



Safe Campuses
Annual Report 2024

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Safe and respectful communities

We are committed to a safe, inclusive and respectful University that actively contributes to the prevention of gender-based violence.

Griffith's Safe Campuses initiative, established in 2017, continues to respond to internal needs and external requirements to promote a safe and respectful University community. Safe Campuses supports Griffith's response to sector programs such as the Universities Australia Charter on Sexual Harm and links prevention and response efforts across the University.

In 2024, the release of the National Action Plan Addressing Gender-based Violence in Higher Education (National Action Plan) prioritised this portfolio of work. The Plan will be followed by the National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence (the Code), which is expected to be passed into legislation during the Spring sitting of Parliament (August-December).

The Code will build on commitments within the Universities Accord and National Action Plan, including embedding the National Student Ombudsman in student safety and wellbeing processes, seeking improved transparency of University processes and prevalence data, genuine implementation of trauma-informed policy and practice and whole-of-University (students, employees, corporate, research, Learning and Teaching) response to gender-based violence.

After introducing a new Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Policy in late 2023, the University has been working to implement changes and enhancements through its 2024 Safe and Respectful Communities Action Plan. These efforts align with the National Action Plan and anticipated requirements under the Code.

The year in review

Sexual Harm policy implementation

The Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Policy and supporting Student Reports of Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination and Sexual Harm Procedure were implemented in Trimester 1, 2024. The revised Staff Sexual Harm Response Procedure and Staff Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination Policy and Procedure were implemented in Trimester 2. The policy and procedures are centred on the University's aim to provide trauma-aware and person-centric processes, services and support to students and employees who have experienced harm, coupled with a positive duty to prevent harm of a sexual nature.

Safe and Respectful Communities 2024 Action Plan

Work to support the Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Policy and other general enhancement activities was endorsed by Executive Group in a 2024 Safe and Respectful Communities Action Plan. Key focus areas under the action plan and progress towards each are as follows:

1. Leading proactive cultural change for the prevention of sexual harm

- Activation of the Safe and Respectful Communities Expert Reference Group.
- Updates to student and employee training materials.
- Introduction of mandatory employee and student training modules to address conduct, sexual harm and gender-based violence.

2. Disclosing, reporting and escalation of potential and actual incidents of sexual harm

- Promotion of the new University-wide policy and related student reporting and employee response procedures, including updated training materials.

- Continued promotion of the Student Safety and Wellbeing team for referral and assistance in managing student behaviours of concern, resulting in increased service uptake.
- Process mapping and review related to the Report a Concern process for students, with minor enhancements to the current process and planning for major system enhancements to be implemented in early 2025.

3. Fully integrated care for those impacted by sexual harm

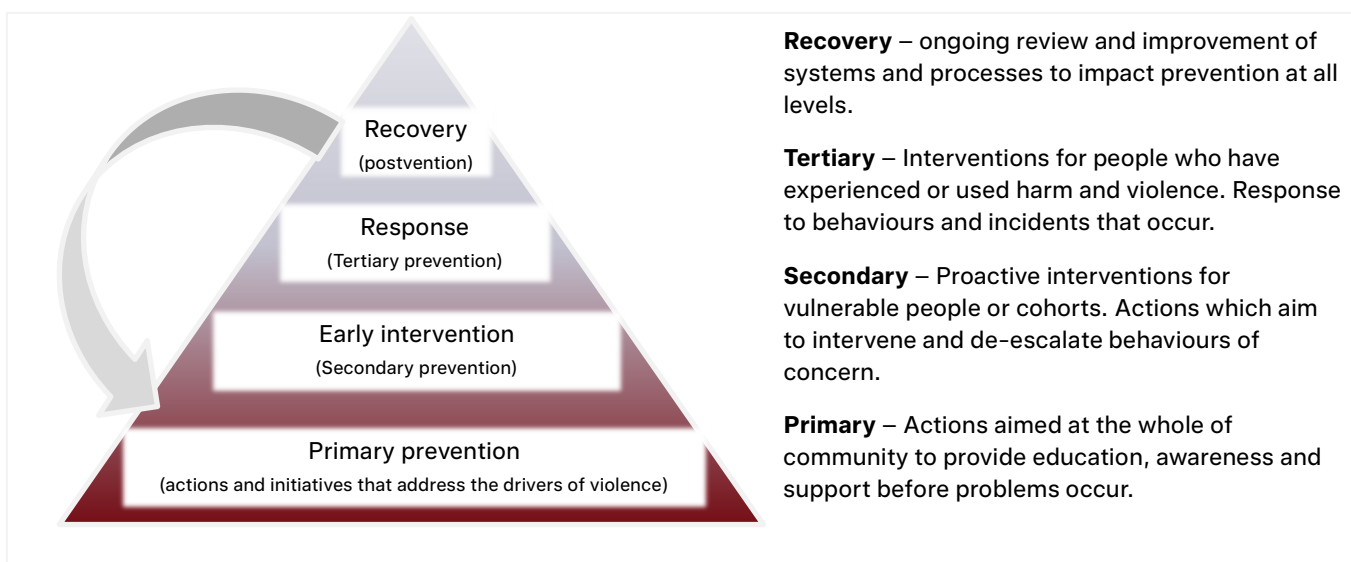
- Existing response processes mapped across the University to determine gaps in trauma-informed service delivery and response and alignment with University policy, UA Charter, National Action Plan and National Code).
- Developed an Integrated Care Model which is proposed to guide expected practice at the University when responding to cases of student and employee behaviours of concern, including sexual harm and other forms of gender-based violence aimed at enhancing alignment with the 'whole-of-organisation' approach outlined in the National Action Plan and Code.

Safe and Respectful Communities Expert Reference Group

The Safe and Respectful Communities Expert Reference Group was established to strengthen leadership in sexual harm prevention and response. Chaired by the Provost, the Group includes representatives from the student body, Student Life, GUMURRII, Legal Services, Human Resources, Health Safety and Wellbeing, and academic experts from various disciplines across the University. A core working group supports the operational response to initiatives.

The Expert Reference Group endorsed the adoption of the public health approach to gender-based violence. The public health model, a concept used across many disciplines and applications, aims to:

- prevent issues occurring in the first place through policies and interventions that target risk factors;
- quickly respond to issues and incidents when they occur; and
- minimise the long-term effects of issues and problems.



Safe Campuses refresh

The University's Safe Campuses website underwent a major refresh in late 2023. Improvements were made to the site to help students find and recognise information about support services, resources, disclosure, and reporting avenues more easily. This has been supported by year-round exposure to Recognise. Respond. Refer. themed on-campus signage, updated training modules, and periodical inclusion of content within student communications. Safe Campuses continues to provide the central point for up-to-date information and education for students and employees.

Respect @ Uni week

Griffith held Respect@Uni Week in Trimester 1 (16-19 April) to raise awareness of respectful behaviours, consent, reporting and support options.

The keynote event was a webinar, *'It wasn't my business until it was,'* featuring Dave Karmer from Small Steps for Hannah. Over 60 people from across the sector attended the live event. Dave was joined by Griffith panellists Scott Croydon, Counsellor Violence Response and Prevention, and Emma Morgan, Director, Student Health, Counselling and Wellbeing, for a conversation about addressing violence and reaffirming positive behaviours to create healthy culture change. Professor Analise O'Donovan expertly guided the panel conversation.

Campus pop-ups encouraged direct engagement with students, including interactions to capture a sense of student awareness and understanding of consent, respect and gender-based violence. The provocations used, and top responses demonstrating students' understanding of the topics are as follows:

How do you know you have consent for sex?	Mutual, enthusiastic, verbal and non-verbal, sober, continued, no and yes can be said differently.
What does sexual harassment look/sound/feel like?	Unsafe, uncomfortable, wrong, unnecessary, forceful, violating.
How can you help prevent sexual harm and GBV?	Call it out, speak up, respect those who speak up, be an ethical bystander, acknowledge it, and hold others accountable.
How do you know you're being respectful?	Inclusive, respect different opinions and boundaries, kindness and ask for consent.

Education and training

Refresh of Recognise. Respond. Refer training

The University's Recognise. Respond. Refer. (RRR) e-learning modules for students and employees were updated in early 2024 to ensure consistency with University policy and procedures, current evidence and compliance sources, including Respect@Work and the latest Personal Safety Survey data (Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021-22)).

Further, the National Code issues paper highlighted a future approach to education and training, including providing mandatory aspects for students and employees, using iterative and collaborative approaches. A framework is being developed to provide an iterative approach to gender-based violence prevention education, using the rich content already available at the University, together with new and emerging resources and evidence.

Mandatory training

Following support for mandatory education from University leadership in 2023, a range of external possibilities for mandatory education were scoped and compared with pre-existing resources at the University to launch the University's first mandatory Safe and Respectful Communities training from T3, 2024.

The *RRR for Students* module was relaunched through Learning@Griffith and MyOrientation in August 2024 and will be mandatory for students commencing in T3 2024. This is complemented by employee Code of Conduct training, launched as a mandatory module for employees in July, and a mandatory RRR for Staff module that will be introduced in Q4 2024.

A new, student-facing *Respect at Griffith* module is being developed and will be finalised following consultation with students in September-October. This module will introduce students to Griffith's values, priorities, and expectations of conduct while encouraging support-seeking behaviours and reporting behaviours of concern. The module will be mandatory for commencing students from onboarding for T1, 2025.

Data management

Students and employees at the University have several options for disclosing or reporting incidents of sexual harm, bullying, discrimination, or harassment. Efforts to centralise data collection have included increased promotion of Report a

Concern as the central reporting point for behavioural matters. The proposed Integrated Care Model being developed under the 2024 Safe and Respectful Communities Action Plan will highlight this as an expected practice. Initiatives to improve data collection and collation will continue.

Sector-wide focus

Higher Education Action Plan and National Code

In February 2024, State and Federal Education Ministers agreed to and launched the Action Plan Addressing Gender-based Violence in Higher Education. The action plan provides seven actions for the higher education and government sectors to address gender-based violence:

- establishing a National Student Ombudsman
- requiring higher education providers to embed a whole-of-organisation approach to prevent and respond to gender-based violence
- requiring higher education providers to embed a whole-of-organisation approach to prevent and respond to gender-based violence
- introducing a National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence
- enhancing the oversight and accountability of student accommodation providers
- identifying opportunities to ensure legislation, regulation, and policies can prioritise victim-survivor safety
- increasing data transparency and scrutiny
- regularly reviewing progress against the Action Plan.

The Action Plan and subsequent (indicative) National Code provide a multifaceted approach to creating higher education communities that are free from and active contributors to the prevention of gender-based violence. The National Code is expected to be introduced to the Federal Parliament in its 2024 Spring sitting for implementation from January 2025 and university regulation from January 2026.

Sector collaboration

National Student Survey

Griffith continues to support Universities Australia in planning for the next national student survey scheduled for 2025 and has been an active contributor to sector consultation by Universities Australia. Vice Chancellor Professor Carolyn Evans is guiding planning for the survey as Lead Vice Chancellor for Safety and Wellbeing through the Universities Australia Vice Chancellor's Steering Committee. In addition, Griffith's Program Coordinator, Respectful Communities, Megan Sharp, has been invited to contribute to survey planning and implementation through membership in the Universities Australia Technical Working Group. The survey results will provide the sector and individual universities with data to assess progress and the effectiveness of efforts in sexual harm prevention and response.

Universities Australia Charter

In November 2023, Vice Chancellors adopted the [Universities Australia Charter on Sexual Harm](#). The charter reaffirms the sector's commitment to and support for the ongoing work of universities and other organisations in the community to address sexual harm. All 39 member universities committed to the Charter, which builds on the many initiatives already in place at universities. The Safe and Respectful Communities working group has reviewed initiatives at Griffith against the action plan to ensure alignment and will coordinate reporting against the Charter as required.

Australasian Universities Safer Communities Symposium

In 2024, Griffith maintained its involvement in the Australasian Universities Safer Communities Symposium (AUSCS) this year as Chair of the Organising Committee (through the Program Coordinator, Respectful Communities). For the 2024 symposium, AUSCS has partnered with the Australia and New Zealand Student Services Association (ANZSSA) to develop

a shared program of events. This approach enables greater participation of student services leaders in the Safer Communities discussion, further promoting the aims of the National Action Plan and National Code. The 2024 event will be held in Brisbane from 30 October to 1 November and includes speakers from across the sector and peak bodies, including Universities Australia and New Zealand and the Department of Education.

Reporting data

The University receives complaints of sexual harm, bullying, harassment and discrimination across various pathways, recognising that victim-survivors face a range of barriers to engaging in formal reporting and support-seeking. The Report a Concern form is the main entry point for employees, students and members of the public to formalise concerns. However, employees may report directly to Human Resources or Workplace Relations, and students may choose to access support through services such as the Personal Violence Counsellors, Student Safety and Wellbeing or other employees before or instead of providing a written report. Students and employees may also seek assistance from the Campus Support Team for behavioural incidents.

The reporting period is 1 September to 31 August each year. For this report, "complainant" means the person disclosing or reporting harm. "Respondent" refers to the alleged perpetrator of harm. A "complaint" can be a disclosure for noting and seeking support or a formal report for the University to investigate. The University adopts a survivor-centric approach where possible, enabling the complainant to determine whether investigative action is undertaken.

Aggregated complaints

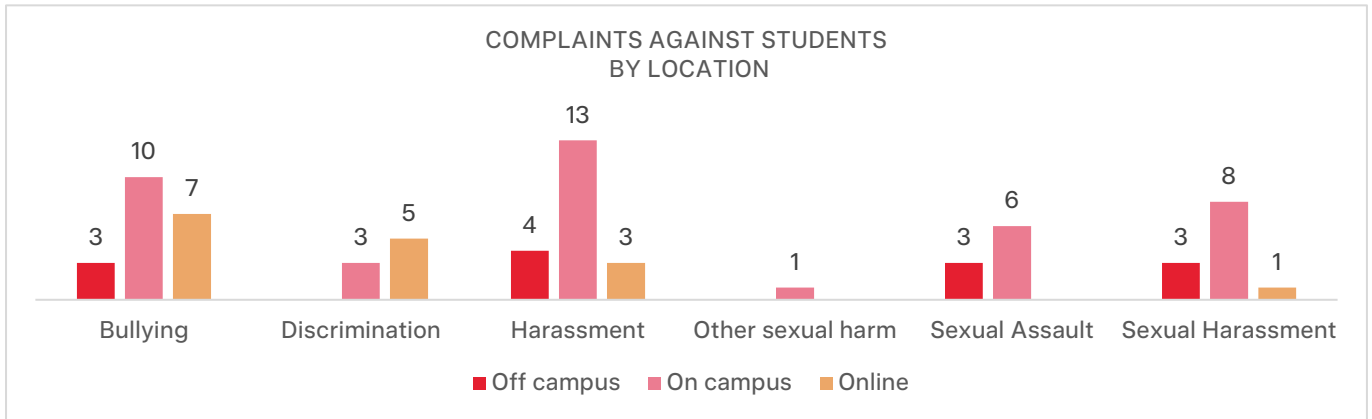
During the reporting period, 172 complaints of bullying, harassment, and discrimination were received. Of these complaints, 41% were against students, 35% against employees, and 23% of concerns were about members of the public or unidentified respondents. The remaining 1% of matters related to discrimination complaints against the University more broadly.

The data provided below is based on reported behaviour, not necessarily substantiated findings, aggregated from the following referral pathways:

- 1. Report a Concern:** Students, employees, and members of the public can submit complaints anonymously via Report a Concern or may choose to be identified. Midway through the reporting period, the Report a Concern form was updated to include sexual harm as an incident category. This aims to align with the Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Policy and related procedures and to remove angst for complainants who may be unclear about the behaviour they have experienced.
- 2. Workplace Relations:** Workplace Relations investigates complaints related to employee misconduct. Complaints are received via Report a Concern from Human Resources or directly from complainants.
- 3. Student Safety and Wellbeing:** Student Safety and Wellbeing provides student support for disclosures of concerning, threatening, or inappropriate behaviour. Almost two-thirds of referrals to Student Safety and Wellbeing were from University employees, 22% resulted from direct contact from students and the remainder were referred via Report a Concern.
- 4. Campus Support:** Campus Support provides on-campus security and promotes student and employee safety through security escort and night bus services. Security incidents, ranging from behavioural concerns to damage, first aid to theft, and vehicle incidents, are reported to Campus Support.

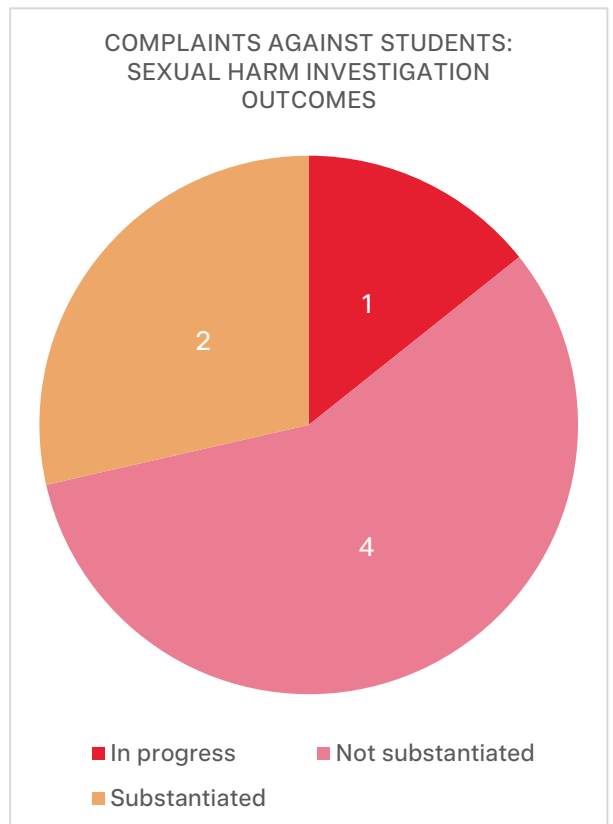
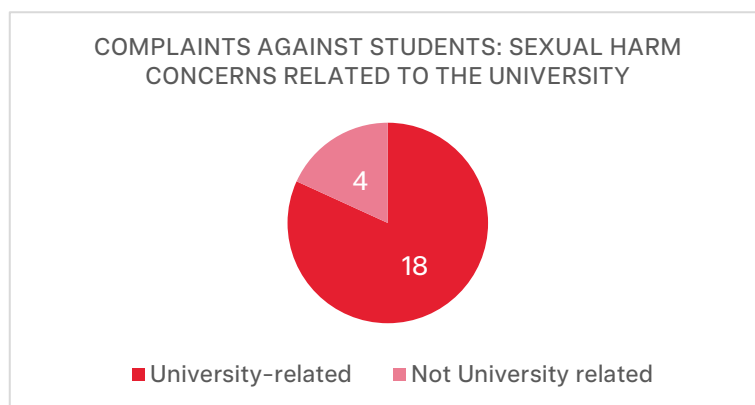
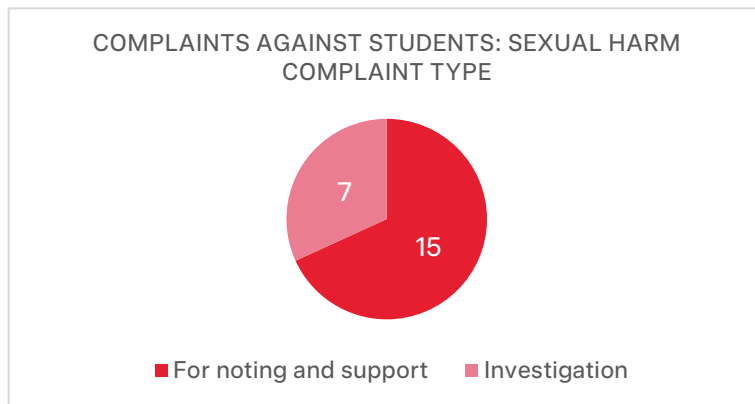
Complaints against students

During the reporting period, the University received 70 complaints about bullying, harassment, discrimination, or sexual harm, of which a student was the respondent. Two-thirds of these complaints were requests for noting and support. In these instances, complainants were referred to University support services and/or supported by Student Safety and Wellbeing.



Twenty-two complaints against students related specifically to sexual harm. This compares to 13 complaints against students in the last reporting period, noting that additional data sources have been included this year.

All sexual harm complaints were made by females, and all respondents were male. In all but one matter, the complainant was a student. The remaining matter was a disclosure from a student bystander referring to an observed incident by another student against a member of the public. As the incident had no connection to the University and no investigation was requested, the respondent was provided education and counselling.



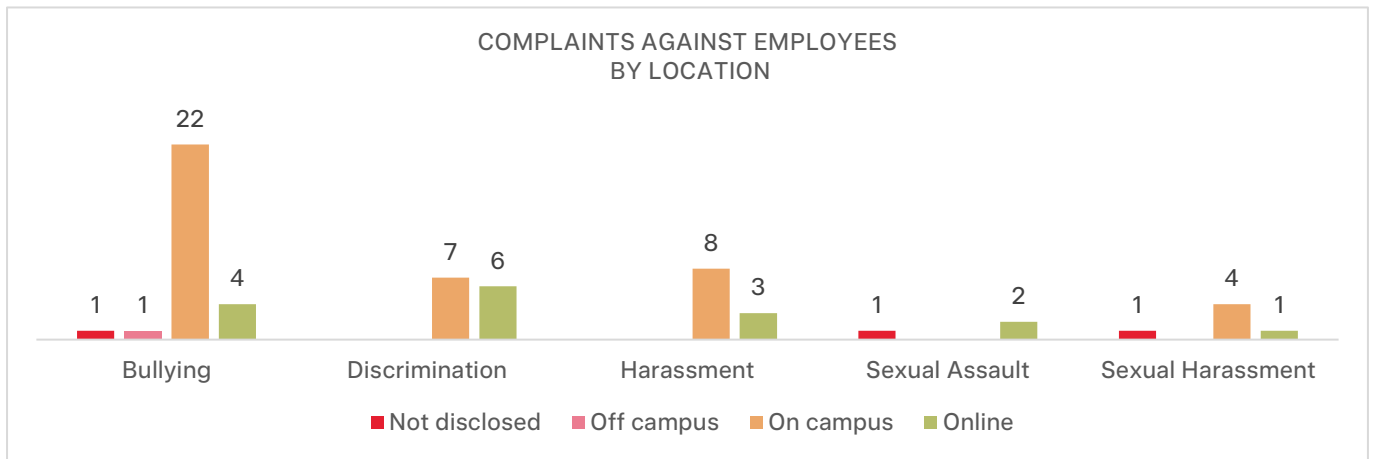
All investigations were carried out according to the Student Conduct, Safety, and Wellbeing Policy. One report is currently under investigation.

Four complaints were unsubstantiated. Student Safety and Wellbeing provided support in all circumstances, and in three cases, no-contact directives were issued.

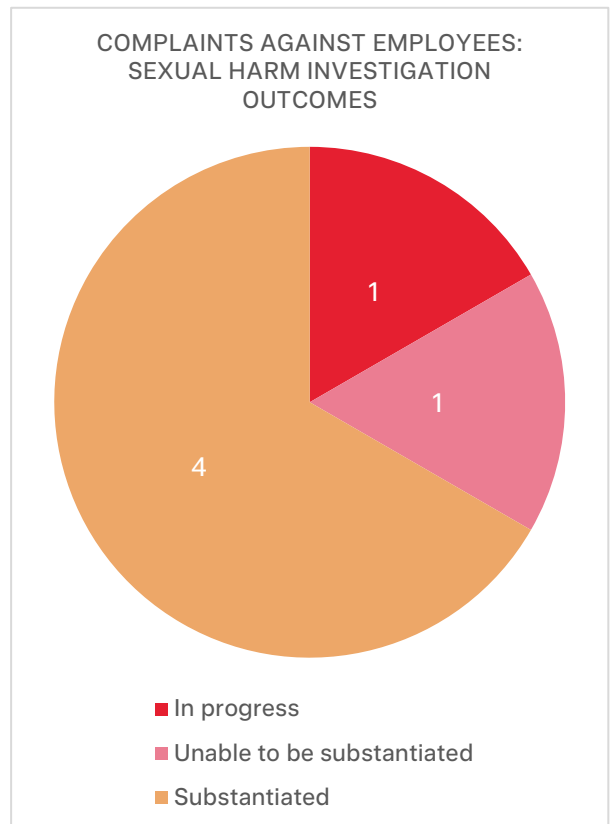
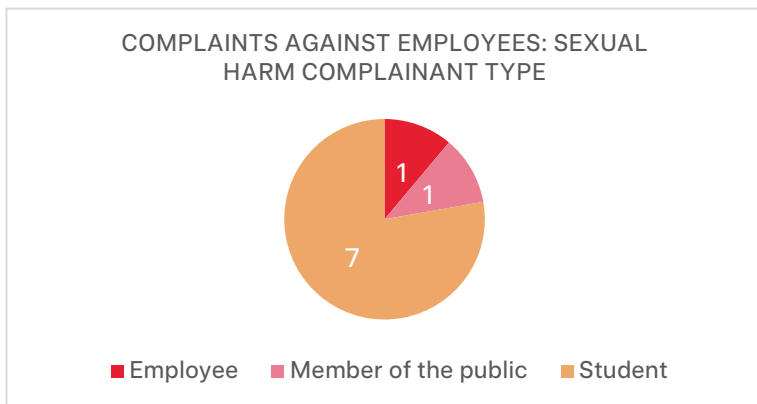
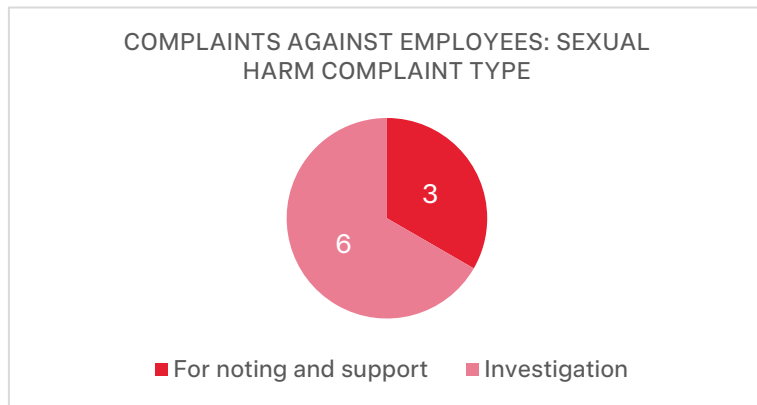
Two complaints were substantiated. The Student Safety and Wellbeing team offered support to complainants. One substantiated case related to an off-campus event where the respondent could not be identified, so actions under the Student Conduct, Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Student General Conduct Procedure could not be taken. The remaining substantiated case resulted in the respondent's permanent exclusion from the University. As the appeal period is yet to expire, the case may be considered ongoing.

Complaints against employees

During the reporting period, 61 complaints about bullying, harassment, discrimination, or sexual harm were received, with an employee as the respondent. Of these matters, 85% were related to bullying, harassment, or discrimination. More than two-thirds of complaints were related to incidents on campus, and 26% were related to online behaviours of concern.



There were nine complaints of sexual harm where the respondent was an employee. This compares to 5 complaints against employees in the last reporting period, noting that additional data sources have been included this year. All matters in this reporting period were incidents related to the University. All complainants were female, and all but one respondent was male. There was one female respondent.

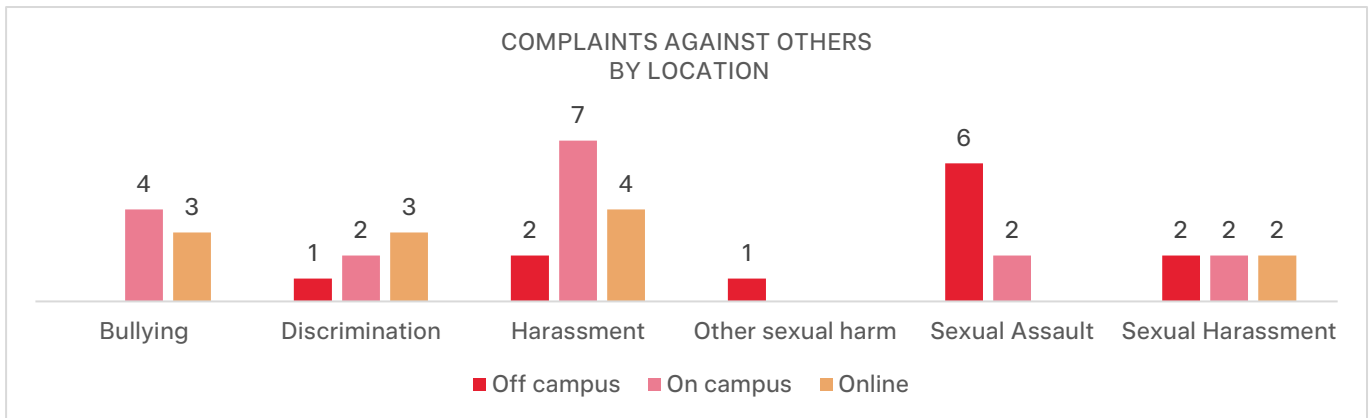


All three sexual assault complaints where the respondent was an employee were requests for noting and access to support. Two of these matters are noted as being more accurately categorised as online sexual harassment. In the third matter, the complainant did not identify the employee respondent and did not wish the University to take investigative action.

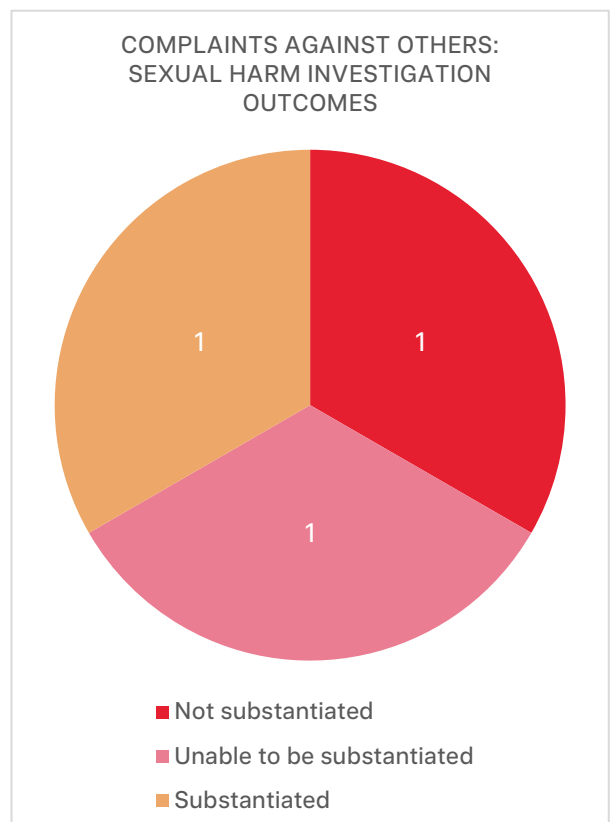
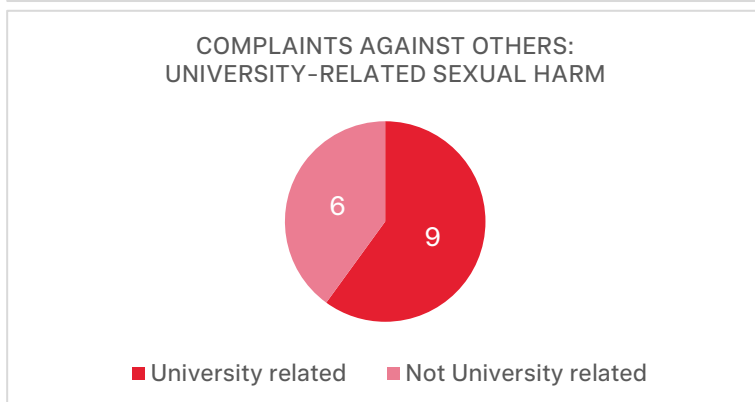
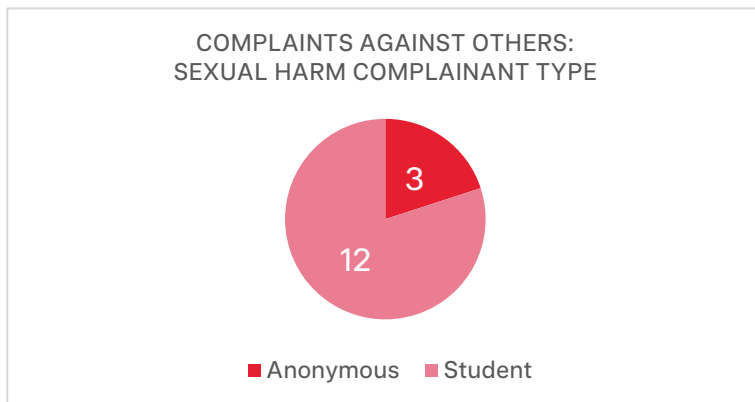
All formal reports for investigation related to sexual harassment. One report was anonymous and could not be substantiated due to lack of detail. One complaint is currently under investigation. The remaining complaints were substantiated and in all cases, the respondent is no longer employed by the University.

Complaints against others

During the reporting period, the University received 41 complaints about bullying, harassment, discrimination, or sexual harm, in which a member of the public (20), the University as an institution (2), or an unidentified person (19) was the respondent. Over two-thirds of these complaints were submitted as requests for noting and seeking support.



There were 15 complaints of sexual harm against unknown respondents or members of the public in this reporting period. This compares to 11 complaints in the previous reporting period, noting that additional data sources have been included this year. One of the sexual assault matters is noted as being more accurately categorised as verbal sexual harassment. Eighty per cent of sexual harm concerns were disclosures submitted for noting and seeking support. Where the person making a disclosure was a student, they were referred to University support services.



Student Safety and Wellbeing supported complainants in all matters that were formally reported for investigation. The respondent in the complaint that was unable to be substantiated was an unidentified member of the public. The investigation into the substantiated complaint led to the cessation of a contractor engagement.

Student support

Counselling and support services are available to students impacted by sexual harm or violence that affects their ability to study, whether it is related to the University or experienced outside of the University context.

Counsellors, Violence Response and Prevention

Within the Counselling and Wellbeing service, the University provides two specialist support roles, known as Personal Violence Counsellors, to provide priority support for students who have been impacted by gender-based violence and sexual harm. Almost 43% of students contact the specialist counsellors directly, 42% are referred by other employees in Student Health, Counselling and Wellbeing and 14% from employees in other areas of the University.

Throughout the reporting period, the personal violence (PV) Counsellors received ninety referrals for student support. In addition, the PV Counsellors were central to efforts during Respect at Uni week, have engaged in educational outreach directly with academic areas, and are engaged in preparation and planning for primary prevention requirements anticipated under the incoming National Code.

Griffith Mental Wellbeing Support Line

In addition to campus-based services, students can access immediate and crisis support through the Griffith Mental Wellbeing Support Line. The 24/7 support service provides referrals back to the University or community safety and support services as requested by the student. Griffith students sought support on 670 occasions during the reporting period, a slight decrease from 699 in the previous year. Service data indicates a slight increase in contacts (26.4% up from 25%) related to issues including family and relationships, abuse and trauma, sexual assault, and domestic and family violence.

Student Counselling and Wellbeing disclosures

The table below shows the yearly trend across key statistics from 2019-2024 related to disclosures of harm and violence to the Student Counselling and Wellbeing service. For the current reporting period, the data shows that almost 86% of students disclosing personal violence identify as female, and over two-thirds of disclosures relate to sexual assault, rape or domestic violence, with just under 16% related to harassment and discrimination. Less than a third of disclosures were received from International students.

Almost 90% of disclosures to Counselling and Wellbeing relate to students seeking support for harm experienced outside of the University environment that is impacting their studies. The below statistics are not represented in the aggregated disclosure and reporting data.

DISCLOSURES TO STUDENT COUNSELLING SERVICES 2019 - 2024

Measure	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
# unique clients referencing personal violence	226	235	195	211	193
# incidents of personal violence referenced	190	184	233	249	250
# clients reporting more than one type of violence	8	10	9	33	35
% references to University-related harm^	-	-	-	15%	10.4%
% references not related to University^	-	-	-	85%	89.6%
% disclosures from female students	84%	81.3%	85%	83.4%	85.7%
% disclosures made by international students	29%	22.6%	21%	27%	28%
% incidents reported to police	27%	26.4%	23%	28%	28.5%

% violence type = sexual assault, rape or domestic violence	90%	60%	38%	62.5%	70.8%
% violence type = childhood sexual abuse	8%	9.4%	10%	13.3%	10.4%
% violence type = sexual harassment	6%	8.9%	9%	7%	3.6%
% violence type = harassment, discrimination, other^	-	-	-	21.3%	15.7%
% timing of incident = within past month	42%	18.3%	18%	41.7%	40.8%
% timing of incident = one to twelve months	37%	7.7%	8%	20%	17.4%
% timing of incident = over one year ago	38%	33.2%	36%	40.3%	37.6%
% timing of incident = not disclosed	8%	0%	6%	8.5%	4.2%
# support contacts to 24/7 wellbeing support line*	453	676	743	699	670
# support contacts related to relationship, abuse, trauma, DFV and sexual harm*	89	194	209	173	177

[^]New statistic captured from 2023.

*Service was expanded from after-hours to 24/7 in February 2020

The year ahead

National Student Ombudsman

The National Student Ombudsman (NSO) will be established as a new statutory function of the Commonwealth Ombudsman. It will be independent and impartial and have powers to investigate student complaints and resolve disputes with higher education providers. The NSO will be able to receive and investigate complaints about a broad range of issues, including student safety and welfare. The National Student Ombudsman will begin taking complaints from 1 February 2025, subject to the passage of legislation. The University will monitor requirements for providers to promote the NSO to students, refer complaints to and from the new service, and amend necessary policies, procedures and work processes to accommodate these requirements.

National Code implementation

The National Code issues paper (2024) indicated seven potential standards for introduction across the Higher Education sector, namely:

1. Accountable governance and leadership
2. Effective organisational policies and practice
3. Trauma-informed, safety-first procedures
4. Evidence-based education and training
5. Expert and timely support services
6. Transparent data and reporting
7. Safe student accommodation

The Safe and Respectful Communities Working Group has been monitoring advice and information from the Department of Education, Universities Australia, and Our Watch relating to the development of the National Code and tools to aid implementation. Initiatives progressed by the Working Group in 2024 have complemented the anticipated requirements of the National Code concerning policies and practice, trauma-informed and safety-first procedures, expert and timely support and evidence-based education and training. Once the National Code legislation is finalised, priority action areas will be incorporated into Griffith's Safe and Respectful Communities Action Plan to ensure compliance is achieved promptly.

Safe and Respectful Communities 2025 Action Plan

Complementary to the implementation of the National Code requirements, the Safe and Respectful Communities Action Plan 2025 will include the following areas of focus:

Support implementation of SafeZone at Griffith

SafeZone is an app that helps organisations to enhance a sense of safety across their facilities and community. Griffith users can share their on-campus location with Campus Support (security) in an emergency. The system (implemented for T1, 2025) will provide a direct real-time interface between users and the Campus Support team, using geographical areas across our campuses. In addition, SafeZone provides the capacity to include additional regions to support activities such as field work, lab work, and lone worker check-in. SafeZone will provide an easy-to-access link to report non-urgent security-related matters through NOGGIN (security incident reporting system), which can be linked to other reporting functionality, such as Report a Concern.

The app's usage and reach across the Griffith Community will depend on its successful promotion to students and employees. As a key safety initiative, promotion to maximise the use of SafeZone at Griffith will be supported through Safe Campuses and other Safe and Respectful Communities initiatives as relevant.

Finalise and implement the Integrated Care Model

It is anticipated that detailed requirements for the resourcing of gender-based violence responses may be prescribed in the National Code. While the Integrated Care Model has pre-empted known elements of the Code, these additional details may impact the required skillset or volume of resourcing. Therefore, before implementing the Integrated Care Model, the Safe and Respectful Communities working group will ensure that proposed resourcing and response practices comply with requirements stipulated in the National Code.

Safety and support for students undertaking clinical placement and work-integrated learning

The National Action Plan states that Universities are responsible for ensuring that teaching and learning environments, including work-integrated learning and clinical placement sites, are equitable, accessible, respectful and safe. Therefore, focused consideration of students' awareness of their rights and responsibilities regarding safe and respectful conduct and their right to access support services and reporting is required. This area of focus aims to complement work led by the Dean, Career Readiness.

Gender-based violence education and training

A draft framework is being developed to provide an iterative approach to gender-based violence education. However, additional details are expected to be outlined in the final National Code. To support the implementation of gender-based violence training and education, a subgroup will be established to support the Safe and Respectful Communities Expert Reference Group, providing a whole-of-organisation approach to education and training.

The proposed framework, being developed by the Safe and Respectful Communities working group, will provide a suite of educational modules or workshops for students and employees, covering the themes of:

- respectful behaviour
- University conduct expectations
- support and reporting options
- respectful relationships and sexual interactions (including consent)
- responding to disclosures
- recognising the signs and drivers of gender-based violence
- prevention of gender-based violence
- being an effective bystander

Safe Student Accommodation sub-group

The National Action Plan has highlighted the intention to introduce a national code for Student Accommodation in addition to the Code for Higher Education. There will be varying responsibilities for on-campus, university-owned, and partner providers, and these will need to be considered carefully by the university to ensure as much consistency for Griffith students as possible. To support this and begin early planning for implementing both codes, a Safe Student Accommodation sub-group will be established to support the Safe and Respectful Communities Expert Reference Group and lead the implementation of student accommodation-specific initiatives.

Improving data management

The introduction of Service Now at the University has presented an opportunity to transfer the Report a Concern mechanism to this platform, which will, in turn, provide data and workflow enhancements. Implementing process adjustments within the proposed Integrated Care Model will also enhance consistency and transparency in future reporting periods while maintaining individual privacy.

Under the National Action Plan and Code, the sector will have standard data definitions and reporting measures. These measures and definitions will be considered against existing systems and reporting at the University and will guide the implementation of related improvements. They will also guide future reporting within and external to the Griffith University community.

