development in line with the recent survey results involves projects designed to address and implement the new recommendations. Since March 2022, the Safer Communities Office has seen a 34 percent increase in referrals relating to sexual assault and a 105 percent increase in referrals relating to sexual harassment (in 2022 compared to 2021). This increase aligns with the return of students to campus after COVID-19 disruptions, increased promotion of the Safer Communities Office, and increased resourcing of the Student Life Portfolio.

University-wide mandatory online module Consent Matters

In 2022, this module, developed by Epigeum, was again rolled out to all newly enrolled students, with a total of 23,255 students completing it. A feedback survey was also conducted, which was completed by 8,798 students (a response rate of 38%). Results of the feedback survey showed that:

- 83% of respondents reported improved understanding of bystander intervention following completion of the module
- 79% of respondents found the module effective in improving their understanding of sexual consent
- 19% of respondents found the module adequate in improving their understanding of sexual consent
- 16% of respondents found the module adequate in improving their understanding of bystander intervention
- 2% of respondents found the module ineffective in improving their understanding of sexual consent
- 1% of respondents found the module inadequate in improving their understanding of bystander intervention.

Consent education workshops

In 2022 the Safer Communities Office again delivered these workshops to first-year students residing in student accommodation and student leaders from residential colleges, with a total of 1294 students attending during the year. A peer facilitation model was also introduced, which involved student co-design and co-facilitation of the workshops, leveraging the respect placed on student leaders in the student accommodation and residential college setting.

Students were asked to complete a pre- and post-workshop feedback survey to determine the effectiveness of the training. **Figures 2 and 3** show that the workshops helped to inform students of internal support and how to make disclosures and complaints about sexual misconduct to the University. This helps to address a key theme from the NSSS – that many students did not know how to make disclosures or complaints, or seek support, through available University channels.

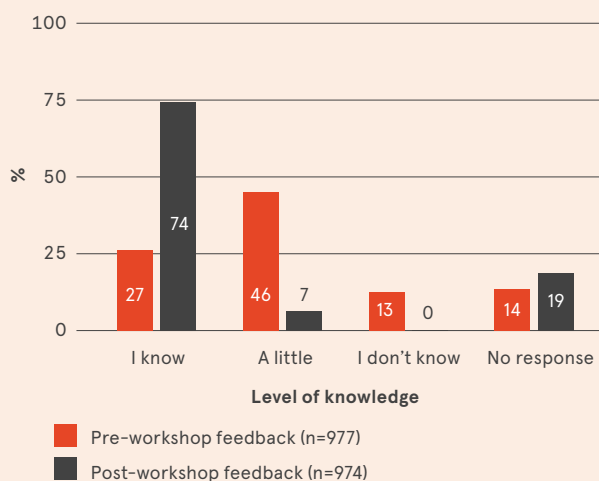


Figure 2: Pre- and post-workshop feedback from consent workshops: knowledge of seeking support

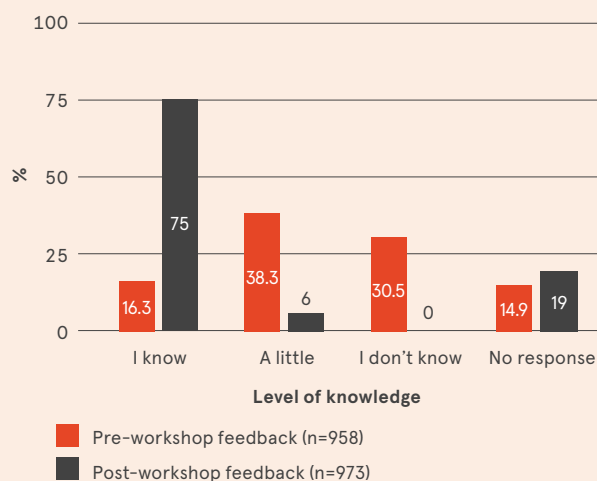


Figure 3: Pre- and post-workshop feedback from consent workshops: knowledge of making a disclosure or complaint

First responder training

In 2022 our first responder training, Responding with Compassion, continued to be delivered to all student leaders and student-facing staff. A total of 152 student leaders and 157 staff completed this training.

Also in 2022, following consultation with student leaders and as part of the Student Leader Training Co-design Project, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Life) mandated that all student executives within the University of Sydney Union (USU), Sydney Uni Sport and Fitness (SUSF), Students' Representative Council (SRC)

and Sydney University Postgraduate Student Representative Association (SUPRA) complete first responder training.

An online module, Responding to Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault for Student Leaders, was also launched during the year, with a total of 590 students successfully completing it. A robust process was set up to ensure that students who might be distressed by the content of this module could easily request exemption and seek support from the Safer Communities Office.

Increasing provision of sexual assault counselling

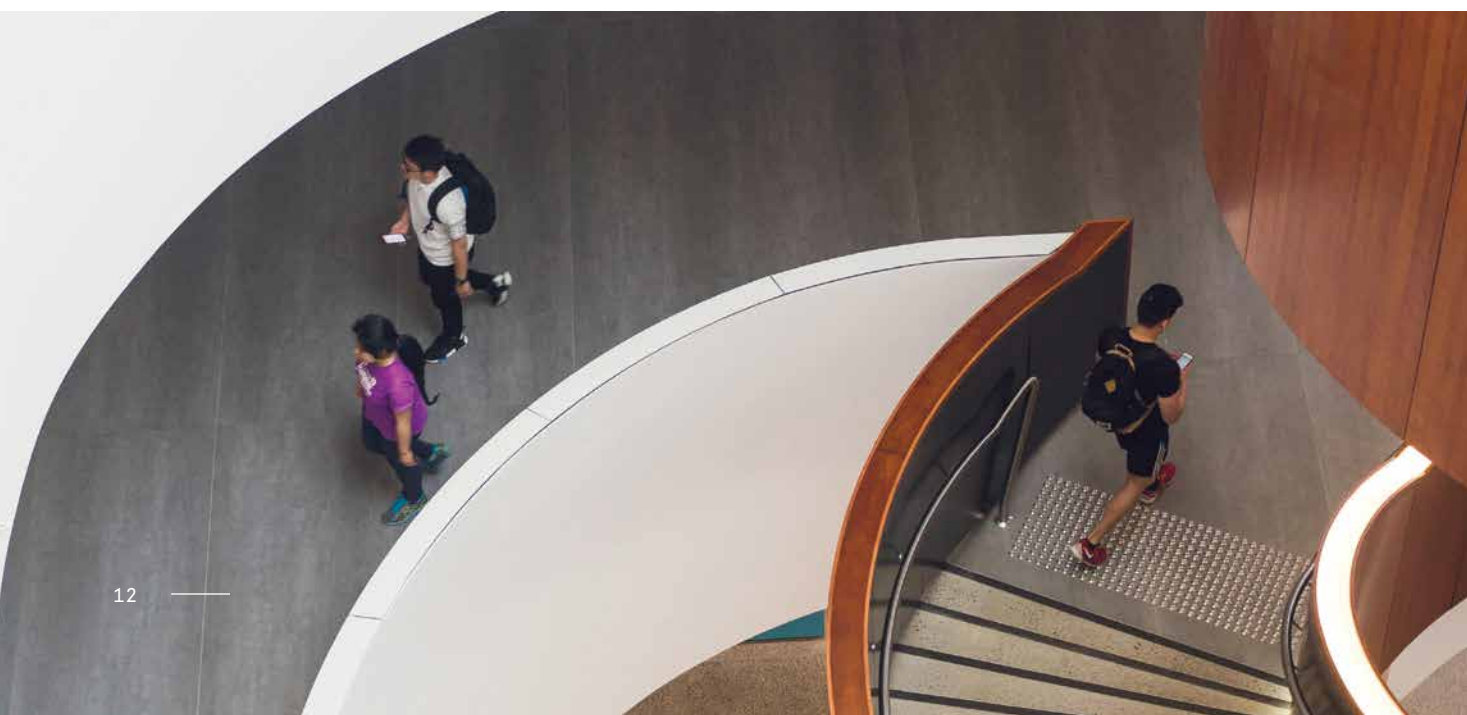
The demand for priority outreach sexual assault counselling through the University's partnership with Royal Prince Alfred Hospital is regularly assessed to reduce wait times, and as a result this service was significantly expanded in 2022, increasing from five to 10 counselling sessions per week during semester. During the year, a total of 290 sessions were offered as part of this partnership allowing priority access for students.

Review and revision of sexual misconduct policies and procedures

There is ongoing review and regular revision of the University's sexual misconduct policies and procedures to reflect legislative changes and best practice. In 2022, the Student Sexual Misconduct Policy and Staff Sexual Misconduct Policy were revised to make clear that the University does not have a practice of resolving sexual misconduct matters by asking complainants to sign a non-disclosure agreement. The University also made amendments to allow for complainants whose complaint has been wholly or partially substantiated by a court or by the University to disclose their identity and that of the respondent. In addition, complainants may disclose any information they provided during the investigation and the outcome of the complaint in respect of those parts of the complaint that were substantiated.

Sexual Health and Peer Education (SHAPE) program

The Sexual Health and Peer Education (SHAPE) program was initiated following the Centre for English Teaching (CET)'s observation of a significant knowledge gap among newly arrived international students around topics of sex and sexual health. The program aims to break down stigma and cultural barriers around conversations about sex and sexual health among international students. In 2022 the Safer Communities Office partnered with CET, NSW Health and Yfoundations to pilot the SHAPE program within the CET. The program provides training to student leaders and peer advisors to equip them to facilitate training around sexual health information, consent and services. Training sessions were run for peer facilitators with the aim being for them to facilitate training for new CET students. The program continues to be rolled out to new students, and evaluations are currently underway.



Respectful Research training for higher degree by research (HDR) supervisors

The results from the 2021 NSSS indicated that nationally, one in 20 of those respondents who reported having been sexually assaulted within an Australian university context stated that their most impactful incident had been perpetrated by a university staff member. It also showed that postgraduate research (also referred to as higher degree by research, or HDR) students were more likely than other students to report that the alleged perpetrator of sexual assault or sexual harassment was a university staff member.

To address these concerns, in 2022 the Safer Communities Office collaborated with the Director of Graduate Research to develop and design a Respectful Research training workshop to create a space where HDR supervisors can discuss and reflect on scenarios relating to professional supervisory relationships with students, boundaries, and power imbalances. The workshop was designed to reflect [Universities Australia's Principles for Respectful Supervisory Relationships](#) and the [Australian Council of Graduate Research's Respectful Research Training Resources](#). Several consultation sessions were held during the year with HDR supervisors and students to tailor the training, and pilot sessions were delivered to HDR supervisors in November 2022. Feedback and evaluation collected following the workshops were very positive, with 93 percent of participants finding the training to be informative, 94 percent finding it relevant, 98 percent finding it interactive, and 97 percent finding it easy to understand.

In addition, below is some of the qualitative feedback received:

“Informative and diverse within the scenarios, presented in a way that are real life scenarios, including even from gift giving (did not know that policy) to sexual harassment.”

“The course was a good length, the in person format was engaging and informative. The scenarios provided a good opportunity for discussion amongst the group. Having this for all supervisors would be ideal.”

Faculty of Medicine and Health clinical placements project

In 2021 the Safer Communities Office partnered with the University of Sydney Susan Wakil School of Nursing and Midwifery to achieve:

- provision of consistent information about sexual misconduct reporting and support options for Nursing School students
- completion of first responder training by all Nursing School staff
- inclusion of case studies within relevant units of study relating to professionalism in the nurse–patient relationship
- awareness of the Safer Communities Office and the support available.

In 2022 this partnership achieved the following:

- ran consultation sessions with students and staff (including representatives of Sydney University Nursing Society) to discuss the best channels through which to promote information about sexual misconduct reporting and support options to Nursing School students
- worked with key academics to embed case studies in relevant units of study
- delivered first responder training sessions.

The partnership was also expanded during the year to involve the wider Faculty of Medicine and Health, and championed by the faculty's Associate Dean (Education) and Academic Director of Student Life. The scope of the project was also expanded to include raising awareness of available support options for all wellbeing and sexual misconduct–related matters.

Following consultations with the Faculty of Medicine and Health's Staff–Student Liaison Network Group and the Associate Dean's Education Committee, the team also developed:

- a placement resource guide outlining the available reporting and support options for students
- an accompanying PowerPoint presentation for academic staff to deliver to students prior to clinical placements.

Evaluations are currently underway for this project.

'It's all about consent' campaign

Institutional results from the 2021 NSSS indicated that 56.9 percent of students knew nothing or very little about where to go to make a complaint about sexual assault. In addition, 47.6 percent of students reported that they knew nothing or very little about where to seek support or assistance for harassment.

As a result, in 2022 the Safer Communities Office and the University's Marketing and Communications team, along with students, co-designed a University-wide campaign. The 'It's all about consent' campaign focuses on promoting affirmative consent and active bystander intervention, and is aimed at both University students and staff.

A significant element of the campaign was ensuring that the information provided on the University's website was streamlined, accessible and easy for students to understand. In Semester 2, 2022, the following was launched in consultation with students:

- a refreshed webpage highlighting the support offered by the Safer Communities Office
- a campaign hub webpage (see **Figure 4**)
- design of key messages on printed and digital material, merchandise, social media and videos to accompany the campaign to ensure campus-wide activations for Semester 1, 2023.

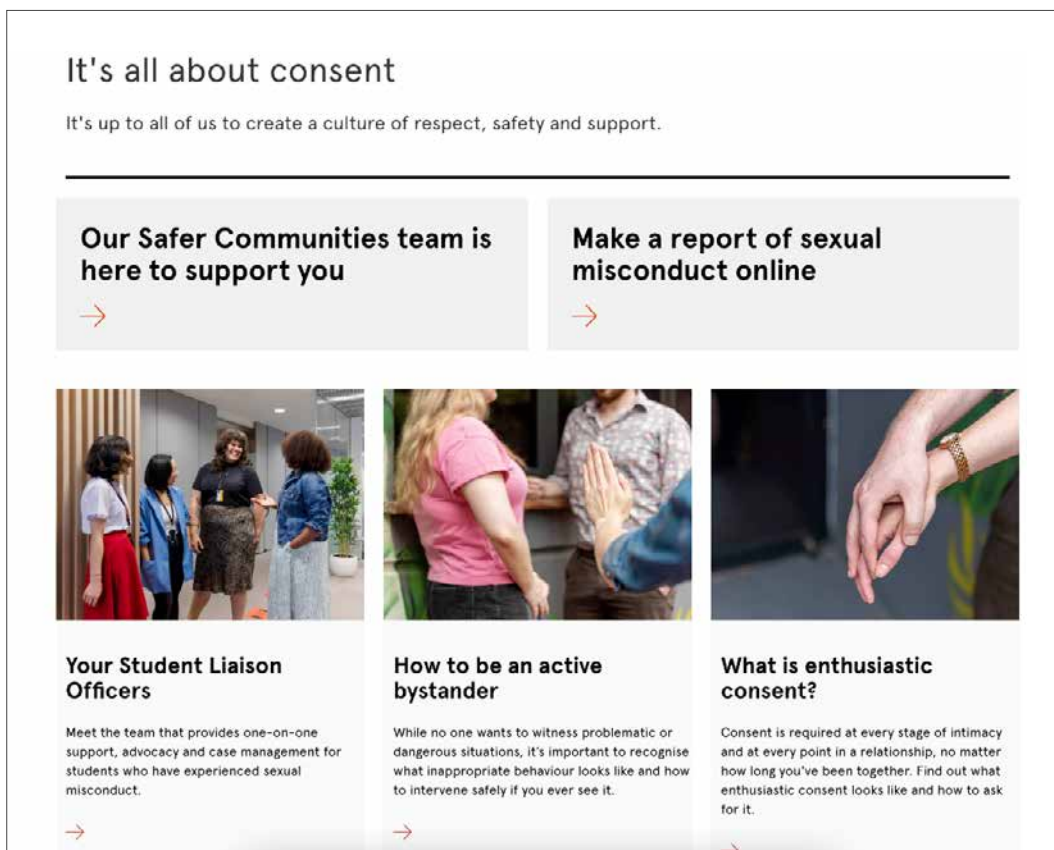
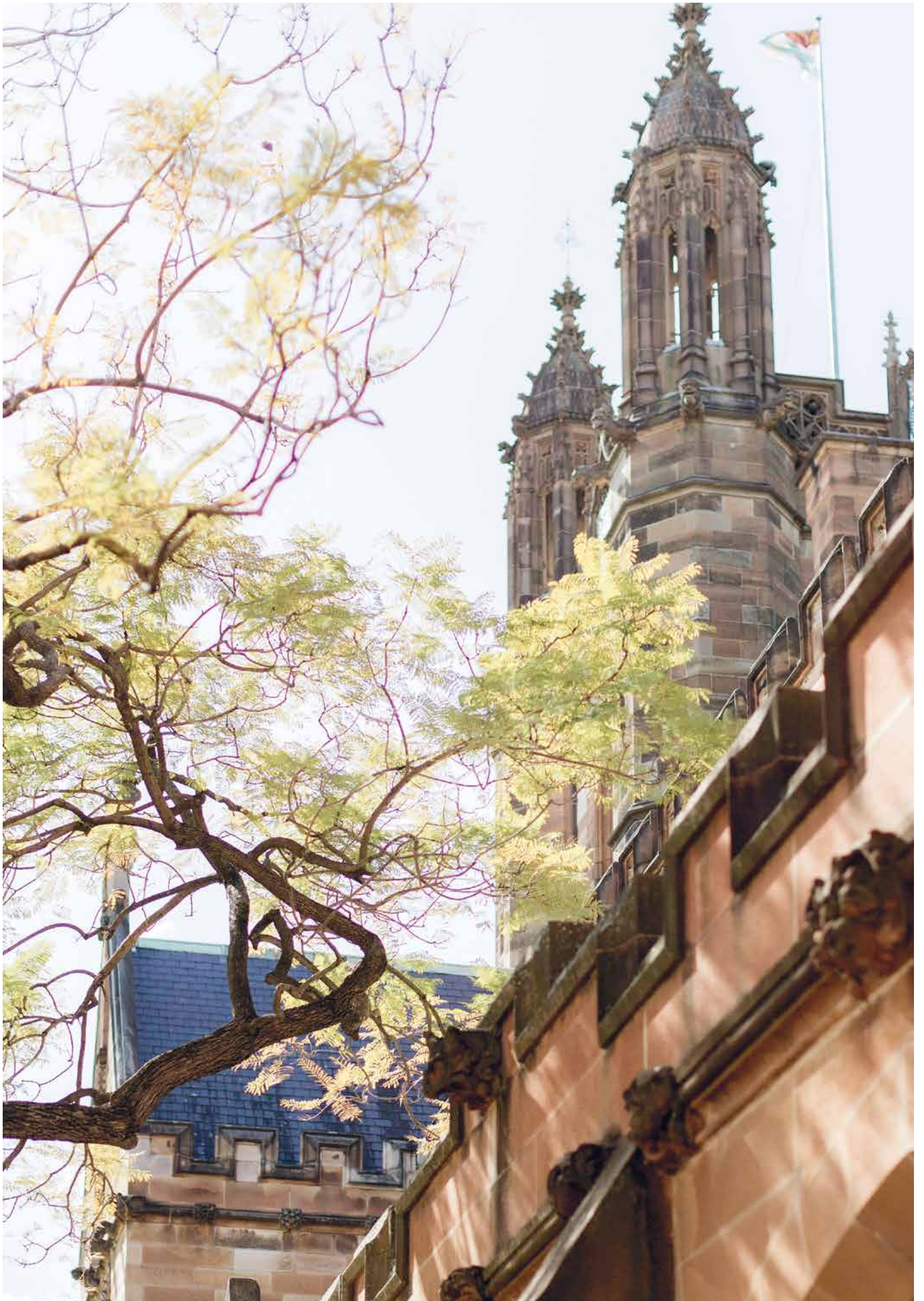


Figure 4: 'It's all about consent' campaign hub webpage sydney.edu.au/students/all-about-consent.html





Complaints handling processes

Students, staff and members of the public can make a complaint of sexual misconduct through the online reporting form available on the University's [Report sexual misconduct](#) webpage or by contacting the Safer Communities Office (SCO), the Student Affairs Unit (SAU) or the Workplace Relations team (within Human Resources) by telephone or email.

Sexual misconduct complaints against students are handled by the Student Affairs Unit. Sexual misconduct complaints against staff are handled by the Workplace Relations team. Where a respondent is both a student and a staff member, the Student Affairs Unit, the Workplace Relations team and the Safer Communities Office work closely together with the aim of streamlining processes and support for the complainant.

While there are separate handling processes for sexual misconduct complaints against students and against staff, they share common principles in the trauma-informed case management of matters, including:

- triaging and acknowledging complaints in a timely manner
- assigning an individual staff member to be the point of contact for the complainant throughout the process
- explaining the process and providing information about options and actions that can be taken
- providing information about available emergency and ongoing support options; and
- handling complaints confidentially.

If concerns arise for the safety of the complainant or other member(s) of the University community while the complaint is being investigated or resolved, there is provision in both processes for the University to take interim measures against the respondent. **Interim measures** are formal actions under policy and may include restricting a respondent's access to campus or to University buildings and facilities, and/or prohibiting them from speaking to or approaching another person(s). Interim measures are implemented on a temporary basis to manage risk and are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are proportionate and reasonable.

Staff sexual misconduct complaints are considered under the [Staff Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) and [Staff Sexual Misconduct Response Procedures](#). Allegations of sexual misconduct from and against students are handled in accordance with the [Student Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) and [Student Sexual Misconduct Response Procedures](#). In all cases, the first stage is a preliminary assessment to determine appropriate steps for resolving the complaint, which may include:

- assisted resolution
- investigation
- referral for handling under the misconduct clauses of the University of Sydney's Enterprise Agreement or the [University of Sydney \(Student Discipline\) Rule 2016](#), as relevant.

In undertaking the preliminary assessment and determining what the steps or actions should be taken, the Student Affairs Unit and Workplace Relations take into consideration the complainant's wishes and the outcome they are seeking from the process. Once complete, the complainant is notified of the outcome of the preliminary assessment and given detailed reasons for any decisions.

For complaints that are referred to investigation, an independent external investigator with expertise in handling sexual misconduct complaints is engaged. Investigations are conducted in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness, and the respondent is invited to respond to the alleged conduct and any relevant supporting information in person and in writing.

If a complaint of sexual misconduct is substantiated and misconduct is proven, disciplinary action is taken against the respondent. For staff, this may include counselling, a written warning, withholding of a salary increment or reduction of salary within the applicable salary range or, in the case of serious misconduct, termination of employment. For students, a finding of sexual misconduct may result in the imposition of a penalty including suspension, exclusion or permanent expulsion from an award course or from admission to or use of University lands.

For complaints where misconduct is not proven or where other actions are taken and the respondent remains on campus or in the workplace, a clear explanation of the reasons will be provided to the complainant, and the University will continue to provide trauma-informed support.



2022 reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment

The data included in this Annual Report was obtained in 2022 from multiple systems across the University and cross-checked to avoid duplication. Most reports of sexual misconduct were recorded by the Safer Communities Office.

Data regarding complaints to the University captures complaints received within 2022 and outcomes reached within 2022. Where outcomes for complaints received in 2022 were not reached within 2022, they will be reported in the 2023 report. Due to the small numbers within subcategories, caution should be exercised in drawing wider conclusions from the figures.

For the purposes of this report, and in accordance with the University's staff and student sexual misconduct policies and response procedures, a **disclosure** is a report of sexual misconduct made to the University by a victim-survivor who wishes to make the University aware of an incident but does not wish the University to investigate or take any specific action in response

to the incident. A person who makes a disclosure may elect to make a complaint to the University about the same incident at a later time, provided that the incident involves University related conduct. A **complaint** is a report of sexual misconduct made by a victim-survivor who wishes the University to investigate and/or take specific action in response to an incident involving University related conduct. A victim-survivor who makes a disclosure to the University may choose to make a complaint to the University about the same incident at a later time, provided that the incident is University related. (For the definition of **University related conduct**, see the Glossary on page 28.)



Total reports received

In total, 121 incidents of sexual misconduct were reported by victim-survivors in 2022.

Of the total reports received (including both disclosures and complaints):

- 74 (61.2%) were categorised as sexual assault
- 47 (38.8%) were categorised as sexual harassment (see **Figure 5**) and
- 98 (81%) were categorised as disclosures
- 23 (19%) were categorised as complaints (see **Figure 6**).

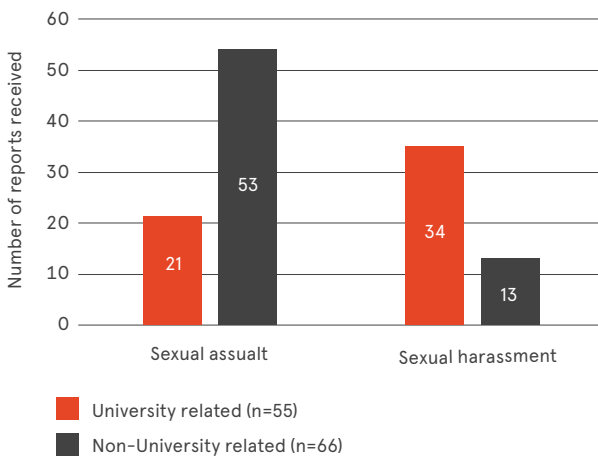


Figure 5: Total number of sexual assault and sexual harassment reports (including disclosures and complaints) received, 2022

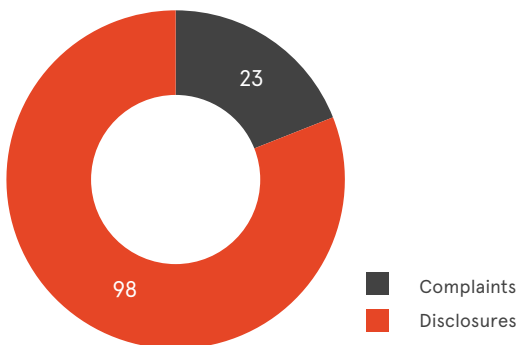


Figure 6: Total number of complaints and disclosures received, 2022

The comparatively high proportion of disclosures can be attributed partly to the fact that 67.3 percent involved non-University related conduct, which cannot form the basis of a complaint.

Where victim-survivors disclosed that they had experienced sexual assault or sexual harassment, without further details of the incidents being provided, the incident has been classified according to their own description of the conduct. Where the victim-survivor reported experiencing both sexual assault and sexual harassment, the incident was categorised as sexual assault.

As indicated in **Figure 5**, of the total 121 reports (including both disclosures and complaints) received in 2022:

- 55 (45.5%) were categorised as University related conduct
- 66 (54.5%) were categorised as non-University related conduct.

University related conduct is defined in the [Student Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) and the [Staff Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) and in the Glossary on page 28.

Of the total 121 reports (including both disclosures and complaints), the victim-survivor's connection to the University was as follows:

- current staff/affiliate: 7 (5.8%)
- current student: 107 (88.4%)
- former student: 3 (2.5%)
- member of the public: 2 (1.65%)
- unknown: 2 (1.65%).

Of the 107 current students listed above, 62 (57.9%) were domestic students and 45 (42.1%) were international students.

Disclosures of sexual misconduct

Of the total 121 reports of sexual misconduct received in 2022, 98 were disclosures.

Of these 98 disclosures:

- 32 (32.7%) involved University related conduct and 66 (67.3%) involved non-University related conduct
- 67 (68.4%) were categorised as sexual assault and 31 (31.6%) were categorised as sexual harassment

As indicated in **Figure 7**:

- 14 (20.9%) of the 67 disclosures categorised as sexual assault involved University related conduct and 53 (79.1%) involved non-University related conduct
- 19 (61.3%) of the 31 disclosures categorised as sexual harassment involved University related conduct and 12 (38.7%) involved non-University related conduct
- 11 (11.2%) involved University-owned or affiliated student accomodation.



Figure 7: Total number of sexual assault and sexual harassment disclosures received, 2022

As indicated in **Figure 8**, of the 98 disclosures, the respondent’s connection to the University was as follows:

- 8 (8.2%) were former or current staff or affiliates
- 21 (21.4%) were former or current students
- 44 (44.9%) were members of the public (includes historical reports, overseas reports, and respondents with no connection to the University)
- 25 (25.5%) were unknown persons (where the connection of the respondent to the University was unknown, either because it was not disclosed or because the respondent was a person unknown to the victim-survivor).

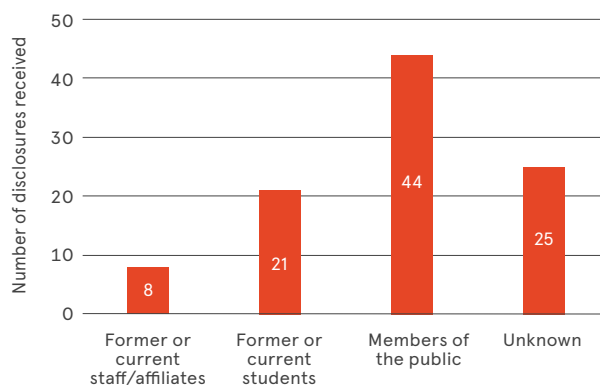


Figure 8: Disclosures received: connection of respondent to the University, 2022

Complaints of sexual misconduct

Of the total 121 reports of sexual misconduct received in 2022, 23 were complaints.

As indicated in **Figure 9**, of the 23 complaints:

- 7 (30.4%) were categorised as sexual assault
- 16 (69.6%) were categorised as sexual harassment.

Only one complaint (4.3%) involved non-University related conduct and was not pursued.

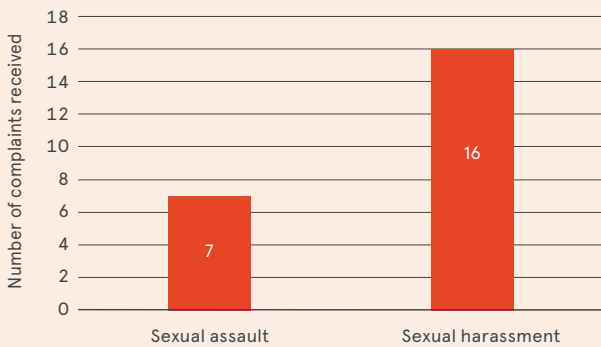


Figure 9: Total number of sexual assault and sexual harassment complaints received, 2022

Of the remaining 22 complaints (95.7%) involving University related conduct:

- 7 (31.8%) were categorised as sexual assault
- 15 (68.2%) were categorised as sexual harassment.

As indicated in **Figure 10**, the respondent's connection to the University was as follows:

- 12 (52.2%) were current students
- 9 (39.1%) were former or current staff or affiliates
- 1 (4.3%) was a former student
- 1 (4.3%) was unknown.

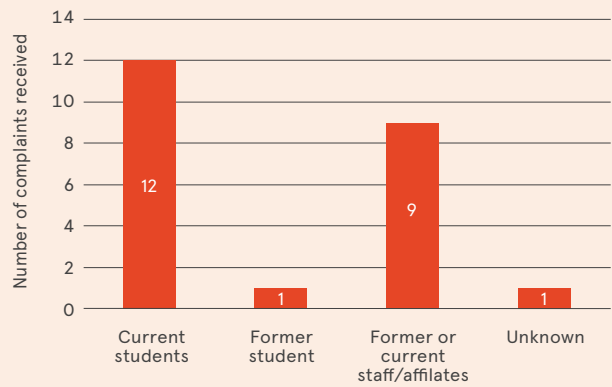


Figure 10: Complaints received: connection of respondent to the University, 2022

Complaints process

Of the 23 complaints received in 2022, 14 (61%) of the complainants sought and received support from the Safer Communities Office.

Ten complaints (43.5%) underwent preliminary assessment or investigation by the University. The remaining 13 complaints did not proceed to preliminary assessment or investigation for various reasons, including where cases were withdrawn, remain ongoing, followed the assisted resolution pathway (see below), or could not be pursued by the University due to the respondent either remaining unidentified or having resigned from their position.

Four complaints (17.4%) were resolved through assisted resolution. **Assisted resolution** is a process that can be pursued in lieu of an investigation, in accordance with the complainant's wishes. It involves a description of the alleged conduct being put to the respondent, along with a list of actions that the complainant would require the respondent to take in order to resolve the complaint. The respondent is not required to admit or deny the allegations, and may fully or partially accept or reject any of the actions requested by the complainant. If the respondent rejects the actions or declines to participate in the assisted resolution process, then an investigation may be pursued.

Three complaints (13%) involved **interim measures** being imposed by the Registrar or authorised delegate. **Interim measures** are implemented on a temporary basis where there are concerns for the safety of the complainant or other member(s) of the University community while the complaint is being resolved or investigated. Where the relevant complaints team has been informed that there is an Apprehended Violence Order (AVO) in place, interim measures will mirror the AVO conditions.

Complaint outcomes

As mentioned above, of the 23 complaints received in 2022, four (17.4%) were resolved through assisted resolution.

Three (13%) of the complaints that underwent preliminary assessment or investigation were either fully or partially substantiated, and the respondent in each of these three cases had a penalty applied for misconduct.

The outcomes of the remaining 16 complaints (69.5%) were as follows:

- 4 (17.4%) were withdrawn by the complainant
- 1 (4.3%) resulted in a warning being issued to the respondent, with no misconduct found
- 4 (17.4%) could not proceed (in 3 of these cases the respondent ceased to be an employee of the University, and in 1 case the respondent was unidentifiable)
- 7 (30.4%) were ongoing as at 31 December 2022, with an outcome yet to be reached (several of these were lodged in the final quarter of 2022; others have yet to be resolved due to the absence or leave of one or more of the parties or key witnesses and/or complexities in the investigation process).

Table 1 summarises the outcomes of the 23 complaints received in 2022.

Table 1: Complaint outcomes and status by connection of respondent to the University

Respondent	Resolved through assisted resolution	Fully or partially substantiated, and misconduct penalty applied	Withdrawn	Ongoing as of 31/12/22	Warning issued, with no misconduct found	Could not proceed	Totals
Staff/affiliate	1	N/A	2	3	N/A	3	9 (39.13%)
Student	3	3	2	4	1	N/A	13 (56.52%)
Unknown	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	1 (4.35%)
Totals	4 (17.4%)	3 (13.0%)	4 (17.4%)	7 (30.4%)	1 (4.3 %)	4 (17.4%)	23 (100%)

Numbers have been rounded up where they were above 0.5 percent





Priorities for 2023

The University is committed to providing a framework of safety and support for victim-survivors that operates with compassion and confidentiality. We strive for continuous improvement to increase accessibility, transparency and consistency of processes and outcomes for our community. Many improvements have been made, but there is more to be done. Our priorities for 2023 are evidence-based and informed by the data provided in this report. Staff and students will work in collaboration to ensure that our community continues to be a safe and respectful environment for everyone. The following is a snapshot of our priorities for 2023.

Improving knowledge of reporting pathways for incidents of sexual misconduct for victim-survivors and bystanders

The results of the 2021 NSSS, released in March 2022, indicated that 14 percent of students did not know how to formally report sexual misconduct to the University. In response, a key priority for 2023 is to streamline the current multiple online reporting options into one form, to ensure that reporting is more accessible and straightforward. A streamlined [Sexual Misconduct online reporting form](#) has already been launched, with a robust communications plan tied in with the 'It's all about consent' campaign, and University login requirements have been removed in order to reduce barriers to reporting.

The Safer Communities Office will continue to work with our staff and students throughout 2023 to improve their understanding of the reporting processes and support options available to them through various channels.



Updating our sexual misconduct policies and procedures

Work is also currently underway to update the student and staff sexual misconduct policies and response procedures to reflect amendments to NSW sexual consent laws and to respond to the positive duty under Commonwealth sex discrimination laws to take reasonable and proportionate measures to eliminate sexual harassment. Consultations will be undertaken with students and staff stakeholders, with this work prioritised for finalisation in late 2023.

Increasing awareness of support options available to victim-survivors and bystanders

The 2021 NSSS results also indicated that 46.7 percent of students knew nothing or very little about where to seek support or assistance following an incident of sexual assault or sexual harassment. In addition to the launch of the 'It's all about consent' campaign in Semester 1, 2023, the Safer Communities Office aims to increase its visibility and engagement in student and staff events across the University. The new streamlined reporting form as mentioned above also encourages victim-survivors and bystanders to seek support from the Safer Communities Office.

Through consultation sessions with students, feedback was received that students wanted to know more about what to expect when contacting the Safer Communities Office and what support would be provided. Direct feedback was also received during consultation sessions with students that they wished to know more about the Safer Communities Office and its staff; specifically, they wanted to know what the Student Liaison Officers looked like, so they could 'put a face to' the service. To address this, the 'It's all about consent' campaign featured photographs of and [interviews](#) with staff.

The Safer Communities Office in collaboration with the Marketing and Communications team will evaluate the 'It's all about consent' campaign with respect to its effectiveness in raising awareness of the Safer Communities Office and in conveying the key messages of affirmative consent and being an active bystander.

In the 2021 NSSS Qualitative Report, victim-survivors reported feeling distressed when faced with course content covering topics such as sexual assault and sexual harassment. Consequently, in late 2022 and continuing into 2023, the Safer Communities Office partnered with the Education Innovation and Design team and selected faculties to develop an initiative promoting effective integration of content disclaimers when teaching distressing content, in line with trauma-informed guidelines. The purpose of the initiative is to:

- develop guidelines on how to teach sensitive content
- provide education to staff on responding with compassion to student disclosures
- consult with staff and students on best practice in teaching and engaging with distressing content
- ensure students are provided with information regarding available support.

The Safer Communities Office will continue to work with staff and students throughout 2023 on this initiative.

Continuing to improve accessibility and inclusion of the Safer Communities Office

It was highlighted in the 2021 NSSS that students who identify as part of the LGBTIQA+ community, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and students with lived experience of disability experience significantly higher rates of sexual assault and sexual harassment than other students. It is widely understood that these communities also experience increased barriers to accessing support. In 2023 the Safer Communities Office will consult with student and staff members of these communities, with the aim of developing internal best-practice guidelines to ensure that the Safer Communities Office continues to be an accessible, inclusive and safe service for all.

The Safer Communities Office will also continue to work in 2023 with the Centre for English Teaching to expand the [Sexual Health and Peer Education \(SHAPE\) program](#) to ensure that newly enrolled students are provided with information relating to safe sex, consent and sexual health. An evaluation of this project will be undertaken in 2023 to inform its rolling out to relevant cohorts across the University.

Participation in the International Students' Sexual and Intimate Partner Violence Experiences Study (INVEST)

It was identified in the 2021 NSSS that culturally and linguistically diverse students who had experienced sexual assault or harassment reported feelings of shame and stigma, and fears of not being believed by services that they reached out to for support. The [Safer Families Centre of Research Excellence](#) identified that further research was warranted, specifically regarding the experiences of woman-identifying international students. As a result, the centre is undertaking a national confidential online survey of this cohort to explore the nature, circumstances and impacts of sexual and intimate partner violence. The aim of the project is to develop culturally sensitive resources (such as factsheets and digital stories) to support international students experiencing sexual or intimate partner violence and to help service providers and universities respond more effectively. In late 2022, the University made a decision to participate in this survey, and the survey was launched in March 2023.

Improving transparency and accountability for victim-survivors

The University strives to ensure that victim-survivors who report an incident of sexual misconduct are provided with regular updates on the progress of their disclosure or complaint. With the victim-survivor's consent, the Safer Communities Office can act as their central point of contact within the University. This is to ensure that victim-survivors do not need to repeat their story. This is aligned with a trauma-informed approach.

The 2021 NSSS results indicated that 23.5 percent of students who reported having been sexually assaulted were not at all or were only slightly confident in the reporting processes within the University. In late 2022 a working group was established comprising representatives of the Safer Communities Office, the Student Affairs Unit and Workplace Relations. This group regularly meets with the aim of improving processes and focusing on continuous improvement. The University has also committed to publishing an Annual Report on Sexual Misconduct from 2023 onwards.

Expanding HDR ‘Respectful Research’ training for HDR supervisors

Following on from the positive feedback received about the Respectful Research training in 2022, the Safer Communities Office is expanding this training to all HDR supervisors requiring re-registration by 2025. This training will form part of their core requirements within the Foundations of Research Supervision (FORS) training.

Expanding first responder and bystander training throughout the University

The 2021 NSSS results indicated that 43.2 percent of students who reported having been sexually harassed believed increased awareness could reduce incidents of sexual harassment. It is the University’s ambition to ensure that every staff member and student leader is equipped with the skills to act as an effective first responder to disclosures of sexual misconduct. To meet this goal, in 2023 the University is expanding its first responder and bystander training to all staff members and student leaders across the University. The Safer Communities Office works with Full Stop Australia to ensure that all sessions are tailored to address the unique needs of each cohort.

Planning is underway to co-design training with our staff and students with a view to rolling out training in late 2023. Also planned for 2023 is bystander training with club executives within the University of Sydney Union (USU), Sydney Uni Sport and Fitness (SUSF), Students’ Representative Council (SRC) and Sydney University Postgraduate Student Representative Association (SUPRA).

In addition, the Safer Communities Office has partnered with Full Stop Australia to provide training to bar and event staff, management and licensees of University of Sydney Union (USU) bars on campus, modelled on the Good Night Out program. A targeted safety intervention originally established in the UK, this program aims to ensure that all bar and event staff are trained in responding effectively to disclosures from patrons and encourages perpetrator accountability, corporate accountability and bystander intervention. The program is both an accreditation and a training program, and Full Stop Australia will work with the USU to ensure that there



are clear and robust policies, procedures and reporting pathways in place to ensure the safety and inclusion of all patrons. This training was rolled out in April 2023 and USU will be working with Full Stop Australia on the accreditation program in the coming months.

Reviewing consent education

In 2023 the University is committed to reviewing its current consent education as provided to students through the mandatory Consent Matters online module developed by Epigeum. A co-design project working group will be created to work with our students and staff to scope the most effective ways to deliver consent education across a large institution. We will also continue to evaluate the in-person consent workshops facilitated by the Safer Communities Office based on student feedback.

Glossary

Affiliate

A person appointed or engaged by the University to perform duties or functions on its behalf, including but not limited to:

- an honorary title holder engaged under the Honorary Titles Policy 2013
- a consultant or contractor to the University;
- an office holder in a University entity, a member of any University committee, board, or foundation.

An affiliate is not an employee of the University.

Apprehended Violence Order (AVO)

An Apprehended Domestic Violence Order (ADVO) or an Apprehended Personal Violence Order (APVO) made by a court;

Note: an ADVO protects a person where the parties live together. an APVO protects a person in other circumstances, including where the parties are both staff members and affiliates.

Assisted resolution

Resolution between the complainant and the respondent is assisted by the University. Assisted resolution may include, but is not limited to), an apology, facilitated discussion (including mediation or conciliation), or an agreed plan of action to prevent further incidents.

Bystander intervention

Seeing and recognising a potentially harmful situation and choosing to respond in a safe way that could prevent or stop the harm from happening or continuing.

Complainant

Any person who makes a complaint of sexual misconduct.

Complaint

A complaint of sexual misconduct by a person who wants the University to investigate or to take specific action in response to the incident.

Delegate

The University employee with delegated authority to take action or make a decision under the University of Sydney Enterprise Agreement 2018–2021.

Disclosure

A report of sexual misconduct by a person who does not want the University to investigate or to take any specific action in response to the incident.

HDR

Higher degree by research.

Historical sexual abuse

Any form of sexual abuse alleged to have occurred on or before 1 July 2018.

Interim measures

Temporary measures taken by the University against a respondent, in accordance with the [Staff Sexual Misconduct Policy 2020](#) or the [Student Sexual Misconduct Policy 2018](#), to minimise the potential for harm to any person while a complaint is being resolved or investigated.

Office of General Counsel (OGC)

Responsible for the provision of legal and other services to the University.

Online reporting form

An online form where current and former students, staff and affiliates and members of the public can make both disclosures and complaints.

Protective Services

24/7 service on campus to respond to emergencies and to assist anyone feeling unsafe on campus.

Residential college

Residential colleges associated with the University of Sydney. The residential colleges are independent institutions with autonomous governing bodies and operate independently of the University.

They are:

- Mandelbaum House
- St Andrew's College
- St John's College
- St Paul's College
- Wesley College
- Sancta Sophia College
- Women's College.

Respondent

A person whose conduct is the subject of a disclosure or complaint of sexual misconduct.

Safer Communities Office

Specialist staff within the portfolio of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) who provide support and guidance to current and former students, staff and affiliates affected by sexual misconduct.

Sexual abuse

Any sexual act that a person does not consent to, and which is contrary to accepted community standards, having regard to the year in which the conduct is alleged to have occurred.

Sexual assault

Non-consensual sexual intercourse, oral sex, and sexual touching; sexual assault is also sexual misconduct.

Sexual harassment

Unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature other than sexual intercourse, oral sex, and sexual touching; for the purposes of this report, sexual harassment includes the recording or distributing of intimate images without consent, sexual gestures, sexually suggestive comments or jokes, repeated or inappropriate invitations to go out or 'hook up', and intrusive questions about a person's private life or physical appearance; sexual harassment is also sexual misconduct.

Sexual misconduct

A range of unacceptable sexual behaviours that are in breach of the University's codes of conduct and policies; including sexual assault and sexual harassment.

Staff or staff member

An employee of the University, including casual employee(s).

Student

Any person who is currently enrolled at the University of Sydney, including:

- award students (students studying for a formal qualification)
- exchange students
- study abroad students
- continuing education students
- other non-award students
- students of the Centre for English Teaching.

Student Affairs Unit

A unit comprising specialist staff within the office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), who assist with the resolution of student reports of student misconduct in accordance with University policies and procedures.

Students' Representative Council (SRC)

The independent representative body for undergraduate students at the University of Sydney.

Sydney Uni Sports and Fitness (SUSF)

The University of Sydney's sporting body; SUSF is a separate incorporated entity and operates independently of the University.

Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association (SUPRA)

The independent representative association for postgraduate students at the University of Sydney.

Trauma-informed

Trauma-informed practice is a framework for service delivery that is based on knowledge and understanding of how trauma affects peoples' lives; it involves upholding the *trauma-informed principles* of choice, collaboration, trust, safety and empowerment in the work that we do with victim-survivors, to minimise re-traumatisation.

University owned accommodation

Accommodation that is owned or managed by a public higher education institution and provided to registered students at the University. At the University of Sydney University-owned accommodation includes:

- Abercrombie Student Accommodation
- Nepean Hall
- Nepean Lodge
- Queen Mary Building
- The Regiment Student Accommodation.

University related conduct

Any conduct that is connected to the University, including conduct that:

- refers or relates to the University, its activities, or its staff, affiliates or students in their status as staff, affiliates or students at the University
- occurs on, or in connection with, University lands or other property owned by the University
- occurs at, or in connection with, a residential college
- occurs at, or in connection with, University-owned or affiliated student accommodation
- occurs using, or is facilitated by, University ICT resources or other University equipment
- occurs during, or relates to, the performance of duties for the University
- occurs during, or in connection to, any University related function or event (whether sanctioned or organised by the University or not) or when representing the University in any capacity
- occurs during any event run by or affiliated with student representative organisations, student clubs or student societies (whether sanctioned or organised by the University or not)
- occurs during student's clinical, practicum, internship or work experience placements
- occurs while a University of Sydney student is participating in an overseas exchange, study abroad or another approved program.

University of Sydney Union (USU)

An independent student organisation that provides a wide range of services, events, programs and facilities to students at the University of Sydney.

Victim-survivor

Any person who has experienced harm as a result of sexual misconduct.

Workplace Relations

The team of specialist staff within Human Resources who assist with the resolution of complaints and reports of misconduct by staff and affiliates, in accordance with University policies and procedures.

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[sydney.edu.au/about-us/vision-and-values/
making-a-safer-community-for-all.html](https://sydney.edu.au/about-us/vision-and-values/making-a-safer-community-for-all.html)