



# RESPECT AND SEXUAL HARM AT DEAKIN

2021 - 2024 PLAN



# Acknowledgement

## **Acknowledgement**

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of our lands and waterways.

We pay respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Deakin campuses are built on the traditional lands of the Wadawurrung people of the Geelong region, the Wurundjeri and Boon Wurrung people of the greater Melbourne region, and the Gunditjmara people of Western Victoria.

We welcome all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to Deakin. Deakin is committed to valuing, building and sustaining recognition, understanding and positive relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and non-Indigenous Australians.



# Introduction

At Deakin we are committed to fostering a connected, safe, inclusive and respectful work and study environment. This commitment extends to our physical campus, online and workplace environments, including workplace environments accessed by Deakin students through their internships or placements.

As a University we set strong standards of behaviour and acknowledge that we all have a role to play in preventing and responding to sexual harm. We empower our staff and students to become active bystanders, calling out disrespectful or discriminatory behaviours, championing respectful and inclusive behaviours and supporting those who feel able to come forward.

As a community we commit to actively challenging views that condone violence, disrespect, power imbalances and inequality. We enforce our codes of conduct with procedural fairness and, where a case is substantiated, hold those responsible accountable for their actions.

This multi-year plan is an important part of the University's work to build and maintain a safe and respectful community. The approach, initiatives and actions are informed by the broad body of international and Australian research demonstrating the severity, prevalence and negative impact of gendered violence and other forms of discrimination on many members of our community.

For example, we know that:

- Young women are more likely to experience intimate partner violence and sexual assault than other members of the community (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2017),<sup>1</sup>
- Fifty one percent of students reported that they had been sexually harassed, of whom 26% reported that it occurred in a university setting (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2017),<sup>2</sup> and

- Young people are more likely to hold views that excuse or minimize violence against women and girls (ANROWS, 2017).<sup>3</sup>
- Recent research indicates that the pressure on young men to adhere to rigid stereotypical masculine norms can have a negative impact on some men's mental and physical health including their use and experience of violence; online bullying; sexual harassment; and binge drinking.<sup>4</sup>

Research tells us that diverse members of our community are more likely to experience discrimination, harassment and victimisation including sexual and other harms. These groups include young women, people from diverse cultural and religious communities who speak English as a second language, people with a disability or multiple disabilities, First Nations people, members of the LGBTIQ+ community, refugees or people on transitional visas.

This plan reflects our commitment to work collaboratively across different levels and teams within the university. Through the delivery of training and capacity building activities, we seek to actively engage individual staff and students and build awareness, knowledge and skills. We also wish to deliver activities that influence policy, institutional processes and practices across the University as a whole. As part of a larger community effort, we commit to collaborating, consulting and working with external agencies to inform our practice and deliver tailored responses. This includes work with the sexual assault and family violence sector, police, government departments and Universities Australia.

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1 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). 2017. Personal Safety, Australia, 2016 | Australian Bureau of Statistics

2 Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC). 2017. Change the Course Report

3 ANROWS. 2017. **National Community Attitudes Towards Violence against Women Survey – Youth Report**

4 The Men's Project & Flood, M. 2020. **Unpacking the Man Box: What is the impact of the Man Box attitudes on young Australian men's be-haviours and wellbeing?** Jesuit Social Services, Melbourne.



# Governance and Reporting

The Vice-Chancellor's Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Advisory Group oversee Deakin's respect and sexual harm prevention and response programs of work. This group takes direct responsibility for shaping Deakin's respect-based initiatives, including those focused on sexual harm, and for monitoring and evaluating actions taken. The Deakin Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Policy and Sexual Harm Response Procedure provide the policy and procedural framework within which sexual harm prevention and response activities are undertaken.

**The Respect and Sexual Harm Plan (2021 – 2024) is coordinated by Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and is aligned with principles of best practice set out in:**

- [Victorian Government Safe and Strong Gender Equity Strategy](#)
- [Respect. Now. Always Guidelines for University Response to Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment \(2016\)](#)
- [Australian Human Rights Commission \(AHRC\) Change the Course: National Report on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at Australian Universities \(2017\)](#)
- [Universities Australia Principles for Respectful Supervisory Relationships \(2018\)](#)
- [Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency TEQSA's Good Practice Note Preventing and Responding to Sexual Assault and Harassment in the Australian Higher Education Sector \(2020\)](#)
- [Australian Human Rights Commission \(AHRC\) Respect@Work Report \(2020\)](#)
- [Our Watch, Educating for Equality \(2021\)](#)
- [Our Watch, Workplace Equality and Respect \(2021\)](#)

## Maintaining a Safe and Supportive Community

Safer Community provides professional support for all members of the Deakin community whether they are involved directly or indirectly in instances of family violence, sexual harm or behaviours of concern, regardless of when, or where, these incidents occurred. Safer Community is designated, through policy, as the central point of contact for reports in relation to sexual harm, domestic and family violence, and concerning behaviours at Deakin. Students, staff and associates are not required to make a formal report or complaint in order to receive support and advice. This includes support even if the harm occurred in their private lives, with no direct nexus to university business.

Should a student or staff member wish to inquire about the complaints process or make a complaint, the University commits to maintaining robust complaint and misconduct processes. Should a staff member choose to make a complaint of sexual harassment against another staff member this complaint will be managed by the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Team. Allegations relating to student conduct or student complaints (against staff or other students) will be managed by the Office of the Dean of Students, Complaints, Appeals and Misconduct Team.

# Deakin's Four-Year Focus

Our four-year focus outlines Deakin's approach to further support and nurture a safe, inclusive, and respectful university community. Five priority areas have been identified with the intent to build and extend upon activities and actions undertaken each year as part of annual rolling action plans.

## Priority Areas:

- **Respectful Communities**
- **Sexual Harm, Gendered Violence, Consent, Power and Authority**
- **Academic Teaching and Learning**
- **Community Education, Partnerships and Engagement**
- **Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting**

### ESTABLISH 2021

This first phase will focus on the connection and coordination of respect and sexual harm prevention work at Deakin, consolidating past work and reviewing training, programs and existing initiatives to align with our future direction. We will deliver training and capacity building initiatives, engage with students as part of the National Student Safety Survey 2021 and implement pilot evaluation strategies occurred in their private lives, with no direct nexus to university business.

### EMBED 2022

This second phase will continue our work with our students and staff to build a culture of safety and mutual respect. We will connect and integrate university-wide respect and sexual harm prevention work, building strong relationships, incorporating research findings of our academic staff. We will review, refine and where appropriate develop new training and capacity offerings and resources. We will develop and implement a robust monitoring and evaluation framework, promote activities and outcomes to the Deakin community and beyond.

### ENHANCE 2023

This third phase will focus on whole of community activities and actions. We will continue to monitor, analyse and report on evaluation outcomes, incorporate findings to ensure continuous quality improvement and increased impact of activities and initiatives. We will increase early engagement and prevention work with individuals and communities who have a greater risk of experiencing harm and those at higher risk of engaging in disrespectful or discriminatory behaviour.

### EVOLVE 2024

In this fourth phase we will identify remaining gaps, new evidence and areas for ongoing development, innovation and improvement. Our focus will be on incorporating evidence-informed preventative work with a strength-based approach. Our focus will be on the sustainability of initiatives and incorporating relevant initiatives into standard practice.

# 2022 Respect and Sexual Harm Plan Context

Deakin's 2022 Action Plan has been developed taking the following into account:

**The impact of COVID-19:** There are short, medium, and long-term impacts of COVID-19 on higher education, some of which include limitations to on-campus learning and teaching, and a reliance upon the domestic student market with ongoing restrictions to international arrivals.<sup>5</sup>

**Family violence and child abuse:** Recent literature highlights that the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a reported increase in family violence and child abuse. More adults, young people and children are working and studying at home and those affected by family violence may have reduced access to support services.<sup>6</sup>

**Online Harm:** Staff and students will continue to spend a high percentage of their time working and studying online, with implications for prevention and response. Technology facilitated abuse is predominantly gendered, with men identified as primary instigators, whilst women and girls form the majority of those negatively affected.<sup>7</sup>

**Universities Australia National Student Safety Survey (NSSS):** The NSSS was conducted in late 2021 with results provided in March 2022.

**New 'National plan to end violence against women and children':** The Federal Government is anticipated to release this Plan in 2023. The 'National Summit on Women's Safety' (September 2021) highlighted key areas including coordinated approaches to gender equality, primary prevention and engagement with men.<sup>8</sup>

**Consent education:** Attention continues to be drawn to concerns regarding understanding and awareness of consent and consent education. Australian governments are exploring a consistent definition of sexual assault, whilst State Education Departments are examining their existing school based sexual education programs.<sup>9</sup>

**Community focus:** There continues to be media attention and community campaigns regarding gender justice, respect, sexual harassment, sexual assault and family violence. These conversations highlight the varying experiences of violence and discrimination by diverse community members.<sup>10</sup>

**Changes to Psychological Health Regulations:** Through the Ministerial Taskforce on Workplace Sexual Harassment and changes to occupational health and safety regulatory framework, hazards to psychological health are increasingly acknowledged as no less harmful than physical hazards. Proposed changes have identified sexual harassment as a key risk. Organisations will be required to comply with new risk management and reporting to ensure compliance with pending legislative change.

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5 Ferguson, H. & Love, A. (2020). 'The impact of COVID-19 on Australian higher education and overseas students – what do the numbers say?'. [Australian Parliamentary Library](#); Schleicher, A. (2020). 'The impact of COVID-19 on Education'. OECD; TEQSA. (2020).

6 Pfitzner, N., Fitz-Gibbon, K. and True, J. (2020). [Responding to the 'shadow pandemic': practitioner views on the nature of and responses to violence against women in Victoria, Australia during the COVID-19 restrictions](#). Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre, Monash University, Victoria, Australia; Walklate, S., Richardson, J., and Godfrey B. (2020).

7 eSafety is an independent statutory office authorised to respond to online abuse. eSafety website and relevant [research articles](#).

8 '[Statement from Delegates - 2021 National Summit on Women's Safety 2021](#)', 7 September 2021; [Statement from The Australian Human Rights Commission on the National Summit for Women's Safety](#), Australian Human Rights Commission. 6 September 2021.

9 [Attorney-General media release](#) (17 May 2021); [Women's Safety NSW media release](#) (16 March 2021); [NSW Attorney-General announces sweeping reforms to consent laws](#). (25 May 2021).

10 Examples include the 'Let Her Speak'; 'Me Too' Movement and 'Black Lives Matter' campaigns.



# 2022 Respect and Sexual Harm Action Plan

Priority Area	Activities
<p><b>Respectful Communities</b> <i>Review, refine and enhance activities which support the creation of a safe, inclusive and respectful community.</i></p>	<p><b>1.1</b> Implement and evaluate redesigned and refreshed ‘Respect at Deakin’ online module, enhancing student engagement through university-wide collaboration.</p> <p><b>1.2</b> Design, facilitate and evaluate ‘Respect at Deakin’ Student Leadership workshops, partnering with program coordinators to ensure content is relevant.</p> <p><b>1.3</b> Coordinate and implement an awareness raising campaign to highlight reporting and support options for students and staff.</p> <p><b>1.4</b> Develop respect and sexual harm resources of value to the Deakin community.</p>
<p><b>Sexual Harm, Gender Violence, Consent, Power &amp; Authority</b> <i>Increase knowledge of gender violence, intersectionality, consent, and implications of power, control and authority.</i></p>	<p><b>2.1</b> Develop a tailored ‘Respect at Deakin’ Respectful Supervisory Relationships module for supervisors and HDR students.</p> <p><b>2.2</b> Engage senior management and executives in Deakin’s respect initiatives.</p> <p><b>2.3</b> Review policies, procedures, training and approach to interpersonal violence (sexual harm, child safety and family violence).</p> <p><b>2.4</b> Build greater awareness of online safety risks, including technology facilitated abuse, bystander actions, and support services as part of involvement in the jointly coordinated Universities Australia and eSafety Commissioner SOAR Program.</p> <p><b>2.5</b> Raise awareness of National Student Safety Survey (NSSS) results, plans to redress any issues and future preventative work.</p>
<p><b>Academic Learning and Teaching</b> <i>Explore opportunities to incorporate the gendered drivers of violence into academic teaching and learning.</i></p>	<p><b>3.1</b> Develop and facilitate a ‘guest lecture’ program focused on respect and gendered violence to raise awareness and upskill students and academics within specific study programs, promote the work of DEI and increase engagement with capacity building offerings.</p> <p><b>3.2</b> Continue active engagement with Occupational Therapy and Primary Education academics in relation to embedding content, materials and resources into course work building on the outcomes from the Our Watch Upskilling Practising Professionals pilot project.</p> <p><b>3.3</b> Identify and engage with relevant research underway at Deakin, exploring themes, outcomes and relevance for prevention work.</p>
<p><b>Community Education, Partnerships &amp; Engagement</b> <i>Cultivate strong, positive relationships with internal and external stakeholders to enhance our culture of respect at Deakin.</i></p>	<p><b>4.1</b> Explore opportunities for sharing of learning, training and best practice with other universities and/or community organisations.</p> <p><b>4.2</b> Explore formalising referral pathways with external specialist services including signing of MOUs where appropriate.</p> <p><b>4.3</b> Explore ways in which respect content can be incorporated to value-add to existing or new Deakin engagement and education campaigns.</p> <p><b>4.4</b> Refresh and rebrand the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training and capacity building program to ensure greater awareness and engagement.</p>
<p><b>Monitoring, Evaluation &amp; Reporting</b> <i>Establish baseline data and develop and apply a formal robust evaluation framework.</i></p>	<p><b>5.1</b> Implement a centralised DEI training evaluation tool and process, baseline data, and application to ensure continuous quality improvement.</p> <p><b>5.2</b> Develop and strengthen our approach to the evaluation of respect initiatives, incorporating available data to guide prevention work.</p> <p><b>5.3</b> Increase sharing of best practice between Safer Community and Deakin Residential Services (DRS) to ensure coordinated support for students.</p> <p><b>5.4</b> In response to changes to Psychological Health Regulations, identify and amend risk management and reporting processes in relation to sexual harassment to ensure compliance.</p>



# 2022 Respect and Sexual Harm Action Plan

The following activities previously introduced will continue at Deakin throughout 2021 – 2024. All projects are led by Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, with a variety of stakeholders across the University involved in implementation.

Priority Area	Activities
<b>Respectful Communities</b>	Continued delivery of existing annual education and training offerings which meet Deakin compliance obligations and seek to ensure that staff and students are equipped to become active bystanders and respond appropriately. Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online Respectful Behaviours Module (Staff)</li> <li>• Online Responding to Disclosures of Sexual Harm Compliance Module (Staff)</li> <li>• Relevant DEI Training Workshops</li> <li>• Development and delivery of training addressing needs of specific staff cohorts</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual Harm, Gendered Violence, Consent, Power and Authority</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitation of financial wellbeing workshops.</li> <li>• Engage senior management and executives in Deakin’s respect initiatives.</li> <li>• Grievance processes, in particular those related to sexual harm, continue to be implemented, supported and improved.</li> <li>• Continue to implement, support and improve the Harassment and Discrimination Contact Officer (HDCO) Network as an avenue through which staff and students can seek advice and support in relation to instances of sexual harm.</li> <li>• Strengthen knowledge across both staff and student cohorts of Safer Community as a central point of disclosure for sexual harm cases.</li> </ul>

## Key Contacts

To report a behaviour of concern or to make a disclosure of sexual harm (recent or historical, on or off campus) contact **Deakin’s Safer Community Services**. SaferCommunity can be contacted via phone on 03 9244 3734 (9am-4pm, Monday to Friday) or via email **safercommunity@deakin.edu.au**. All assistance is confidential.

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

If you are a staff member and wish to inquire about the complaints process or to make a complaint of sexual harassment against another staff member contact **eeo@deakin.edu.au** You may also raise your concern or complaint through the **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Complaints Form**.

For advice or support relating to student conduct, please contact **studentconduct@deakin.edu.au** For any reports of student conduct or student complaints, please complete the relevant online reporting form via the **Student Conduct webpage** or the **Student Complaints webpage**.

**Contact:**

For information about Deakin’s Respect or Sexual Harm program of work or for questions relating to this Action Plan please email: [respect@deakin.edu.au](mailto:respect@deakin.edu.au)

For further information, please visit the Deakin website at [deakin.edu.au](http://deakin.edu.au)

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