



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF QUEENSLAND  
AUSTRALIA

CREATE CHANGE

# Strategic Framework and Action Plan for Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response





It's absolutely essential that we continue to cultivate a safe culture across the University, where we have zero tolerance for any form of violence or disrespect. This Strategic Framework and Action Plan outlines UQ's approach to preventing sexual misconduct, as well as providing appropriate support to the survivors of sexual assault or harassment. Ultimately, for this to be successful, we need to promote an environment of equality, inclusion and respect<sup>1</sup>

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**Vice-Chancellor and President**  
**The University of Queensland**

<sup>1</sup>The Vice-Chancellor's response to the Change the Course report is available at [respect.uq.edu.au/article/2017/07/message-vice-chancellor](https://respect.uq.edu.au/article/2017/07/message-vice-chancellor).



## Background

In 2017, the Australian Human Rights Commission released results from a national study highlighting significant rates of sexual misconduct<sup>2</sup> (sexual assault and sexual harassment) on university campuses across Australia.<sup>3</sup> The report emphasised inadequate university responses and support systems for students experiencing sexual misconduct. Since the release of this report, UQ has reiterated our commitment to ensuring our campuses are safe and respectful environments, and that students have access to timely and appropriate systems of support. Since 2017, the Sexual Misconduct Support Unit (SMSU) has worked to ensure survivors of sexual misconduct at UQ have access to timely systems of support, including reporting options, 'reasonable measures' and emotional support.<sup>4</sup> In 2019, UQ Respect was established to support the coordination and promotion of the SMSU and to strengthen UQ's approach to prevention through student and staff focused training, education, and promotional campaigns.

This *Strategic Framework and Action Plan for Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response* sets out UQ's commitment to providing students and staff with safe and respectful environments free from any forms of physical or emotional harm and discrimination, including sexual misconduct. We recognise that preventing sexual misconduct requires action from all levels of society. At UQ, we are building the leaders of the future and we acknowledge that our university environment has the potential to create change through shaping broader social norms across Australia.

## Mission

To promote a safe and respectful campus culture by engaging our communities of students and staff in the prevention of sexual misconduct and providing trauma-informed<sup>2</sup> support for survivors.

This *Framework* aligns with UQ's mission and values, set out in the *UQ Strategic Plan 2018-2021*<sup>5</sup> through:

- striving for the personal and professional success of our students and staff (**Mission**)
- promoting mutual respect and diversity (**Values**)
- supporting our people (**Values**).

<sup>2</sup>For definitions of the terms used in this document refer to the UQ Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures available at: [ppl.app.uq.edu.au/content/1.50.13-sexual-misconduct](http://ppl.app.uq.edu.au/content/1.50.13-sexual-misconduct).

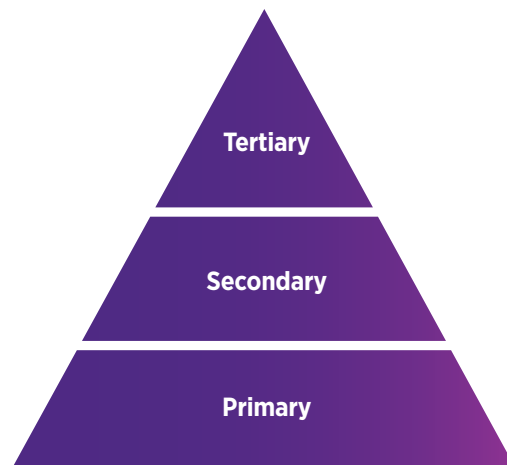
<sup>3</sup>Australian Human Rights Commission. (2017). *Change the Course: National Report on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at Australian Universities*. <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/sex-discrimination/publications/change-course-national-report-sexual-assault-and-sexual-harassment-at-australian-universities>. Sydney: Australian Human Rights Commission.

<sup>4</sup>See progress report on Change the Course recommendations, available at [www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/sex-discrimination/audit-2018](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/sex-discrimination/audit-2018)

<sup>5</sup>See the *UQ Strategic Plan 2018-2021*, available at: [about.uq.edu.au/strategic-plan/vision-mission-values](http://about.uq.edu.au/strategic-plan/vision-mission-values)

# A public health approach

Addressing sexual assault and sexual harassment requires action across primary, secondary and tertiary levels of prevention. This approach encompasses support for individuals while striving to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our entire community. Through taking steps in primary, secondary and tertiary prevention, we can ensure our approach to sexual misconduct prevention is not only responsive but also transformative.



## Primary prevention

The goal of primary prevention is to halt violence and harassment before it occurs. Our primary prevention response will centre on ensuring our campuses are safe environments for all students and staff, regardless of gender, sexuality, cultural background, ability, religion or any other factor.

We are committed to addressing the root causes of violence, assault and harassment, providing students with education on gender equality, healthy and respectful relationships, and creating an environment of zero tolerance to violence.

## Secondary prevention

Secondary prevention focuses on the immediate response to violence or harassment, including acts to stop or change the trajectory of a situation and initial responses to disclosures of sexual misconduct. We are committed to promoting an ethical bystander approach across our campuses, equipping students and staff with the knowledge, skills and confidence to safely intervene when witnessing a potential act of sexual misconduct and to challenge attitudes that condone sexual misconduct and violence against women more broadly.<sup>6</sup>

We recognise that sexual misconduct is experienced by people of all genders, sexualities, ages, abilities and cultural backgrounds. We are committed to providing our students and staff with timely and appropriate support services through trauma-informed response and care.

## Tertiary prevention

Tertiary prevention focuses on care and support after an act of sexual violence or harassment. Our tertiary prevention approaches acknowledge that trauma can affect every aspect of a person's work, study and home life. The SMSU will provide assistance to survivors, their supporters and perpetrators where appropriate.

We will continue to encourage reporting of incidents of sexual misconduct including anonymous and third party reporting. We will maintain our strong partnership with the UQ Integrity and Investigations Unit to ensure all matters of sexual misconduct, applicable under the *Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures*, are investigated in a robust and timely manner.

## UQ Respect Goals



<sup>6</sup>Sexual misconduct is experienced by people of all genders. Women experience disproportionate rates of sexual misconduct and research indicates that prevention of sexual misconduct must include challenging social and cultural norms that support and condone gender inequality and violence against women. <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/resource/change-the-story-a-shared-framework-for-the-primary-prevention-of-violence-against-women-and-their-children-in-australia>





## Underpinning principles

### Whole of university approach

We recognise the importance of a 'whole-of-organisation' approach.

We are committed to establishing robust and best practice sexual misconduct policies and procedures supported by visible leadership, comprehensive student and staff engagement, and ongoing commitment to cultural change.

### The gendered nature of sexual misconduct

Sexual assault and harassment can happen to anyone, and every survivor deserves to be treated with respect and to have access to appropriate, trauma-informed support systems.

We acknowledge that sexual misconduct is driven by social and cultural norms that support strict notions of gender identity and expression, gender inequality and condone, excuse or trivialise violence against women.

We will strive to ensure all survivors from our community have access to timely, trauma-informed support, while working to address underlying, structural causes within our campus environments.

### Intersectionality

For key groups within our society, social systems of power (e.g. sexism, racism, homophobia) intersect with individual identities (e.g. gender, sexuality, cultural background) to create unique and exacerbated experiences of sexual assault, sexual harassment and other forms of violence. We acknowledge that broader social drivers influence people's experiences of violence in different and complex ways. In responding to and preventing sexual misconduct, we will strive to acknowledge the unique social locations our students and staff inhabit and address broader, structural inequalities that support sexual misconduct.

## Scope

This *Framework* sets out UQ's approach to response and prevention of sexual misconduct on all our campuses. We are committed to continued and improved provision of support for students and staff who have experienced sexual misconduct and further acknowledge that primary prevention requires long-term culture change.

## Measuring success

We acknowledge the importance of robust monitoring and evaluation systems to ensure our goals are achieved. We will track our progress over the long term using internal and external quantitative and qualitative evaluations.

## Governance

UQ Respect, which includes the SMSU, is responsible for implementation of this *Framework*. The Vice Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Sexual Misconduct oversees the implementation of this *Framework* and supporting *Action Plan*, which are reviewed every three years with input from internal and external stakeholders.





# Action Plan

## Aim

The *Action Plan* provides a map for implementing the *Strategic Framework* over the next three years (2020-2023).

## Objectives

1. Promote a culture of safety and respect across our campuses and learning and research environments.
2. Promote respectful, consensual and safe relationships among our community.
3. Support members of the UQ community who have experienced sexual misconduct, including those whose experiences are unrelated to UQ but affecting their learning, work and/or research.
4. Provide clear and transparent policies and procedures, including confidential methods of making formal reports of sexual misconduct to the University.
5. Promote compassionate and trauma-informed first response to disclosures of sexual misconduct and increase awareness and visibility of support services available to the UQ community.

# Key actions

PRIMARY PREVENTION		
Activity	Objective	Action
Online module	1, 2	Implement and promote a new online module that is relevant to our community, available to all staff and students.
Student-focused consent and respect campaign	1, 2	Support a student-focused consent and respect campaign across all campuses.
		The consent and respect campaigns will be refreshed and re-implemented at the beginning of each calendar year.
UQ Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures (also secondary and tertiary)	1, 3, 5	Increase awareness of the <i>Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures</i> .
		Develop a document to support students and staff to navigate and understand expectations and procedures.
		Review <i>Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures</i> annually.
		Provide support to colleges to update policies and procedures where necessary.
Respectful relationship training	2	Provide students with training on consent and establishing and maintaining respectful intimate relationships.
Respectful supervisory relationships campaign	1, 2, 3	Integrate <i>Universities Australia Principles for Respectful Supervisory Relationships</i> into supervisor induction processes.
		Provide training modules to academic staff.
		Develop and disseminate a summary of <i>Universities Australia</i> recommendations.
		Promote respectful supervisory relationship principles with students including understanding individual's rights and boundaries.
Sexual misconduct prevention and respectful campus culture training (also secondary prevention)	1, 2, 5	Continue and strengthen <i>Sexual Misconduct Response and Prevention 101</i> staff development training.
		Adapt the <i>Sexual Misconduct Response and Prevention 101 training</i> course to be offered to students.
SECONDARY PREVENTION		
Activity	Objective	Action
Ethical bystander promotion (also primary prevention)	1, 2, 3	Collaboratively develop a student-led ethical bystander awareness campaign promoted during semester and at key events.
		This campaign will be refreshed and re-implemented each calendar year.
		Deliver ethical bystander information to students, including short presentations and interactive, practical training.
		Offer ethical bystander training to all staff.
		Make information about being an ethical bystander accessible to students and staff communities via the UQ Respect website.
First response training	1, 3, 4, 5	Develop and promote a campaign providing education on trauma-informed response and services and supports available at UQ.
First Responder Network	1, 3, 4, 5	Strengthen the First Responder Network through increasing membership and providing ongoing training, community of practice and increased visibility.
TERTIARY PREVENTION		
Activity	Objective	Action
Sexual Misconduct Support Unit (SMSU)	3, 4	Continue and strengthen support available to survivors of sexual misconduct and their supporters at UQ.
		Improve data collection, tracking and reporting systems.
		Improve student awareness of SMSU and reporting options.



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## Contacts

### UQ Respect Coordinator

For information regarding the *Strategic Framework, Action Plan* or related initiatives at UQ.

**T** +61 344 32629  
**E** [uqrespect@uq.edu.au](mailto:uqrespect@uq.edu.au)  
**W** [respect.uq.edu.au](https://respect.uq.edu.au)

### Sexual Misconduct Support Unit (SMSU)

For counselling, guidance and academic support for survivors of sexual misconduct and their supporters at UQ.

**T** +61 3443 1000  
**E** [sexualmisconductsupport@uq.edu.au](mailto:sexualmisconductsupport@uq.edu.au)  
**W** [respect.uq.edu.au/support](https://respect.uq.edu.au/support)

### To make a confidential report about sexual misconduct at UQ

**W** [respect.uq.edu.au/report](https://respect.uq.edu.au/report)

### In an emergency

In a campus emergency call **3365 3333**  
For 24 hour support call **1800 Respect**

# UQ Respect

CRICOS Provider 00025B