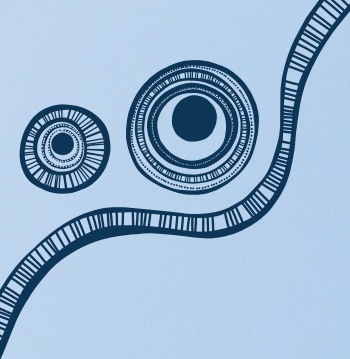




SEXUAL HARM PREVENTION AND RESPONSE ACTION PLAN

PROGRESS IN 2021–2024

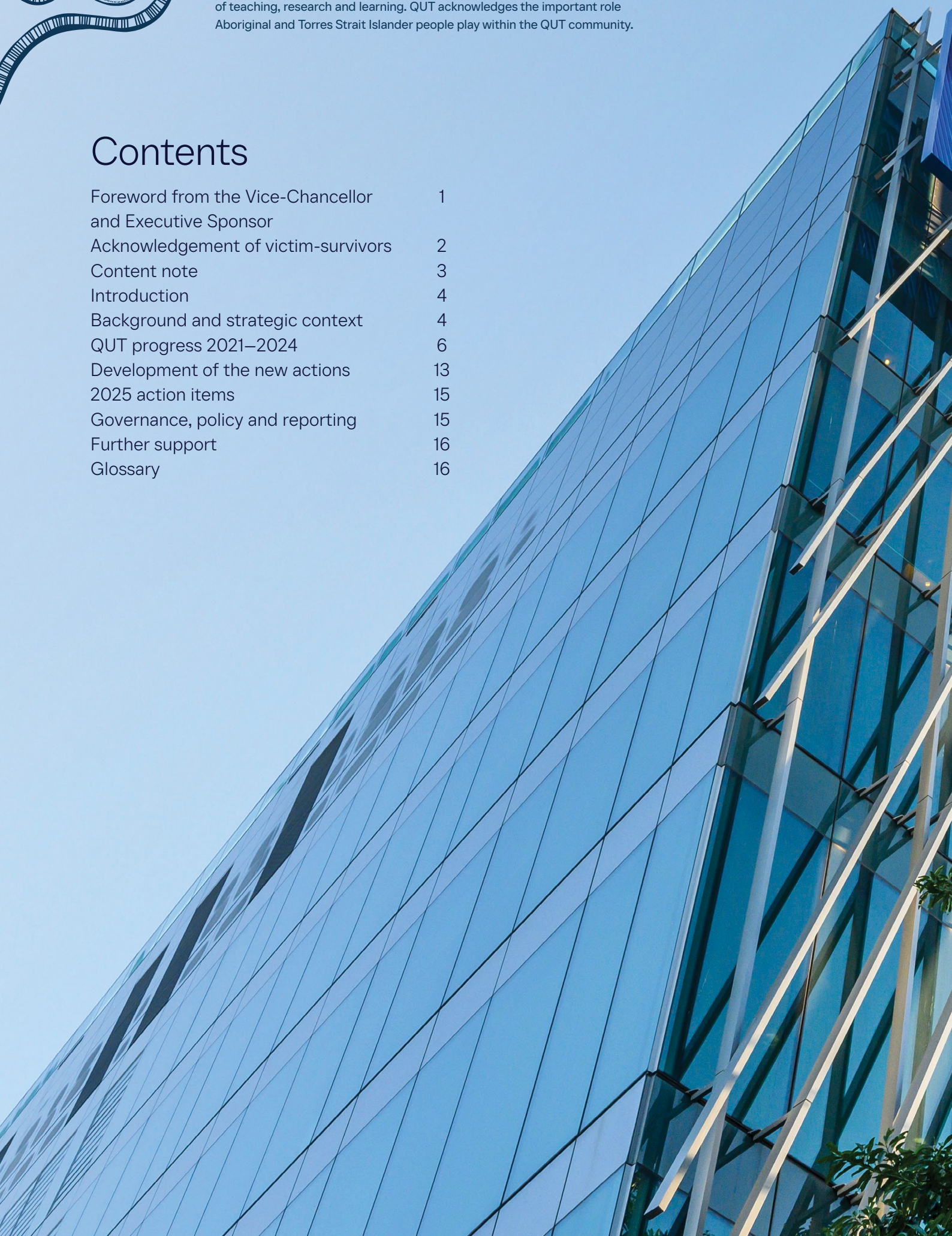
ACTIONS FOR 2025



QUT acknowledges the Turrbal and Yugara, as the First Nations owners of the lands where QUT now stands. We pay respect to their Elders, lores, customs and creation spirits. We recognise that these lands have always been places of teaching, research and learning. QUT acknowledges the important role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people play within the QUT community.

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Foreword from the Vice-Chancellor and the Executive Sponsor

As an institution, QUT is deeply concerned about and condemns the prevalence of all forms of sexual harm in Australian society. As a signatory to the 2024 **Universities Australia (UA) Charter Against Sexual Harm**, QUT acknowledges the significant role that universities will continue to perform in:

- creating and maintaining safe environments which set an example for society;
- researching; and
- sharing effective practice in prevention and support services for staff and students.

As such, we are proud to launch the *QUT Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Action Plan*. As you will see in this action plan, many opportunities exist in this challenging space, focusing on prevention, response, recovery and governance-related areas. The work is complex. It must be responsive to legislation and regulatory frameworks as well as being flexible enough to respond to the needs of our community and evolving knowledge and practices.

Our sincere thanks to the many people who have contributed their time, expertise and in some cases personal experience to help this action plan come together. We are extremely proud of the dedication and commitment of our research, teaching and professional staff and students who helped deliver this essential work.



Professor Margaret Sheil AO
Vice-Chancellor and President



Leanne Harvey
Vice President (Administration),
University Registrar and Executive
Sponsor of the QUT Sexual Harm
Operational Working Group





Acknowledgement of victim-survivors

QUT recognises the experiences of all victim-survivors of sexual harm, including those within our community. We are dedicated to supporting victim-survivors and are actively working towards eliminating all forms of sexual harm within our university.

We endeavour to centre the voices of victim-survivors in the development of this action plan and other relevant policies.

Support

Support is always available.

QUT students can contact the Respect and Safety Partners (respectandsafety@qut.edu.au) for specialist support, to disclose an incident or make a complaint of sexual harm. Counselling and other wellbeing support is also available from QUT Student Services on 07 3138 2019. Further information is available on the [QUT HiQ page](#) (student only access).

QUT staff can find further information on the [Digital Workplace](#) (staff only access) as well as counselling services through the Employee Assistance Program provided externally by Assure Programs on 1800 808 374.

Counselling and support are also provided outside the university through 1800 RESPECT or DV Connect on 1800 811 811.

Content note and terminology

This action plan contains information relating to sexual harm encompassing sexual assault, sexual harassment and domestic and family violence.

While this action plan does not detail information of specific cases, it does include general information relating to sexual harm

and domestic and family violence experienced by QUT students.

Across the external references in this action plan, the terminology, definitions and scope of behaviours varies and extends beyond that of sexual harassment and sexual assault.

A glossary is included at the end to explain terms used.

QUT has opted to use the broad term 'sexual harm' in the action plan. However, we recognise that sexual violence and gender-based violence may be the terms used in the future.

In addition to the glossary, Figure 1 (below) has been developed by Social Worker and QUT Respect and Safety Partner, Bronwen Gray, to highlight the scope of the behaviours included in the action plan and the complexities regarding the language used. We acknowledge that this diagram may generate discussion and that views may differ. We intend to validate the diagram through further consultation and research however, it is included to provide understanding of the context in which the action plan operates.

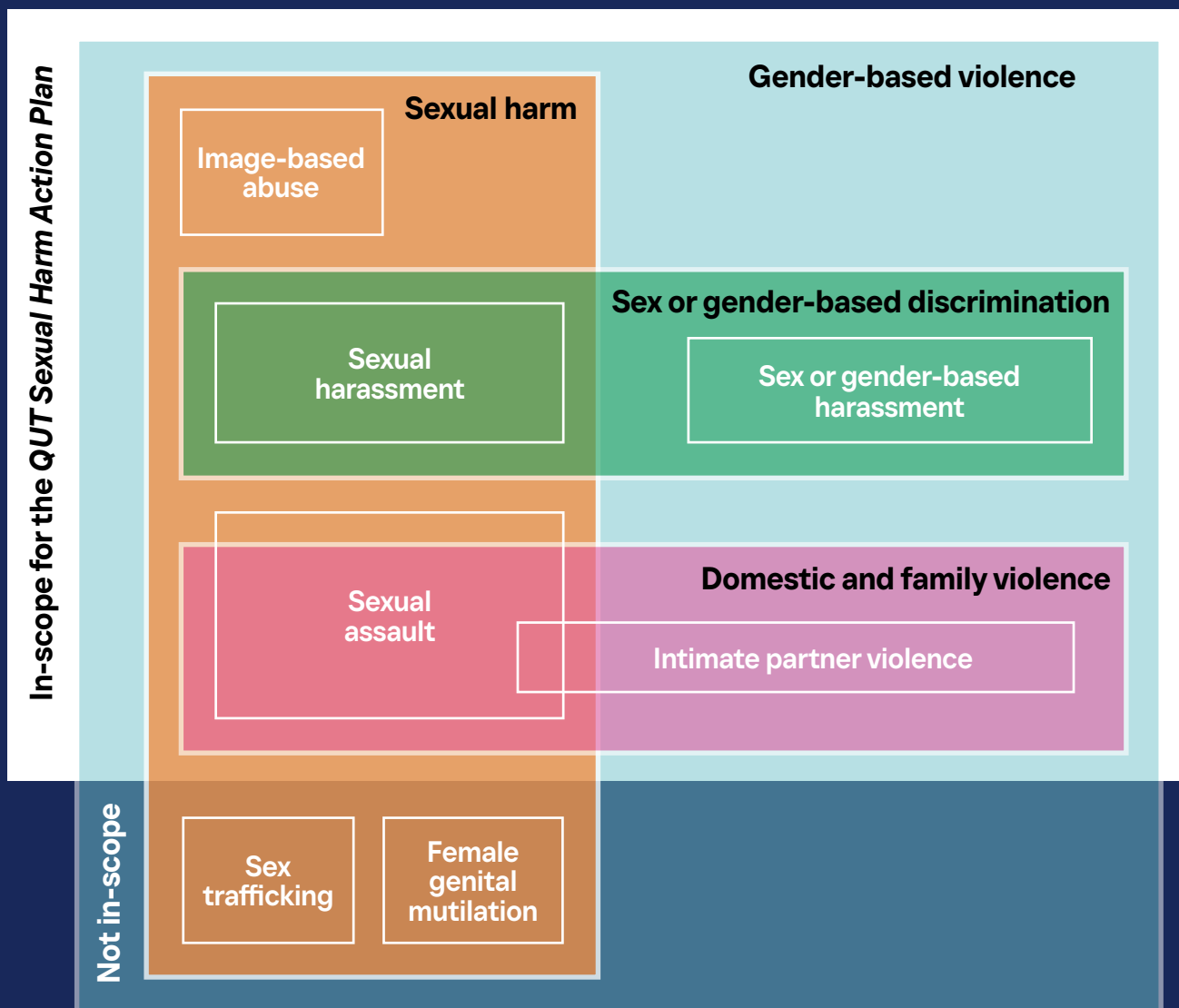


Figure 1: Forms of sexual harm and gender-based violence

Introduction

Over the last 12 months, the sector has reached a threshold of approximately sixteen regulatory standards, guides and/or legislative requirements relating to sexual harm—with more anticipated in the future.

In response, the *QUT Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Action Plan* aims to provide clarity and context for the university's immediate priorities and lay the foundation for future work as further requirements emerge.

This action plan begins by providing the background and strategic context within which this work is taking place. It is followed by a report on the progress achieved to date—this includes a summary of the key outcomes of the *QUT Student Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Action Plan 2021–2023* as well as the activities undertaken and student case matters reported in 2024.

Looking ahead to 2025, it outlines the guiding principles on which current actions are based, the consultation completed for our immediate priorities and the actions planned for 2025.

In addition, it provides an explanation of the QUT governance, policy and reporting requirements as well as further information and a glossary.

By the end of 2025, the next suite of actions will be drafted to continue building on the work undertaken—and both plan for and respond more specifically to the requirements released by the Australian Government.

Background and strategic context

For nearly a decade, Australian universities have been working to address what we currently refer to as sexual harm in our communities.

The Universities Australia (UA) world-first, sector-wide program *Respect. Now. Always.* launched in February 2016, as well as the landmark *Change the Course* report by the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) in 2017 catalysed widespread institutional reforms to prevent sexual violence and improve how universities respond to and support those who have been impacted.

A National Student Safety Survey (NSSS) by UA also provided insight into the prevalence and nature of sexual assault and sexual harassment. A second NSSS survey is planned to launch in Semester 2, 2025.

The results of the 2021 NSSS gathered responses from nearly 44,000 students across 38 universities in September–October 2021. QUT invited 10,000 students to participate in the NSSS and 938 QUT students responded.

In addition to the prevalence data in Table 1, findings from the 2021 NSSS identified:

- Across all universities there were higher risks for specific groups including female students, gender diverse students, students with disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, those living in university accommodation and younger students. Note: while not explicitly reported in the

2021 NSSS findings, QUT has also identified international students and Higher Degree Research students as being at greater risk.

- The most impactful incidents of sexual harassment for QUT students predominantly occurred in general campus areas (46.4%), followed by university lecture theatres and computer labs (20.9%) and the university library (18.0%). Notably, 58.4% of students knew some or all the perpetrators involved in these incidents.
- Regarding reporting and support seeking, 60.7% of QUT respondents knew little to nothing about where to make a complaint about sexual harassment and 54.9% were

Table 1: 2021 National Student Safety Survey key results

	All universities	QUT
Students experienced sexual harassment since starting university	16.1% (7,084)	20.4% (191)
Students experienced sexual harassment in the preceding 12 months	8.1% (3,564)	11.8% (110)
Students experienced sexual assault since starting university	4.5% (1,980)	4.3% (40)
Students experienced sexual assault in the preceding 12 months	1.1% (484)	0.9% (8)



unaware of where to seek support or assistance. 2.8% of students who were sexually harassed made a formal complaint and 12.7% sought support or assistance from the university.

In response to the NSSS findings and noting the higher prevalence of sexual harassment at QUT—as well as drawing on the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Good Practice Note—QUT developed a targeted *Student Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Action Plan (2021–2023)* which outlined strategies, priorities and initiatives for implementation across the university.

The university also established the QUT Sexual Harm Operational Working Group (SHOWG), involving expert academic staff, key leaders and specialists from Equity, Health Safety and Environment (HSE), Human Resources (HR), Graduate Research, QUT Security and the Office of the University Registrar to monitor implementation of the 2021–2023 action plan and lead QUT efforts to address sexual harm.

This includes ensuring actions align with best practices and comply with policies and legislation, identifying missing actions or necessary changes and undertaking a review of relevant QUT policies and procedures.

Since 2023, there has been significant and numerous governance requirements introduced to the sector, including approximately 16 standards, guides and/or legislative requirements relating to sexual harm or gender-based violence of relevance. Collectively, these references detail evidence-based best practices and legislative requirements which have informed actions QUT delivered in 2024 and the development of priorities and actions for 2025. This will continue to shape the university's approach to sexual harm prevention and response in the future.

In this context, QUT deferred the release of an updated action plan from 2024 to 2025 to ensure alignment with emerging national frameworks. This decision was particularly influenced by two key federal initiatives:

- Release of the Australian Government's *National Action Plan Addressing Gender-based Violence in Higher Education* in early 2024.
- Proposed *National Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence*.

Legislation for the national code was introduced to parliament in February 2025 with a proposed implementation date of 1 January 2026, despite the government intending it to be in place from 1 January 2025. At the time of writing this action plan, there is ongoing uncertainty surrounding the final form and requirements of the national code with the federal government election pending. Nevertheless, QUT supports the development and implementation of the national code and acknowledges the significant role that higher education providers will continue to perform in addressing this issue both on campus and across the broader community.

QUT progress 2021–2024

QUT Student Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Action Plan 2021–2023

The 2021–2023 action plan identified 25 specific actions across four priority areas. The timeline for completion of the items was mostly *immediate and ongoing*. Key achievements in each of the priority areas are listed below.

Awareness and prevention

- Developed several new print and digital materials including *Responding to Disclosures Protocol*, sexual harassment and sexual assault brochure and a sexual harm postcard.
- Enhanced search functionality and content online to improve student access to information on support, sexual harm and how to book an appointment.
- Delivered Respect Week events for students in 2022 and 2023 in collaboration with the QUT Guild.
- Introduced sexual harm content and support information in the Student Notebook for 2023 (and 2024) sent to commencing domestic and international students.

Training and education

- More than 12,300 students completed the *Respect and Safety at QUT and Consent Matters* eLearning modules between January 2021 and December 2023.
- Commenced development of the *QUT Responding to Disclosures* eLearning module.
- Introduction and training for QUT staff and students on Griffith University's *MATE Bystander Program* (Motivating Action Through Empowerment), aimed at empowering staff and students to address harmful or abusive behaviour involving their peers and creating a culture that nurtures gender equality and respect.

Support and wellbeing

- Improved referral pathways between QUT service and support areas.
- Online complaint and disclosure forms developed—267 students or staff have utilised this since 2021.
- Developed a one-page summary of available support services for easy reference and distribution.

Governance, monitoring and reporting

- Regular meetings of the QUT Sexual Harm Operational Working Group (SHOWG) and establishment of SHOWG Governance Oversight Group.
- Regular reporting to the Registrar's office for further consideration and reporting to the Vice-Chancellor.
- QUT representation at two additional groups with members from industry and the sector respectively, including Stopping Gendered Violence Advisory Group and Queensland Tertiary Safer Communities Network.
- Psychosocial Hazard Data Reference Group (PHDRG) established to review HSE, HR and Equity data to identify themes and trends related to psychosocial hazards (including sexual harm disclosures and complaints) at QUT. The PHDRG also evaluates and prioritises these hazards, and recommends actions to mitigate risks, either through preventative measures or immediate responses.
- Independent body Diversity Australia conducted a review and provided recommendations in early 2023 relating to our sexual harm policy and processes for response management and trauma-informed practices. Several recommendations have been implemented with work underway on others.
- A proposal for the development and implementation of a dedicated and sophisticated case management system (Advocate by Simplicity) was submitted to the Digital Transformation Advisory Group in 2024. This has since been approved and the go-live date for this system for Equity and HSE is March 2025.



QUT actions and student matters in 2024

In order to plan and deliver programs, projects and initiatives for 2024 and 2025, the SHOWG used the four domains of the health promotion framework (Figure 2) referenced in the Universities Australia *Primary Prevention of Sexual Harm in the University Sector: Good Practice Guide*. A fifth domain of governance and reporting was also added.



Figure 2: Universities Australia Sexual Harm Health Promotion Framework

Primary Prevention

Student advisory group

A student advisory group was established to increase the student voice in decision-making with diverse student representation selected through an open call and review process. The group provided vital feedback on matters such as awareness raising campaigns and pre-arrival communication for international students in 2024.

MATE Bystander Program

Griffith University's *MATE Bystander Program* continued to be delivered with five sessions run with a total of 71 participants, the majority of whom were staff. A detailed evaluation and broader consultation were undertaken in 2024 to review the program for impact, relevance and sustainability at QUT. Consequently, QUT will develop and implement a bespoke program in 2025.

Respect and safety

In 2024, Respect Week focused on digital and online safety and evaluation reports. A communications campaign and market day event was also delivered. Data showed an increase in engagement from the 2023 event, with particularly strong engagement via the messaging platform.

A student survey completed by 70 attendees of Respect Week in 2024 identified:

- 57% of respondents were aware that we have specific support services for students and staff who have experienced sexual harassment and assault.
- 79% would like respectful relationships education incorporated into the QUT curriculum (for undergraduate students).
- As a result of participating in Respect Week, approximately 79% felt a stronger sense of belonging to QUT and of being supported.
- The top three training options that participants sought were *Active bystander*, *How to have respectful relationships*, and *How to respond and support someone who has experienced sexual harassment or sexual assault*.

- Respondents would particularly like sex-positive events focusing on health and respectful relationships and were less interested in contributing to the action plan (relative to 2022).

An estimated 5,050 students completed the *Respect and Safety at QUT* eLearning module in 2024.

Five bespoke *Higher Degree Research (HDR) Respectful Conduct workshops* were delivered in collaboration between the Faculty of Science and Equity. The evaluation of the three hour in-person sessions revealed significant improvements in participants' confidence to recognise inappropriate behaviours and willingness to seek help early.

The *Faculty of Science action plan assessment and review* was conducted in the latter half of 2024 and involved a comprehensive evaluation effort to strengthen prevention and response mechanisms within the faculty's unique academic environment. This assessment, jointly conducted by HSE, Equity and HR, combined quantitative analysis of reported incidents from 2022–2024 with qualitative insights gathered through targeted focus groups comprising both staff and students. Having completed data collection and analysis in 2024, the project team will present preliminary findings and recommendations to faculty leadership in March 2025.

Early Intervention

The *Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) training program*, developed by the Health, Safety and Environment and Equity teams, equips frontline staff at QUT with skills to support community members affected by DFV. Attended by around 70 staff in 2024, the sessions focus on recognising DFV indicators, responding to disclosures and connecting individuals to support services. Post-training evaluations showed improved confidence and knowledge among participants, supporting the university's commitment to safer learning and working environments.

Response

- Equity developed a **student service evaluation survey** for those supported by Respect and Safety Partners (RSPs), but response rates were low. In 2025, the focus will be on implementing processes for immediate post-case closure evaluations to improve response rates and feedback validity.
- The **online disclosure and complaints forms** used by students and staff to report sexual harm matters were reviewed and updated to reduce barriers to reporting matters and to provide users with the information needed to make informed decisions about their personal information. In 2024, 64 online forms were submitted for disclosures of sexual harassment and sexual assault, which was an increase of approximately 11% from 2023.
- Equity delivered several **bespoke training programs** in 2024 to support specific needs and outcomes for priority teams/areas of the university. This includes several student-facing teams in Student Services and the Wellbeing/People Service Portfolio along with student sessions delivered within specific units of study.
- A new QUT **Responding to Disclosures module** has been developed to provide clear and concise information to QUT staff who may receive a disclosure relating to sexual harm from a student and was launched in March 2025.
- **Trauma Informed Investigations training** was delivered by Avyon Consulting and attended by 30 staff from various organisational areas (including Security, Student Ombudsman, Registrar's Office, HR, HSE and Equity).
- The Blue Knot **Managing Wellbeing and Recognising Vicarious Trauma workshop** was delivered twice in 2024 to 60 QUT staff, targeting roles mostly in the Administrative Division that respond to and support students and staff in difficult circumstances. The training explored the nature, dynamics and risks of vicarious trauma, aiming to support staff to stay healthy and safe in their work by providing the knowledge, skills and tools to better recognise the early signs of various stress outcomes.
- One of Equity's **Respect and Safety Partners joined the QUT Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Strategy Group** to improve response management and provide advice relating to sexual harm.

Governance and reporting

Both the HR and Equity teams have **improved data collection and reporting** throughout 2024, leading to improvements and efficiencies with reporting both internally and externally. These data sets provide for a deeper understanding of trends and provide an evidence base for the development of future targeted prevention programs, particularly for at risk cohorts.

- In 2024, the SHOWG conducted its regular meetings, focusing on exploring current challenges, sharing key information and research. In addition, the SHOWG:
 - reviewed the 2021–2023 QUT SSASH action plan
 - commenced drafting 2025 actions
 - oversaw the actioning of items scheduled for 2024
 - contributed significantly to the University's responses to the draft national action plan, the National Code Issues Paper and UA reporting requirements
 - reviewed the research project evaluation results on the Respect and Safety module.
- Draft **organisational risk assessments** for sexual harm and sex or gender-based harassment (student and staff) were developed. These assessments will be finalised after a period of consultation in the first quarter of 2025.
- The **2024 Sexual Harm Annual Report** was provided to the QUT Executive Leadership Team and the Risk and Audit Committee in March and April 2025 respectively.



Student matters in 2024

Provided below is an overview of student sexual harm and domestic and family violence (DFV) enquiries and cases managed by Equity’s Respect and Safety Partners (RSPs) in 2024.

The RSPs collaborate with other areas of the university to:

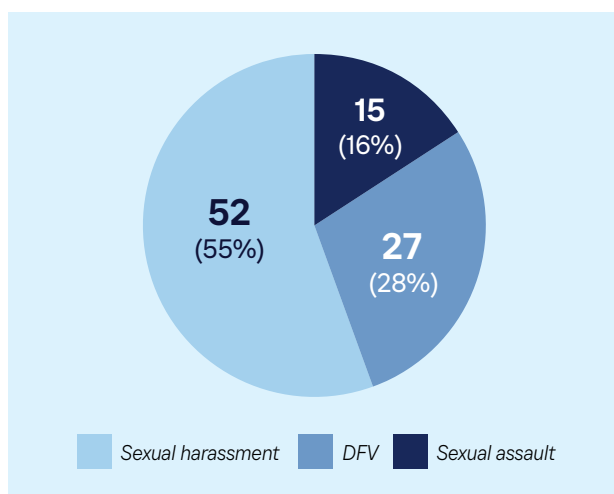
- promote respectful, safe relationships and prevent discrimination and sexual harm (including sexual harassment and sexual assault) through training, programs and events
- provide support to students who have experienced discrimination, sexual harm, and DFV including safety planning, academic adjustments and linking students to appropriate internal and external supports
- respond to disclosures in a trauma informed, supportive and person-centred way
- support parties through the complaint resolution process, addressing and resolving unacceptable behaviour in collaboration with the respective area of the university and other specialist teams as relevant (for example, QUT Security, Student Counselling, Health and Wellbeing, and HR People and Workplace Relations).

In 2024, sexual harm and DFV matters represented 49% of all enquiries and cases managed by the RSPs. An increase of approximately 12% from 2023 (see Table 2) may be attributed to the increased awareness of avenues for reporting and support seeking. Sexual harassment and DFV were the two most common types of experiences reported to RSPs (refer to Figure 3 for 2024 prevalence).

Table 2. Student sexual harm and DFV matters

Matters	2023	2024
Student sexual harm and DFV enquiries and cases	84	94

Figure 3. 2024 student sexual harm and DFV matters



Important notes for data interpretation

- Enquiries include requests for general information and guidance along with specialist advice, guidance and recommendations.
- Cases include disclosures where support and assistance was provided by RSPs as well as reports where either of the two stage complaint resolution processes were followed, as per the *Resolution Procedures for Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault and Discrimination Related Complaints*.
- Only student sexual harm and domestic and family violence matters managed by Equity from 1 January to 31 December 2024 are reported. Data relating to other experiences and matter types also supported by RSPs e.g. discrimination, are not included.
- Reporting for 2024 does not differentiate between incident(s) which occurred in relation to university activities and incidents which occurred in the general community.
- Any staff-only matters are not reported.
- Whilst Power BI Reporting was introduced from 1 July 2024 resulting in a substantial improvement in reporting capabilities, record keeping was undertaken using basic software capabilities and therefore, caution is required when reviewing results.
- Further improvements to reporting will occur in 2025 with the launch of a new case management system for RSPs.

Results from matters arising from 1 July and 31 December 2024:

- 39% of all sexual harm and DFV matters were classified as cases, with most matters involving support to the complainant, whilst in only 71% of matters resolution processes were undertaken (refer Figure 4).
- The average number of days for cases remaining open were 30 days and 36.5 days for support-only matters and stage 1 resolution processes respectively.
- Equity and safety plans were provided in 68% and 46% of these matters respectively. While for 46% of matters, risk assessments were conducted.
- The primary referral/contact method is from other professional staff/student support roles (47%), mainly within Student Services. Self-referral is the next most common method (29%) and then referrals from faculty (24%) (refer to Figure 5).

Figure 4. Service provision for student sexual harm and DFV matters

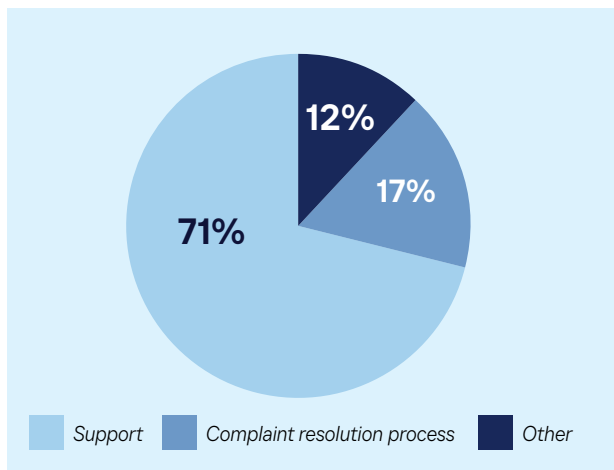
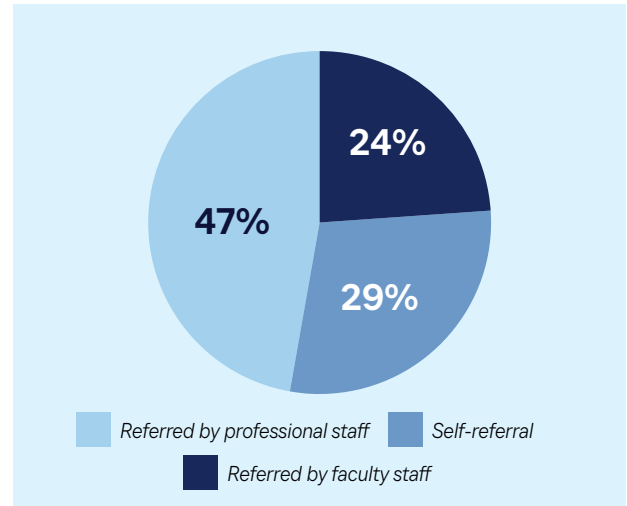


Figure 5. Referral/contact methods for sexual harm and DFV matters



Progress made during 2021–2024 also saw increased clarity emerging about the complexities of preventing and responding to sexual harm in the university context. Gaps and new areas of focus were also identified, including:

- continuing to target prevention and response efforts to the needs of higher risk cohorts
- an increasing focus on domestic and family violence
- an increasing understanding of technology-facilitated abuse
- the need to target prevention and response efforts at the perpetrators of sexual harm, as well as victim-survivors.

These new areas and other emerging themes shape the university’s ongoing efforts in this essential work.



Development of the new actions

QUT has delivered a number of initiatives over several years related to the prevention of and response to sexual harm. This action plan is not only underpinned by such work, but has also been developed with consideration of QUT values and future priorities. This alignment ensures that the initiatives in the action plan connect with our people and reflect our commitment to create a safe, inclusive and supportive environment.

Guiding principles

The guiding principles from the 2021–2023 action plan continue to underpin QUT priorities and actions for 2025 including:

- whole-of-institution leadership and commitment
- respectful and inclusive strategies
- evidence-based practice addressing the root causes of sexual violence
- trauma-informed support, care, and complaint management
- fairness, transparency, and privacy are maintained.

These principles are also consistent with those included in the federal government's *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032*.

This action plan also demonstrates support for the principles included in the national action plan, including our commitment to:

- lead and collaborate on long-term social and cultural change to prevent gender-based violence
- implement change in our own community and support positive change in the wider community, informed by a shared understanding of the drivers of gender-based violence, good practice and clearly defined standards
- co-design work to address gender-based violence with students, staff, academic subject matter experts, specialist practitioners, service providers, local communities and victim-survivors
- being accountable for delivering change.

Consultation and process

Led by the co-chairs, this action plan has been developed by the SHOWG in consultation with key stakeholders and will be delivered in partnership with several university leaders, teams and organisational areas.

Development of the plan has also involved an iterative process of drafting, refining and cross checking with key documents, best practice guidelines and new legislation, along with considering feedback and the status of initiatives in the 2021–2023 action plan.

Stakeholders

- QUT students including the representatives on the SHOWG, a sampling of students who had accessed support from the RSPs as well as the Sexual Harm Student Advisory Group.
- Chairs and members of several equity-related committees, including the University Health, Safety and Environment Committee, University Equity Committee, Faculty and Division Equity Committees, LGBTIQ+ Working Party, Disability and Inclusion Action Plan Reference Group and Gender Equity Diversity and Inclusion in Research and STEMM Committee.
- Staff and student unions, including the QUT Guild.
- QUT Student Ombudsman.
- Equity department representatives.
- Health, Safety and Environment department representatives.
- Key leaders and teams within the university including Student Success and Teaching Advancement, Office of the University Registrar, Human Resources and Student Services.
- SHOWG Governance Oversight Group comprised of Vice-President People and Chief People Officer, Executive Director, HR and Deputy Chief People Officer and Director, Student Services.
- QUT Executive Leadership Team.

2025 action items

Notes:

- Ongoing or business as usual activities are not included to provide clarity on new work and actions.
- QUT has elected to focus on action items in this document for 2025, to allow for the finalisation of the *National Gender-Based Violence Code* which will inform action items for 2026 and subsequent years.

1. Primary Prevention: *Whole-of-community actions and initiatives that address the primary drivers, underlying social factors or causes of violence in order to stop sexual harm before it starts. Includes social conditions, power structures, norms and practices, as well as the systems which excuse and justify it.*

Item	Key result and outcome	Action
1.1	Prevention programs, initiatives and plans are responsive and tailored to the diverse needs of the QUT community, centring the student voice, safety and wellbeing.	Review and update current prevention training and initiatives to reflect latest research and evaluation findings, scaffolding learning over time.
1.2	Students and staff have a shared knowledge and understanding of positive relationships, the drivers of sexual harm, gender-based violence, respect, safety and consent.	<p>Design and deliver a communications campaign for students in collaboration with the student advisory group to achieve measurable awareness objectives.</p> <p>Integrate information on drivers and types of sexual harm and gender-based violence, as well as supports, into training for student club leaders, pre-commencement and arrival materials for international students and Higher Degree Research (HDR) starter packs.</p> <p>Ensure training, initiatives and communications are delivered using inclusive language.</p>
1.3	Enhanced impact of training to inform and empower students and staff to be an active/effective bystander, to speak up and take action on sexual harm and gender-based violence.	Develop and implement an evaluation process and continuous improvement approach for MATE Bystander training (including pre and post survey follow up).
1.4	University leaders are accountable for a whole of university approach and have the knowledge and skills to lead and develop a culture of respect and safety to prevent sexual harm and gender-based violence.	<p>Develop and deliver a mandatory program for key university leaders (Executive Leadership Team, Faculty Leadership Teams and relevant university committees), run every 2 years, which fosters a culture of respect and safety.</p> <p>Review and update work frameworks (CP+) documentation to reference, review and set expectations for zero tolerance for sexual harm and gender-based violence.</p> <p>Develop a measure of staff perception for the degree of accountability of university leaders in modelling safe and respectful conduct as well as preventing and responding to sexual harm and gender-based violence.</p>
1.5	Students report an improved sense of safety.	<p>Collect and analyse student safety experience data through internal and external surveys, such as the Student Voice Survey, Student Experience Survey.</p> <p>Increase reported levels of awareness of QUT safety supports including night shuttle bus, QUT security escorts and utilisation of SafeZone app</p> <p>Partner with Equity and other relevant stakeholders to design respect and safety communications for specific student groups (e.g. LGBTIQ+ students, Indigenous Australian students, students undertaking placements or field trips). Communication approach to be guided by Internal Communications, with delivery coordinated by the relevant operational areas.</p>
1.6	Prevention plan to manage identified risks from either sexual harassment or sex/gender-based harassment.	Prepare a prevention plan to manage an identified risk to the health or safety of workers, or other persons, from either of the following at work: (a)sexual harassment or (b)sex or gender-based harassment, in line with the <i>Work Health and Safety (Sexual Harassment) Amendment Regulation 2024</i> .

2. Early Intervention / Secondary Prevention: *Actions which aim to target, intervene and change the course for those individuals (at a cohort level) who are at greater risk of using or experiencing violence.*

Item	Key result and outcome	Action
2.1	A plan to address drivers of perpetration within the QUT community.	Map what is being done within other universities/organisations to address the drivers of perpetration and develop an implementation plan for relevant actions for the QUT community.
2.2	Improved safety within digital environments, including QUT affiliated social media sites.	<p>Identify the hazards and review the controls and supports in place, determining if additional controls/support mechanisms are required.</p> <p>Develop training and resources for unit coordinators and educators in the use of digital technology and safety for students.</p>

3. Response: *Actions which support the wellbeing and safety of victims/survivors and resolve sexual harm complaints, with the focus being on preventing further harm.*

Item	Key result and outcome	Action
3.1	Student leaders and key staff positions have greater awareness and clarity on the university's response and reporting options for sexual harm and gender-based violence matters.	Develop a protocol which defines response stages, clarifies roles and responsibilities for key stakeholders, outlines communication approaches including privacy and limits to confidentiality, investigation and other process approaches.
		Deliver information sessions on new protocol to the Guild Student Representative Council, key student support positions and university staff.
		Develop and implement a communication strategy protocol, including engagement with faculty, division and university health safety environment committees.
3.2	Our response and resolution processes minimises trauma on those people we support and is measured, with results used to improve services and processes.	Incorporate relevant feedback results into existing reports provided to key university leaders and committees, with demonstrated application of improvements/actions taken to improve services and processes.
3.3	Processes and tools are in place to reduce barriers to disclosure and streamlining support-seeking and resolution processes.	Conduct a high-level analysis of options for making an appointment with a Respect and Safety Partner (e.g. a messaging service).
3.4	An informed, strategic approach is used to determine resourcing needs and skills which best support sexual harm and gender-based violence disclosures, responses and grievance management.	Develop an evidence-based plan to address barriers to disclosure and the training of staff/staff network to receive disclosures.
3.5	Risk screening and safety planning strategies are implemented to provide a safe working and learning environment for people who are experiencing Domestic and Family Violence (DFV).	Develop risk screening and safety planning documentation suitable for use by QUT staff who are supporting students or staff.

4. Recovery: *Actions which provide ongoing support and ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of the victim/survivor and the person using violence.*

Item	Key result and outcome	Action
4.1	Support processes are in place for student responding parties following completion of resolution processes.	Introduce a post-resolution process follow-up with student responding parties, which focuses on providing support.

5. Governance and Reporting: *Actions relating to policy, frameworks, systems and reporting.*

Item	Key result and outcome	Action
5.1	Clear, accurate and consolidated processes exist to review and monitor progress of the action plan.	Distribute completed progress report to relevant committees and stakeholders within quarter one of the subsequent year.
		Consolidate internal reports to include both student and staff data.
5.2	Reporting is efficient, accurate, timely and fit-for-purpose, ensuring consistent implementation and collective performance, compliance and accountability.	Develop and implement systems and processes to allow reporting on incident data, information about the people involved, support provided and outcomes and provide results to key university leaders and committees.
		Publish consolidated sexual harm data (including prevention activities) on the QUT website.
		Identify, record and monitor regulatory and/or voluntary compliance obligations via the university's compliance management system (including designation of responsible officers, where relevant) and facilitating critical incident or material change notifications, or responding to Requests for Information) and/or providing advice on external reporting (e.g. Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), Workplace Gender Equality Agency Australia (WGEA)).
5.3	Inclusive, current, accurate and appropriately-detailed policies provided to the university community.	Undertake a review, consultation and finalisation of policies relating to sexual harm, ensuring alignment with other relevant policies and procedures.
		Provide information on how to access appeals and a review of process to staff and students.
5.4	Sexual harassment prevention plan is reviewed after a report is made.	Ensure relevant policies, procedures and protocols, including terminology and definitions are regularly reviewed and updated in line with the policy review cycle.
		Develop a process to review sexual harassment and sex or gender-based harassment prevention plans as soon as practicable after a report is made, in line with the <i>Work Health and Safety (Sexual Harassment) Amendment Regulation 2024</i> .



Governance, policy and reporting

QUT takes a whole-of-organisation approach to the governance, regulatory and policy context for sexual harm at the university. We have a comprehensive framework encompassing specific **policies and procedures** including student and staff codes of conduct.

Our strategies and actions are also guided by legal, regulatory and sector standards:

- Criminal law relating to sexual assault and associated offences
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*, including the new *Respect@Work* legislative framework
- *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (Cth)*
- Workplace health and safety legislation, codes and regulations (federal and state government)

- *Action Plan Addressing Gender-based Violence in Higher Education* and proposed National Code
- *Sexual Harm Response Guidelines 2023* (Universities Australia)
- *Good Practice Note: Preventing and responding to sexual assault and sexual harassment in the Australian higher education sector 2020* (Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency)
- *Educating for Equality 2021* (UA, Our Watch and the Victorian Government)
- Universities Australia charter on sexual harm.

The QUT Sexual Harm Operational Working Group (SHOWG) is responsible for implementing the action plan, is governed by the QUT Health Safety and Environment Committee (UHSEC) and the QUT Executive Leadership Team and reports to the QUT Risk and Audit Committee. A student advisory group also advises the SHOWG.



Further support

To report a behaviour of concern or to make a disclosure of sexual harm contact QUT Respect and Safety Partners via email respectandsafety@qut.edu.au.

Students can also contact Students Services via phone on 07 3138 2019 to access mental health, wellbeing and counselling support.

If you are a staff member and wish to enquire about the complaints process or to make a complaint against another staff member, after first speaking with your supervisor (if appropriate) contact your [HR Partner](#) or email hrrelations@qut.edu.au. You can also make a complaint via Your Call on 1300 790 228.

You may also raise your concern or complaint via the [Equity Services Respect and Safety Referral Form](#) online.

Information relating to other concerns is available on the [QUT Report a Concern webpage](#).

Student and staff unions are also available to provide advice and assistance.

For support external to QUT contact 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732). This is a 24/7 phone and online counselling service.

Glossary

Term	Definition
Disclosure	<p>Disclosure refers to the provision of information about a person's experience to another person, and for the purposes of this action plan, that other person is a QUT community member. A disclosure allows for the person to seek support, advice and assistance which may or may not include seeking investigation or other action (such as a complaint procedure) by the university.</p> <p>Reference: <i>QUT Manual of Policies and Procedures Glossary</i></p>
Domestic and family violence (DFV)	<p>Domestic and family violence refers to behaviours towards another person with whom the first person is in a relevant relationship, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physically or sexually abusive behaviour • Emotionally or psychologically abusive behaviour • Economically abusive behaviour • Threatening behaviour • Coercive behaviour • Any other behaviour that controls or dominates the second person and causes them to fear for their safety or wellbeing or that of someone else. <p>The behaviours may include personal injury, coercing sexual activity, damaging property, depriving liberty, and unauthorized surveillance. The behaviours can also occur over time and may involve multiple acts that cumulatively constitute abuse. Relevant relationships include intimate personal relationships, family relationships, and informal care relationships.</p> <p>Reference: <i>Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012</i></p>
Gender-based violence	<p>Gender-based violence means any form of physical or non physical violence, harassment, abuse or threats, based on gender, that results in, or is likely to result in, harm, coercion, control, fear or deprivation of liberty or autonomy.</p> <p>Reference: <i>Proposed National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence</i></p>
Image-based abuse	<p>Image-based abuse is defined as the non-consensual creation, distribution, or threat to distribute intimate images or videos of another person.</p> <p>Reference: eSafety Commissioner</p>
Intimate partner violence	<p>Intimate partner violence are behaviours which occur between married couples, de facto couples and individuals who are engaged, including both current and former partners and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical or sexual abuse: this can involve causing physical injury or forcing sexual activity. • Emotional or psychological abuse: examples include belittling or making comments to undermine a person's self-esteem. • Economic abuse: this involves actions like coercing someone to surrender property or income or refusing access to necessary funds. • Threatening, coercive, or controlling behaviour: this can include stalking, surveillance, or other actions that cause fear for safety or wellbeing. <p>Reference: <i>Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012</i></p>
Sexual assault	<p>Any unwanted or forced sexual act or behaviour without consent. It covers a broad range of sexual activity. Sexual assault occurs when an offender:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Without lawful reason indecently assaults a person (e.g. groping, inappropriate touching of a sexual nature) • Procures a person, without their consent, to commit an act of a sexual nature. <p>Reference: <i>QUT Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault Policy</i></p>

Term	Definition
Sexual harassment	<p>For there to be sexual harassment, all these elements need to be present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The conduct is sexual in nature • The conduct is unwelcome • The conduct is done either with the intention of offending, humiliating or intimidating the target or in circumstances where a reasonable person would have anticipated the possibility that the target would be offended, humiliated or intimidated. <p>It includes uninvited physical intimacy such as touching in a sexual way, uninvited sexual propositions and remarks with sexual connotations. It has nothing to do with mutual attraction or consensual behaviour. Sexual harassment can take various forms and may be obvious or subtle, physical or verbal.</p> <p>Reference: Queensland Human Rights Commission</p>
Sexual harm	<p>Any unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature. Sexual harm includes sexual assault, rape, sexual harassment, sex-based harassment and any other unwanted sexual behaviour, whether online or in person. The harm may result in a person feeling uncomfortable, frightened, distressed, intimidated, or harmed either physically or psychologically.</p> <p>Reference: Universities Australia</p>
Sex and gender-based harassment	<p>Sex or gender-based harassment refers to the harassment of a person (the harassed person) on the basis of the harassed person's sex or gender, by another person who:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Engages in unwelcome conduct of a demeaning nature in relation to the harassed person on the basis of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. the harassed person's sex or gender; or ii. a characteristic a person of the harassed person's sex or gender generally has; or iii. a characteristic often imputed to a person of the harassed person's sex or gender; or iv. a sex or gender the harassed person is presumed to have, or to have had at any time, by the person engaging in the conduct; or v. a sex or gender the harassed person has had, even if the harassed person did not have that sex or gender at the time of the conduct; and b) Engages in the conduct: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. with the intention of offending, humiliating or intimidating the harassed person; or ii. in circumstances in which a reasonable person would have anticipated the possibility that the harassed person would be offended, humiliated or intimidated by the conduct. <p>Reference: <i>Industrial Relations Act 2016</i></p>



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