



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
MELBOURNE

The University of Melbourne  
**Sexual Misconduct  
Annual Report 2022**

# Introduction

**We acknowledge the experiences of all victim-survivors and we thank those who have come forward to report sexual misconduct.**

**The University of Melbourne is taking concerted action to eliminate sexual misconduct in our community.**

The publication of the first Sexual Misconduct Annual Report (2021) in May 2022 reflected a renewed commitment to transparency regarding the University of Melbourne's efforts to address and eliminate sexual misconduct. This report continues our commitment to transparency and we hope that it assists our students and staff, as well as colleagues beyond the University of Melbourne, to understand our progress to date and future work.

In 2022, the University has advanced its efforts to change institutional culture and progress has continued in designing interventions to prevent, identify and respond to sexual misconduct. Over 3000 staff members have completed the University of Melbourne's 'Respect Education Program' to date, and the 'Speak Safely' anonymous reporting platform was launched in May.

We reviewed and further strengthened the Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy. Importantly, the policy clarifies that the University does not, and will not, ask or require victim-survivors to sign Non-Disclosure Agreements (unless requested by the victim-survivor). Online contexts and predatory and grooming conduct are now explicitly covered by the policy also.

The number of student complaints increased substantially in 2022, albeit from a low base. Under-reporting remains a significant issue. We nevertheless hope this increase indicates that victim-survivors and witnesses are more willing to disclose and report sexual misconduct, and to seek support and advice. The number of staff complaints increased slightly from those received in 2021. In 2022, four staff members have left the University subsequent to a finding of serious misconduct, and seven students have been suspended subsequent to a finding of sexual misconduct.

While much progress has been made, more work is required to build awareness of, and trust in, reporting processes to enable better support for victim-survivors, and to refine and target our prevention efforts. In particular, we welcome ongoing and closer partnership with students to advance these issues.

We have developed a comprehensive work program to combat sexual misconduct in 2023, with a strong focus on working with students to improve communication and expanding student training programs. As our work matures in 2023, we commit to collecting high quality data to assess the effectiveness of our sexual misconduct prevention and response efforts.

Our absolute commitment to eliminating sexual misconduct within our community is shared by all University leaders. We thank all students and staff who are working with us to achieve this commitment. We encourage all students and staff to raise any concerns, with the assurance that issues will be handled in a respectful, fair and confidential manner.



**Professor Duncan Maskell**  
Vice-Chancellor



**Professor Nicola Phillips**  
Provost



**Professor Pip Nicholson**  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor  
(People and Community)

# Recent Context: National and institutional

## National

High profile legislative changes by state and federal governments have sustained recent public attention on issues of sexual assault and sexual harassment. The Victorian Government adopted the 'affirmative consent' model through changes to the Crimes Act in August 2022, and the passage of the 'Respect@Work' Bill through Federal Parliament in November 2022 creates a positive duty on employers to implement measures to prevent sexual harassment, discrimination and victimisation.

Combatting sexual misconduct faced by students also remained a high priority for the higher education sector in 2022. Universities Australia funded the National Student Safety Survey (NSSS), conducted by the Social Research Centre, set up specifically to undertake this research. The NSSS collected data on the scale and nature of university student experiences of sexual harassment and sexual assault across Australia. The results of the 2021 survey, released in March 2022, demonstrated that the prevalence of student sexual assault and sexual harassment in university settings remains unacceptably high and vastly under-reported.

Following the release of the NSSS results, Universities Australia and the Group of Eight (Go8) have redoubled their work with the sector to combat sexual misconduct through improvement of prevention and response guidelines. The University works closely with Universities Australia and the Go8 on sexual misconduct issues. In 2022, this included hosting a productive Go8 workshop on sexual misconduct which facilitated sharing of best practice sexual misconduct prevention, response and reporting approaches between Go8 universities.

## University of Melbourne

In 2021, a comprehensive review of the University's end-to-end policies and procedures on sexual misconduct identified a number of areas where the University's approach and systems could be improved. In response, the University developed a stand-alone sexual misconduct policy based on best-practice principles, and launched a range of initiatives designed to improve the University's prevention of and response to sexual misconduct. These included:

- Strengthening governance through establishment of the Respect at Melbourne Committee and Respect at Melbourne Reference Group,
- Developing and implementing an all-staff Respect Education Program to build staff capability to prevent, call out and respond to sexual misconduct
- Building capacity in the Safer Community Program and Human Resources team to improve case management and support for complainants.

The University's positive duty as an employer to prevent sexual misconduct, legislated in the 'Respect@Work' Bill, is articulated in the Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy (MPF1359) (SMPR Policy) and all initiatives discussed in this report contribute to our prevention efforts.

The results of the 2021 NSSS provided additional insight into University of Melbourne students' experiences of sexual misconduct. Of the University's 54,000 students, 1,481 students participated in the NSSS. This response rate was one of the highest in the sector, and the University acknowledges the experiences of all survivors in our community, and thanks them for their contribution to the survey. The results of the survey indicated:

- 7.5% of respondents had experienced sexual harassment and 1.3% had experienced sexual assault in a university context in the last 12 months
- Only 1.9% of the respondents who were sexually harassed made a formal complaint to the University
- 20.7% of respondents who were sexually harassed sought support or assistance from the University
- 39.7% of respondents reported that the most impactful incident of sexual harassment they experienced in a university context occurred in general campus areas.

These results reflect the broad trends identified by the NSSS across the sector. They also highlight the pressing need to address sexual misconduct within our community, and to continue to build trust in our support services and reporting systems.

As the University has continued to implement its broad program of work to eradicate sexual misconduct, much has been learned. The insights and areas for improvement identified in the following analysis of complaints data and work completed in 2022 have directly informed the University's priorities for 2023. As this work matures, the University will maintain its focus on continuous improvement of all prevention and response initiatives and policy settings, to ensure a safe and respectful environment for all students and staff.

## Definitions and Penalties

The term 'sexual misconduct' incorporates both sexual assault and sexual harassment:

- **Sexual assault** is any type of sexual act perpetrated against someone's will. It includes forced sex and unwanted sexual touching. Sexual assault is a criminal offence
- **Sexual harassment** occurs when a person makes an unwelcome sexual advance, an unwelcome request for sexual favours, or engages in any unwelcome sexual conduct when it could be reasonably assumed the other person would be offended, humiliated or intimidated.

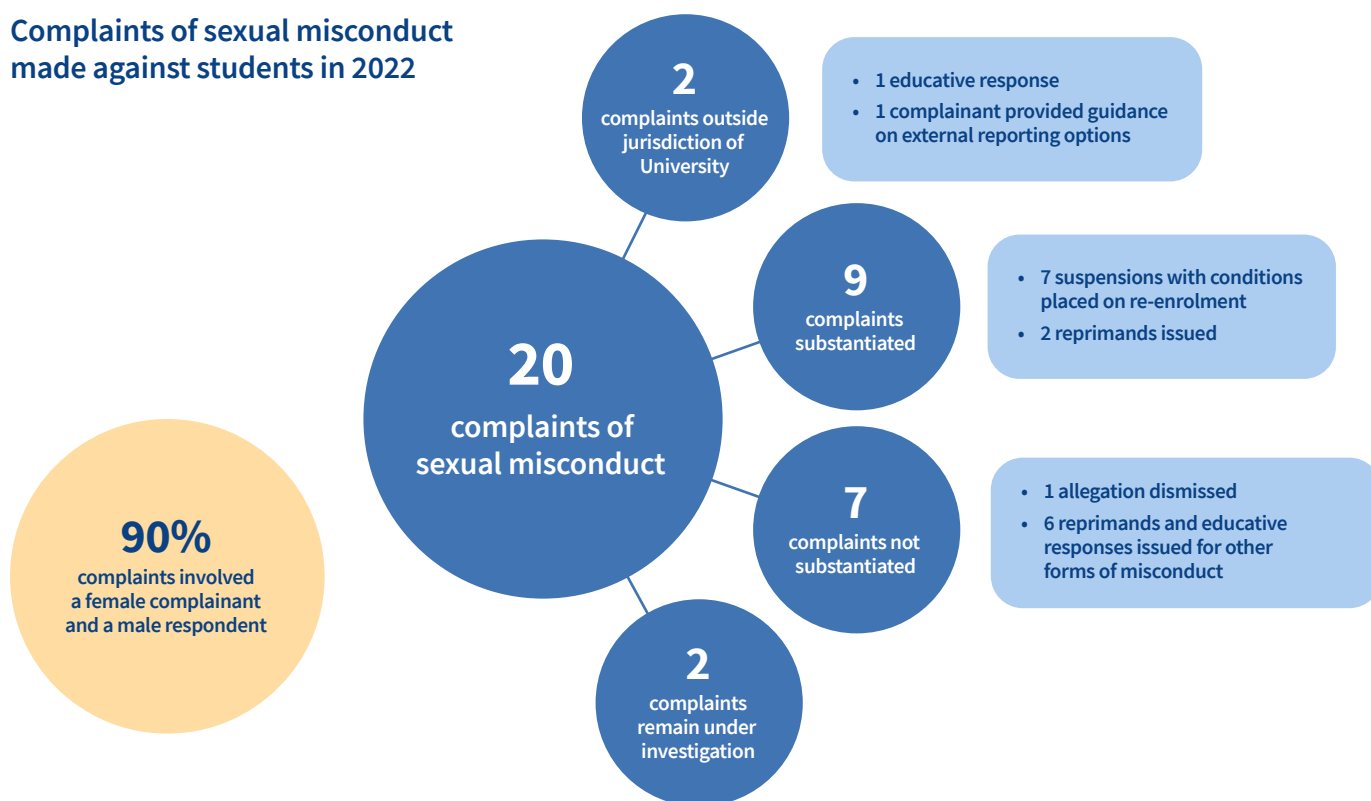
Sexual misconduct can occur online including through email, websites, online meetings, social media, games or other forums.

Sexual misconduct constitutes serious misconduct under the University's Enterprise Agreement and the Fair Work Act 2009. If serious misconduct is found to have occurred, employment can be terminated without notice.

For students, sexual misconduct constitutes general misconduct under the Vice-Chancellor Regulation and the Student Conduct Policy (MPF1324) and can result in suspension or termination of enrolment.

# Formal complaints and their handling in 2022

## Complaints of sexual misconduct made against students in 2022



## Complaints against students

In 2022, 20 complaints of alleged sexual misconduct against students were made to the University, occurring predominantly on campus. Of the 20 cases:

- 18 involved a female complainant and a male respondent (90%)
- 14 complaints were made by students or former students (70%)
- 4 complaints were made by staff (20%).

Seven students were suspended from the University as a result of a finding of sexual misconduct, with conditions placed upon their re-enrolment. A range of other educative penalties were also applied, including requirements to complete individual counselling and/or respectful behaviours training.

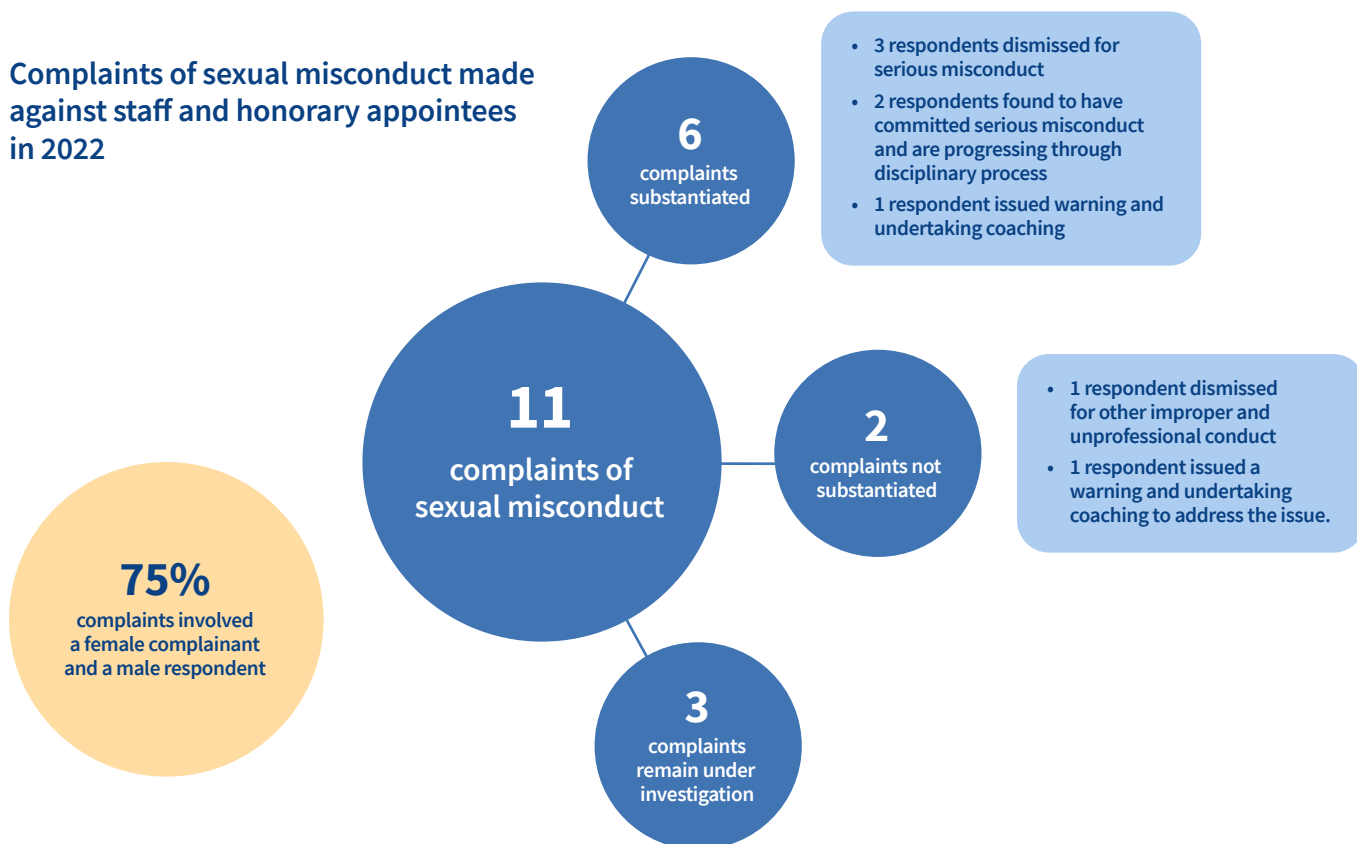
The 20 complaints of alleged sexual misconduct received in 2022 is a significant increase from the four complaints that were made by students in 2021. However, the results of the NSSS suggest that under-reporting continues to be a problem and more communication with students is required to increase knowledge of and confidence in support services and complaint processes. Working with students is a priority for the University in 2023, with plans in train to work closely with them on communication and process issues.

It is hoped that the higher number of reports made in 2022 signals a trend of increased reporting, while we work actively to reduce and eliminate the occurrence of sexual misconduct. Factors that may have contributed to the increased number of complaints include the return of students to campus in 2021 and increased visibility of the University's support for students to report sexual misconduct.

In all complaints involving students, a trauma-informed approach is taken to the management of cases. The complainant is provided with options for complaint and support to promote their agency throughout the process, as well as advice about reporting the matter to Victoria Police in matters involving potentially criminal conduct. Cultural, linguistic and other accessibility needs are recognised and supported through provision of specialist support and advice. In 2022, the majority of complainants had accessed the services of the Safer Community Program prior to making an official complaint, enabling them to be connected to support services throughout the complaint process. Those against whom complaints are made are also supported.

Allegations of sexual misconduct can be made as part of student misconduct complaints involving a number of other inappropriate behaviours, such as bullying or discrimination. In such cases, it is possible for allegations of sexual misconduct to be unsubstantiated, but for reprimands, educative or punitive measures to be applied for other forms of substantiated misconduct.

## Complaints of sexual misconduct made against staff and honorary appointees in 2022



## Disciplinary decisions as they relate to students

As noted above, allegations of student sexual misconduct are considered in accordance with the SMPR Policy, Vice-Chancellor Regulation and the Student Conduct Policy. The Academic Registrar publishes potential penalties for student misconduct, web-linked from the University's Student Conduct Policy.

Penalties for student misconduct generally fall into three bands (but may be applied in combination):

- Corrective (examples include an apology, separation of impacted students, conditions on future enrolment)
- Educative (examples include undertaking an awareness-raising or training course, counselling or support services)
- Punitive (examples include restrictions on access to University campus, services, or facilities, suspension, exclusion).

Where a student is found to have engaged in sexual misconduct, decisions on penalties are made based on a careful assessment of the circumstances to ensure that penalties are proportionate.

## Complaints against staff and honorary appointees

In 2022, 11 complaints of alleged sexual misconduct by staff members (including honorary appointees) were made to the University, and one outstanding complaint, received in 2021, was resolved.

Of the 11 complaints made against staff/honorary appointees in 2022, nine complaints were formally investigated, and four staff members/honorary appointees left the University as a result of a finding of serious misconduct (including the outstanding case from 2021). Of these, one respondent resigned prior to the investigation, which continued with the support of the complainant despite the respondent's departure, and concluded with a finding of sexual misconduct.

Additionally, one respondent was dismissed for other improper and unprofessional conduct, and two further respondents are progressing through disciplinary proceedings.

When respondents have contested the University's decision for dismissal via the Fair Work Commission, the University has contested the claims rather than seek a settlement.

The University does not, and will not, ask or require victim-survivors to sign Non-Disclosure Agreements.

## Complaint and investigation processes

Complaints against staff are received and reviewed by Workplace Relations and Investigations. A trauma-informed approach is taken to the management of all cases. This means that Workplace Relations and Investigations staff:

- Acknowledge and respond to complaints,
- Talk complainants through next steps and potential outcomes of the complaints process,
- Provide information about internal and external support services
- Treat complaints confidentially.

Workplace Relations and Investigations staff will ensure that the complainant understands how the complainant's information will be used. The frequency of communication between the complainant and Workplace Relations and Investigations staff is agreed to support the complainant's agency throughout the process. More particularly, complainants can choose to be updated on all phases of the investigation and to receive regular check-ins from workplace relations staff, or not.

With all sexual misconduct matters, a cross-functional case management approach is taken to ensure that the appropriate support is provided. This may involve meeting with the complainant's manager, HR and Safer Community Program. By bringing different expertise together, we ensure a holistic approach is taken to supporting the complainant.

Complaints against staff are considered in accordance with the Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy (MPF1328) and the SMPR Policy. Following a complaint, Workplace Relations and Investigations conduct a preliminary assessment, with a range of possible consequences, including:

- No action
- Mediation
- Informal management
- Workplace inquiry
- Investigation.

Where a formal investigation is warranted, the case is referred to an independent investigator.

If the sexual misconduct is substantiated as serious by the investigation, employees can face dismissal or other disciplinary action as determined by law and the relevant policies. Honorary staff members can have their honorary appointment rescinded.

All disciplinary decisions are made on the basis of a careful assessment of the circumstances, and outcomes are proportional to the nature and impact of the proven misconduct.

The Provost (for faculties) and the Vice-President Strategy and Culture or Chief Operating Officer (for professional and administrative staff in non-academic divisions) are the decision-makers in these cases.

In cases where an investigation does not substantiate an allegation of sexual misconduct or serious misconduct and the respondent continues their employment with the University, the outcome is explained to the complainant and ongoing support is offered, including counselling and regular check-ins with senior HR staff.

The University commits to communicate substantiated breaches of the sexual misconduct policy, and any subsequent dismissals arising from serious misconduct, having ensured complainants have been consulted about the communications. It has been reported by the majority of complainants that having some control and agency over communication assists to empower them.

## Gender, Intersectionality and Sexual Misconduct

At least 75% of reported staff and 90% of reported student sexual misconduct matters in 2022 have involved a female complainant and a male respondent. This figure reflects the evidence that societal norms and attitudes about gender, traditional gender roles, and unequal power relationships all contribute to sexual assault and sexual harassment.

The risk of experiencing sexual misconduct is heightened further for people who experience discrimination based on other aspects of their identity and who face additional barriers because of this to reporting sexual misconduct. The NSSS has shown that transgender and gender diverse students report disproportionate levels of sexual harassment and abuse, but are under-represented in formal reporting data. Heightened incidence and underreporting are also known to be common for people with disability, Indigenous people, people of diverse nationality, ethnicity or faith, and members of the LGBTIQA+ community.

A comprehensive program of work exists to improve safety and inclusion for transgender and gender diverse students and staff, which includes the provision of specialist support in the Safer Community Program.

Gender-equality and intersectional approaches are important foundations for the University's efforts to address sexual misconduct. The Respect Education program, with its behaviour-change approach, recognises the relationship between sexual misconduct, gender inequity, intersectionality, and unequal power relationships. Recognition of the interdependence of gender inequality, intersectionality and sexual misconduct can be further amplified by more explicitly linking sexual misconduct prevention and response efforts to the University's broader initiatives to build diversity and strengthen inclusion.



# Work completed in 2022

## Launch of 'Speak Safely' Platform

The 'Speak Safely' portal was implemented in April 2022 and launched in May, alongside publication of the 2021 Sexual Misconduct Annual Report. The Speak Safely portal is an online sexual misconduct reporting tool that provides a simple and accessible way to report sexual misconduct, access support or seek action by the University. Importantly, it respects the agency of victim-survivors who can choose to remain anonymous while using the tool, and includes a 'Diary Note' function to store evidence while they resolve their next steps.

The Speak Safely portal was developed and implemented in partnership with Elker, a software platform that enables anonymous reporting and case management through encrypted communication services. Users can choose to tell the University about their experience anonymously through the 'Report Something' pathway. Once submitted, the user is referred to the Workplace Relations, Student Conduct or Safer Community team for advice. University staff can correspond with the user through an encrypted chat function to provide details on support services and complaint processes. Since the platform was implemented, 11 people have used the 'Report Something' pathway and been referred to services as appropriate.

In December, a 'Diary Note' function was added to the Speak Safely portal which enables users to record time-stamped evidence, in a secure platform without submission to the University. Complainants can submit details to the University at a later date if they choose. Users can also turn on a scanning function, that matches their 'Diary Note' with other similar entries and enables submission of Group Reports to the relevant complaints-management team. No identifying information is shared between individuals using the 'Diary Note' and scanning functions.

Anonymous reporting systems are a critical part of combatting sexual misconduct. They provide victim-survivors with a way of recording their experiences and accessing support services without fear of victimisation or other negative repercussions stemming from power imbalances between the complainant and the respondent or other participants and decision-makers. By implementing the 'Speak Safely' platform, the University hopes to increase the likelihood of victim-survivors accessing support services and making a formal complaint. The Speak Safely portal will be promoted widely to the University community in 2023 and its implementation will be monitored over time to ensure continuous improvement.

## Respect Education Program

Respect Education for staff is at the heart of the University's primary prevention approach and implementation of the Respect Education Program for staff continued in 2022. The program is a comprehensive, University-wide professional development and behaviour change program designed to build capability and confidence in all staff, equipping them with practical tools needed to prevent, call out and respond to issues of sexual misconduct in our community. Content is tailored for each staff cohort based on level of responsibility.

Phase 1 of the program concluded in March 2022, in which over 95% of the University's most senior leaders and professors completed a one or two day leadership workshop on identifying, responding to and preventing sexual misconduct. Phase 2 of the program commenced in July and has delivered a range of programs tailored to different staff cohorts:

- 1-day workshops for Senior Leaders
- Half-day workshops plus an eLearn module for Leaders and Supervisors
- 1-day plus 2x half-day workshops for Human Resources, Workplace Relations and Safer Community Program
- Commenced delivery of 2-hour workshops (plus eLearn module) for fixed-term and continuing staff
- An additional half-day Advanced Skills workshop for the University's most senior leaders and professoriate to embed skills learned in Phase 1 programs.

A major focus of Phase 2 has been the delivery of training to senior managers and supervisors, with approximately 80% of this cohort having either enrolled in or completed training in 2022.

Feedback from participants continues to be positive. Survey results across all cohorts indicate a significant self-reported increase in:

- Understanding the causes of sexual harassment at work
- How to be an active upstander against disrespectful behaviour
- How to provide a victim centered approach when supporting a person who has witnessed or experienced sexual misconduct
- Understanding the steps involved in the case management process at the University.

An evaluation framework has been developed to review the effectiveness of the program. Initial results from the 2022 evaluation reflect an increase in knowledge and understanding of sexual misconduct at work and an increase in confidence and ability to navigate difficult conversations and model respectful behaviour.

The evaluation also highlights that further resources and ongoing training and development opportunities are required to sustain the intended behaviour change. This insight has already led to development of the Advanced Skills workshops for the University's most senior leaders and professoriate, and will continue to inform further training.

Program	Cohort	Format	Completions in 2022	Total completions
University Executive and 120 Most Senior Leaders Program	Members of the University Executive and the approximately 120 most senior leaders of the University.	2-day or 1.5-day program. Mandatory.	0	112
Advanced Skills workshop	Members of the University Executive, the 120 most senior leaders of the University and the Professoriate.	Half-day workshop. Participation not mandatory, but strongly encouraged.	179	179
Professoriate workshop	Level E academic staff.	1-day workshop, Mandatory.	291	653
Senior Leaders workshop	Professional staff with an executive role; Level D academics with 15 or more direct reports; staff with a formal leadership position.	1-day workshop. Mandatory.	415	415
Leaders/Supervisors workshop	All staff with supervisory delegation or responsible for at least one direct report.	Half-day workshop plus 30 min eLearn module. Mandatory.	1658	1658
HR and Specialists workshop	Human Resources, Workplace Relations and Safer Community Program	1 x 1-day and 2 x half-day workshops. Not mandatory.	63	63
Staff workshop – fixed-term and continuing	Fixed-term and continuing staff without supervisory delegation and no direct reports.	E-module and 2-hour workshop. Mandatory.	310	310
<b>Total completions</b>			<b>2916</b>	<b>3390</b>

## Respect Committee and Respect Reference Group

The Respect Committee contributes to fulfilling the University's positive duty to take measures to eliminate sex discrimination and sexual harassment.

The Respect at Melbourne Committee was established at the end of 2021 and met six times in 2022. It has been chaired by the Provost, with the active participation of the following University leaders:

- Vice-President, Strategy and Culture
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor, People and Community
- Associate Director, Respect Initiatives
- Pro Vice-Chancellor, Student Life
- Executive Director, Students and Scholarly Services and Academic Registrar

- Chief Human Resources Officer
- President, University of Melbourne Student Union (UMSU)
- President, Graduate Student Association (GSA).

Composed of university leaders, the Committee has overseen various university initiatives and driven progress on SASH-related issues involving both staff and students. During Committee meetings in 2022 UMSU and GSA student representatives advocated for reform of student complaints processes and clearer communication of student support and complaint mechanisms, among other matters.

In late 2022, the Committee commenced development of a revised workplan for 2023–24, building on the previous Respect Action Plan and articulating the short, medium and long-term goals of our Respect work.



The Respect Reference Group is a newly-formed consultative forum for faculties, services, a diverse group of student representatives, and colleges (university-owned) to provide advice and feedback on the University's approach to eliminating sexual misconduct. It also comprises experts on sexual misconduct drawn from both our academic and professional staff. The Reference Group meetings enable emerging sexual misconduct-related issues, ideas and proposals to be presented by members and options for resolution and implementation to be refined and tested, particularly with the active participation of students. The first Reference Group meeting held in November 2022 involved 27 participants and provided feedback on the 'Diary Note' function of the Speak Safely portal, the sexual misconduct complaints processes for staff, and student communications.

## New appointments

In April 2022, the University established the role of Deputy Vice-Chancellor (People and Community) and appointed Professor Pip Nicholson, former Dean of the Melbourne Law School, to the position. Working together with teams across the University, the role has furthered the work commenced in 2021 to build a safe, respectful and inclusive culture for students and staff.

In 2022, the ongoing role of Director of Workplace Investigations was created to streamline the process for sexual misconduct matters involving staff. Jessica Kerr was appointed, bringing experience as an employment lawyer, a qualified mediator and conflict coach. Jessica works with victim-survivors to ensure that they understand the complaints-handling process.

An Associate Director, Respect Initiatives role was established within the Office of the Provost. Amanda Benson commenced in this position in September, bringing a background in child protection and the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment in the international aid and health sectors. This position strategically aligns the Respect initiatives across the University, identifies opportunities to strengthen our prevention and response efforts and potential new initiatives, and facilitates communication and decision-making between stakeholders.

New roles were also created within the Safer Community Program (see below).

## Building capacity in the Safer Community Program

The Safer Community Program provides services to students and staff who have experienced or have been impacted by sexual misconduct and other forms of inappropriate or threatening behaviour. Over the last year, the staff of the Safer Community Program observed a growing awareness and understanding of sexual misconduct within the university community.

In 2022, a key focus for the Safer Community Program was building its capacity to provide specialist support and advice. Four additional roles were added to the team. These included one senior advisor for Gender Affirmation, two advisors to triage and provide generalist support to students and staff. A project officer develops internal resources for the team.

In addition to provision of support and advice to students and staff, the Safer Community Program has worked across the University to improve responses to disclosures of sexual misconduct, including:

- Development of practice guidelines to articulate its trauma-informed approach and meet best practice standards within the team
- Collaboration with UMSU Sexual Harm officers improve and consolidate referrals to and communication
- Development of Gender Affirmation Guidelines and strengthening of capacity to provide support to transgender and gender diverse students and staff
- Collaboration with University Security to redevelop their after-hours wellbeing procedures to include a timely response to students who advise of sexual misconduct.

These initiatives are designed to improve the effectiveness of the University's response to those who have experienced sexual misconduct. Improved evidence-based practice and enhanced referral pathways form a key part of their ambition.

## Continuous improvement of policies and processes

All policies and processes regarding the prevention and response to sexual misconduct are reviewed regularly. The University is also an active contributor within Universities Australia and the Go8 fora.

When introduced in 2021, the SMPR Policy formally recognised victim-survivors' right to speak about what they have experienced and witnessed. The University's policy position was made more explicit with amendments approved in late 2022. These changes also reflect the draft guidelines written by both Universities Australia and the Go8, as well as recent legislative changes.

The key changes to the SMPR Policy were:

- Clarify the definition of 'University matters' consistent with other policies and explicitly include University-owned colleges and residential halls and its controlled entities
- Recognise more context for the occurrence of sexual misconduct
- Explain that information is kept confidential during complaints-handling, to support procedural fairness, natural justice and the rights of all persons involved
- Include additional, detailed information about 'Transparency, Limited Confidentiality and Use of Information' to make explicit that the University supports victim-survivors to speak about their experience
- Online contexts and predatory and grooming conduct are now explicitly covered by the policy
- Update the definition of 'consent' to align with recent amendments to the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic).

In addition, several improvements to the process for managing student complaints have been implemented in response to student feedback and case studies. These include the development of guidelines to determine when a complaint should be referred to an independent investigator and increased regular communication with victim-survivors prior to, during, and at the conclusion of the process. Additional processes have also been developed to handle anonymous allegations about student conduct.

## HR changes and governance

The consolidation of Human Resources, together with the SMPR Policy, has improved consistency in the University's handling of sexual misconduct complaints against staff. The Chief Human Resources Officer and the Director of Workplace Relations treat preliminary assessments and complaints consistently via central oversight, in line with the SMPR Policy. Once a misconduct investigation is complete, Workplace Relations makes final recommendations to the Provost, the Chief Operating Officer, or the Vice-President Strategy and Culture for their review and decision.

The Director of Workplace Investigations is the key victim-survivor contact throughout the process, reflecting established trauma-centric practice. Complainants have input into who will be appointed as the external investigator, taking into account their preferences for gender, race, or other relevant factors. As mentioned above, complainants are also consulted about communications regarding the departure of the respondent, as relevant. In addition, senior members of the HR community meet monthly to review the approach to case management and ensure that there is a focus on continuous improvement.

A video has been created to raise awareness among staff and students about the complaints handling process and those who work within it. Web content outlining procedures has been improved and there is regular information-sharing with faculties and divisions.

# Priorities for 2023

## Respect Action Plan

In recent years, the University has focused its efforts on taking urgent action to better address complaints, provide training for staff and develop necessary sexual misconduct policy. There is now a need to locate these actions within a longer-term context that identifies the key drivers of sexual misconduct, and our goals and objectives to address them.

The revised Respect at Melbourne workplan for 2023-24 will provide a framework against which to monitor the progress of the University's prevention and response work, and its longer-term impact. The University's Respect work will be organised according to primary prevention, early intervention, and response and recovery approaches, with an effort to find a balance between these domains. The interdependence of gender inequality and intersectionality will be more explicitly considered within this program of work and linked to the University's broader efforts to build diversity and strengthen inclusion.

There will also be an increased emphasis on collecting high quality data to support our monitoring and evaluation efforts, providing the Respect Committee with a clear understanding of the prevalence of sexual misconduct, numbers of complaints, the support provided and the effectiveness of prevention and complaints processes.

The Respect Committee will oversee this monitoring and evaluation work, enabling ongoing adaptation of the University's prevention and response approaches.

## Primary prevention and Respect Education for students

Primary prevention has been identified as a priority in proactively eradicating sexual misconduct. While increasing knowledge or awareness of sexual misconduct is an important component of primary prevention, it is not sufficient. Primary prevention must also change behaviour.

In 2023-24, the University's primary prevention approach will have a strong focus on students, moving to embed comprehensively shifting perceptions, attitudes and ultimately behaviour in relation to sexual misconduct. We will develop a program of Respect Education for students, specific to the University of Melbourne context and with similar scope and quality as the training provided to staff. The program, to be co-designed with students in early 2023, will be tailored for different cohorts of students, including undergraduate, postgraduate coursework, postgraduate research, and student leaders. It will also consider different settings, including University campuses, events, placements and residences. The course will be piloted and tested with students by the end of 2023, and officially launched in the first semester of 2024.

In the interim, the University continues to make the Consent Matters online training available to students, focusing on sexual consent, communication and relationships. The three-part Module will be mandatory for all enrolling undergraduate and postgraduate coursework students from Semester 1 in 2023, with students unable to view their end of semester academic results until the training has been completed. Those who have previously completed the training will be exempt.

## Improved support for students

A key focus for responding to sexual misconduct in 2023 will be to improve support and complaints processes for students and provide increased access to support. The improvements will reflect the findings of a review of processes underpinning sexual misconduct matters. Best practice in handling sexual misconduct matters involving students will be promoted within faculties, for example through communities of practice. Leaders responsible for making disciplinary determinations in student sexual misconduct matters will receive specialist training.

The public Respect at Melbourne website is being redesigned in consultation with students, to provide easier access to information for students seeking urgent assistance, those seeking to make a complaint, or wanting to know about the support services available to them. An information guide and a map-style resource are also being developed to set out sexual misconduct complaints processes for students. The website and resources will both be launched in early 2023. The Students and Scholarly Services team will monitor the general number of visits to the web pages and seek feedback on their accessibility and usefulness. It is hoped that students will feel more comfortable in seeking support or making a complaint through these developments.

Prevention and response work extends across the whole University community, including in affiliated organisations, such as colleges. In 2023, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (People and Community) and the Associate Director, Respect Initiatives, will engage with University-affiliated colleges, identifying how we can further our work together to ensure the fluency between the University's SMPR Policy and relevant college policies.

Within the Safer Community Program, 2023 will see the appointment of additional senior advising staff, enabling the University to further improve specialist support to students and staff impacted by sexual misconduct. The Safer Community Program will continue to build capacity and raise awareness for students on bystander intervention, responding to disclosures of sexual misconduct and understanding consent. Safer Community Program services will be promoted through student events and activities, such as Orientation Week, and existing relationships with student organisations will be strengthened. In 2023, the Safer Community Program will roll out a new case management system, Resolve, which will centrally and confidentially record all sexual misconduct disclosures to support service delivery and record data relating to sexual misconduct.

## Respect Education for University leaders and all employees

In 2023, delivery of workshops to the University's approximately 5000 fixed-term and continuing staff members will be a priority, as well as delivery of online and face-to-face training modules to all casual, contracted and honorary staff.

Development and implementation of Phase 3 'Embed and Sustain' behaviour change programs will be a focus. These may include, for example, the series of Advanced Skills workshops for the University's most senior leaders and professors, and new Communities of Practice implemented within faculties.

A further priority for 2023 is deepening understanding of the ongoing outcomes and longer-term impacts of Respect Education. The University will continue to collect and review data against its evaluation framework to understand how the course contributes to behaviour change. This analysis will inform iterative adjustments to the program to continuously improve it over time.





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