

Reporting to Police: Your Rights and Options

Choosing to report your experience of sexual assault to the police can feel like a big decision. It is important you have access to information about the police reporting process so that you can make an informed choice.

It is your right to choose if, and when, you want to report your experience.

You can choose to speak with a police officer about what the process involves before deciding whether to make a formal report.

What is sexual assault?

Sexual assault includes any sexual activity that is unwanted or occurs in the absence of affirmative consent.

How can I make a report to the police?

If the sexual assault occurred in Queensland, you can make a report to the Queensland Police Service. There are a few ways you can report sexual assault to the police.

You can make a report online at <https://forms.police.qld.gov.au/launch/SexualAssault>. When you make a report online you will be contacted by an investigator who will discuss possible next steps with you.

Alternatively, you can make a report by contacting your local police station. You can find a police station near you at <https://www.police.qld.gov.au/stations>.

There is also an **Alternative Reporting Option (ARO)** which allows you to provide police with as much information about your experience as you would like to share, with the option of remaining anonymous. Reports made through ARO will not be investigated by police. However, the information you provide can be used by police to assist other prosecutions against an offender.

What happens when I make a report?

If the assault was recent, the police will want to ensure your immediate safety and wellbeing. Depending on the circumstances of your report, if the assault happened very recently you may be asked if you want to have a forensic medical examination to preserve physical evidence. The [Sexual Assault Response Team](#) at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital can provide information about, and support during, forensic medical examinations.

The police can also coordinate temporary accommodation for you if you are unsafe in your current place of residence.

You may be offered a referral to a service that can provide counselling and other forms of support that the police do not provide.

A police officer will explain your reporting options, and possible next steps. You will be asked to make a **formal statement**, which records everything you can remember about your experience in as much detail as possible. Giving your statement can sometimes take several hours or multiple appointments. You can take breaks whenever you need to, and you can have a support person with you throughout this process.

Can I speak with an officer of a particular gender?

You have the right to ask to speak with an officer of a particular gender. It may not always be possible depending on who is on duty at that time, but where possible your preferences will be accommodated.

If you identify as LGBTQIA+ you can choose to contact an LGBTIQ+ liaison officer. LGBTIQ+ liaison officers can provide non-judgemental advice, assistance or referral for police-related matters.

What if I'm not sure if what I experienced was a criminal offence?

You do not need to know whether your experience of sexual assault was a criminal offence before speaking with a police officer or making a report.

It is the role of the police to work out whether your experience of sexual assault was a criminal offence.

You can make a report to the police regardless of whether you are an Australian citizen or not.

I was sexually assaulted a while ago – can I still make a police report?

It is never too late to make a report.

Regardless of when the assault happened, including if it happened many years ago, you can still report it or speak to a police officer. It is very common for people to take time to decide to report their experience of sexual assault to the police.

For further details, contact

uqrespect@uq.edu.au
respect.uq.edu.au

For after hours assistance, call the
UQ Counselling and Crisis Line at 1300 851 998



CREATE CHANGE

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What happens if there is an investigation?

The initial stage of the investigation process involves collecting all the available evidence, which includes any information or materials that may assist in the investigation.

Investigators will ask you a series of questions about the circumstances leading up to, during and following the assault. Recalling an experience of sexual assault can be difficult. Police investigators are trained to understand the impacts of sexual assault and support you through this process. You can have a support person with you during the interview.

If the offender is identified, the police will ask them if they would like to be interviewed. They can refuse to be interviewed or answer the police's questions.

What if I do not want to continue with the investigation process?

It is your right to choose not to continue with the reporting or investigation process and you will be supported in your decision.

Deciding not to continue with the investigation does not stop you from proceeding at a later date. Where there are delays to an investigation, this can result in some evidence being lost over time.

In some cases, where police feel there is a risk to community safety, they may need to continue with an investigation.

Useful Contacts

Triple Zero (000)

Call 000 in an emergency for police or ambulance assistance.

Policelink

You can seek police advice and report non-urgent police matters through Policelink.

Phone: 131 444

Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)

SART is a team of social workers that provide free and confidential:

- support and information to people (aged 14 and above) who have recently experienced sexual assault;
- information about reporting options;
- support during forensic medical examinations; and
- practical and emotional support.

Phone: (07) 3646 5207 – available 24/7

Queensland Sexual Assault Helpline

The Queensland Sexual Assault Helpline provides free information, advice and counselling support. They can also provide referrals to services near you.

Phone: 1800 010 120 – available 7.30am – 11.30pm, every day

Sexual Misconduct Support Unit (SMSU)

The SMSU provides free, confidential support to members of the UQ community around sexual assault and harassment.

They can provide information about your reporting options, including reporting to the police.

To make an appointment:

- call (07) 3443 1000 – available 8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday
- book an appointment online via StudentHub **here**.



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