

# Deakin University Sexual Harm Action Plan Report

## Feeling safe, supported and engaged

Last updated November 2018

Deakin's Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Action Plan (Action Plan) aims to eliminate all forms sexual harm toward our students and staff.

The Action Plan incorporates recommendations from the Australian Human Rights Commission's (AHRC) *Change the Course* report. Three independent reviews and Universities Australia's *Guidelines for Universities to Respond to Reports of Sexual Assault*, and the *Principles to Guide Supervisor-Postgraduate Interactions*.

The action plan consists of 12 sections requiring a whole of University approach in effecting change from primary prevention, early intervention to continuous support and responding to disclosures and reports of sexual harm and initiatives that foster a respectful, equitable and safe working, learning, research and social environment.

<u>Governance</u>	<u>Engagement</u>
<u>Primary Prevention</u>	<u>Early Intervention</u>
<u>Incident Response</u>	<u>Staff Counselling and Support</u>
<u>Discipline Process</u>	<u>Recording and Reporting</u>
<u>Continuous Improvement</u>	<u>Policies and Procedures</u>
<u>Roles and Responsibilities</u>	<u>Deakin Residential Services</u>

## 1. Governance

Deakin University is committed to ensure that our University campuses are a safe and welcoming environment for all our students, staff and visitors.

The Vice-Chancellor's *Respect. Now. Always* (RNA) Advisory Group has been established with oversight of this Action Plan. The Vice-Chancellor's RNA Advisory Group meets six times a year. Membership includes the following:

- Chief Operating Officer – Member of University Executive
- President and Vice-President Deakin University Students Association
- Dean of Students
- Three staff members representing student services including front-line response services
- CEO Deakin Residential Services
- Two academic staff including PVC Research Development and Integrity
- Executive Director Human Resources
- Director Equity and Diversity
- Director Campus Services (includes Security)
- Manager Student Conduct

The Advisory Group draws on the expertise of the RNA Reference Group which includes researchers and academics to ensure best practice and remains up-to-date with current literature and community trends.

## 2. Engagement

Deakin is committed to strengthening our partnership and communication both internally and externally.

Internal activities include:

- a comprehensive staff and student engagement plan with staff and students
- regular meetings the RNA Reference Group
- a students as partners approach to engaging with students, regularly recruiting interns to develop and implement activations for students.
- externally activities include: working with a variety of partners, Prevention of Violence against Women (PVAW) agencies and community groups both in the Barwon and Melbourne region
- regularly meeting with other universities to share ideas and strategies in contributing to the sector-wide prevention of sexual harm.

In February 2019, Deakin will host the inaugural national *Respect. Prevent. Respond* Conference, to contribute to the improvement of sector wide practices and strategies in eliminating sexual harm. The theme of the conference is 'Preventing and Responding to Sexual Harm in the Tertiary Education Sector'.

## 3. Primary Prevention

An analysis conducted in May, 2018 looked into ways of fostering a more respectful university community, and to improve student and staff's understanding of sexual assault, sexual harassment, consent. This has led to the implementation of education and training plan.

Current training programs for staff and students include:

- Responding to disclosures of sexual harm training
- Consent Matters
- Bystander intervention program
- Respectful Relationships

By early 2019 Deakin will:

- implement a compulsory online module for all students covering consent, respect, understanding gender-equality, and how to seek support and assistance.
- provide bystander intervention program developed in conjunction with Deakin's Centre for Health through Action on Social Exclusion (CHASE) available to all students. The program is currently being trailed at Deakin and other universities.
- strengthen training and information for Higher Degree by Research students. Information will also be provided to staff to safeguard our research students, but also to improve research supervisor's understanding of their responsibilities.

## 4. Early Intervention

The AHRC's *Change the Course* report highlighted that many students were unaware of where to seek help or who they can report an incident of sexual harm to. Since the release of the AHRC report, the University commissioned an independent review of the University's policies and procedure in responding to sexual harm and the reporting pathways available to students.

Following the independent review the resulting initiatives have been put in place:

- Enhanced awareness program to students on how and where to disclose and where to receive support. Information provided during orientation, in the student diary, online and through regular on-campus activities and student news bulletins.
- Information provided to international students before arriving in Australia and at tailored sessions as part of the International Student Welcome.
- Establishment of the Safer Community unit as a central contact point for disclosing, reporting and referring reports of sexual harm.
- Provision of interpreters for those who wish to make a disclosure or report in another language.

The University will continue to improve access to information and options for disclosing or making a report through:

- development of an online reporting system, including offering anonymous disclosures to increase the likelihood of disclosure or reporting incidents
- reviewing capacity and expertise to respond sensitively to the distinct needs of different student cohorts (e.g. Indigenous and LGBTIQ students)
- translating key policy documents into other languages.

## 5. Off-campus Incidents

We want our students to be safe both on and off-campus and to ensure that they can receive the best support while on a University related trip or attending a University related event.

In 2019, the University will implement the following initiatives:

- establishment of minimum training requirements or qualifications for staff or student leaders who oversee off-site trips and events.
- review and where necessary, strengthening of policies and procedures to reduce risk and to improve protocols for preventing and responding to incidents of sexual assault and sexual harassment on off-site trips, study hours (on and off-shore), external student placements and internships.

## 6. Staff Counselling and Support

We acknowledge that supporting incidents of sexual harm may distress or trigger past trauma for some staff members. This is why the University will strengthen our internal processes to ensure that staff members who may be required to respond or be involved in supporting an incident of sexual harm are given advanced notice, training and provided with support where possible.

## 7. Disciplinary Process

In line with Universities Australia's guidelines and our current victim/survivor centered approach in receiving disclosures, University is currently reviewing and overhauling our student misconduct regulations and policies to ensure:

- the University's internal process doesn't compromise or interfere with any potential police investigation into incidents of sexual assault.
- our internal processes do not cause further harm or distress to those that have to disclose an incident of sexual harm.
- that victim/survivors are provided with information on outcomes of their complaint.

We will continue to clarify roles, responsibilities and to centralise our triaging and escalation of serious allegations of

misconduct. The centralized misconduct committee will be trained to understand the role and responsibilities and not to interfere, investigate or substantiate criminal matters or offenses.

We will also clarify our practices, regulations, policies and procedures to:

- help the University community better understand the misconduct process.
- uphold principles of natural justice
- clarify and explain the standards of proof required for determining incidents of general student misconduct.

## 8. Recording and Reporting

The University currently maintains records of disclosures of sexual assault and sexual harassment in keeping with the AHRC's recommendations.

The University also reports publicly on the progress of the Australian Human Rights Commission's *Change the Course* recommendations and provides reports to relevant agencies and government authorities such as TEQSA through the Vice Chancellor's Advisory Group.

## 9. Student Clubs and Societies

The University will continue to partner with the Deakin University Student Association (DUSA) by facilitating regular communications and processes for formal reporting between Safer Community and DUSA. By sharing information regarding risks and trends, this may improve the safety and experience of DUSA clubs or society events.

## 10. Policies and Procedures

Released in 2017, Deakin was the first university in Victoria to have a standalone sexual assault prevention and response policy and procedure. This policy established formal processes for implementing protective measures for victim/survivors and pathways for disclosing incidents of sexual assault.

We have streamlined policies and procedure to ensure that victim/survivor can easily access special consideration or extensions for their academic work.

The University has also updated our Staff Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policy to reflect the view that research supervisors and academic staff who supports or mentors student should not misuse their position of influence or trust by entering into any romantic or sexual relationship with students in carrying out their duties.

We will further strengthen our policies and procedures on the prevention and response to sexual harm by:

- introducing a standalone sexual harassment policy and procedure

- improving the way we respond to technology-facilitated abuse and violence.
- providing clarification between making disclosure and making a formal report.
- providing clearer and more consistent use of terminology and definitions
- strengthening safeguards for Higher Degree by Research students when attending trips, conference or working in isolated environments.
- strengthening incident management processes on our residential services.

## 11. Roles and Responsibilities

At Deakin, the Safer Community unit has been identified as the single central point of contact for students and staff who wish to disclose or to refer incidents of sexual harm. This approach ensures that we create a safe, empathetic and supportive environment for victim/survivors and to provide some assurance in the consistency and quality of the disclosure experience to prevent further distress or harm.

We will continue to improve awareness of Safer Community's role, what incidents need to be communicated and referred to them including from Deakin Residential Services. We will update our website to address frequently asked questions which students and staff may have.

## 12. Deakin Residential Services

Deakin Residential Services (DRS) has been a strong partner in the prevention of sexual harm and the fostering of a safe and supportive living and learning environment for Deakin students. This is demonstrated through initiatives such as the DRS RESPECT program. Other DRS initiatives include:

- Compulsory induction and consent training for all residential students.
- Extensive Residential Leader training in respectful relationships, sexual ethics, bystander intervention, leadership and personal development.
- 24/7 residential life and security support
- Student handbook clarifies processes for escalating matters, definitions, and support information.

DRS will further strengthen their positive culture by:

- Nurturing a supportive and respectful environment and continuous effort in eliminating low level sexism.
- Encouraging international students to become Residential Leaders.
- Fostering active bystander culture through compulsory bystander training, communications and meetings.

	Action Plan Items	In Progress	Ongoing	Complete
1.	Public reporting on the progress of AHRC Recommendations		✓	
2.	Six monthly reports of data to the Vice-Chancellor		✓	
3.	Map and manage external relationships	✓		
4.	Establish engagement plan to strengthen communication with student clubs	✓		
5.	Develop and implement mandatory training for students and staff	✓		
6.	Guidelines and training for research supervisors	✓		
7.	Strengthening HDR student induction	✓		
8.	Review campus amenities and infrastructure			✓
9.	Responding to disclosure of sexual harm training for student and staff		✓	
10.	Centralised training tracking database for staff			
11.	Analysis of current training and future recommendations			✓
12.	Updating DRS Handbook to incorporate PwC recommendations	✓		
13.	DRS student bystander training and messaging		✓	
14.	Translation of key policy documents into other languages	✓		
15.	Provision of interpreting services for student and staff			✓
16.	Encourage International Students to become Residential Leaders	✓		
17.	Awareness campaign for staff and students on where to disclosure and how to report		✓	
18.	Mechanism for anonymous disclosure	✓		
19.	Online disclosure form	✓		
20.	Clarification of process for those that are both students and staff	✓		
21.	Review capacity and expertise to support the needs of distinct student cohorts	✓		
22.	Clarify requirements for reporting to the police			
23.	Review appropriateness of existing emergency powers			
24.	Develop policies for safeguarding and reducing the risk of off-campus activities and trips			
25.	Establish a minimum standard for staff and student that oversees off-site trips			
26.	Advance communication and support for staff involved in sexual harm incidents			✓
27.	Code of Conduct: Processes to avoid interfering of compromising the police investigation			✓
28.	Misconduct Regulation: To minimize harm to victim survivors and to standardize outcomes	✓		
29.	Misconduct Regulation: Review natural justice, the standard of proof, etc.	✓		
30.	Communicate and clarify the role of Student Conduct Manager		✓	
31.	Implementation of centralized institution-wide Student Misconduct Committee			✓
32.	Review and improve storage and sharing of data			
33.	Streamline special consideration			✓
34.	Policy improvement in preventing and responding to technology facilitated abuse			
35.	Clarification between making a disclosure and making a formal report	✓		
36.	Develop standalone sexual harassment policy and procedure			
37.	Update policy and procedure on supervisor-student interactions			✓
38.	Safeguard HDR student on conference, trips and working in isolation			
39.	Communicate remit of Safer Community and FAQ website	✓		
40.	DRS and Safer Community communication	✓		