



University of  
**Southern  
Queensland**

# **Safer Communities Action Plan**

2023 - 2025

# Contents

|                                       |          |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Acknowledgments</b>                | <b>2</b> |
| <hr/>                                 |          |
| <b>Content Warning</b>                | <b>2</b> |
| <hr/>                                 |          |
| <b>Intersectionality</b>              | <b>2</b> |
| <hr/>                                 |          |
| <b>Background</b>                     | <b>2</b> |
| <hr/>                                 |          |
| <b>Governance</b>                     | <b>2</b> |
| <hr/>                                 |          |
| <b>Our Safer Communities Approach</b> | <b>3</b> |
| <hr/>                                 |          |
| <b>Our Underpinning Principles</b>    | <b>3</b> |
| <hr/>                                 |          |
| <b>Our Action Plan</b>                | <b>4</b> |
| <hr/>                                 |          |
| Aim                                   | 4        |
| Objectives                            | 4        |
| Evaluation                            | 4        |
| Our Focus Area                        | 4        |
| Key Actions                           | 5        |
| <br>                                  |          |
| <b>References</b>                     | <b>7</b> |
| <hr/>                                 |          |
| <b>Support Services</b>               | <b>8</b> |
| <hr/>                                 |          |

## Acknowledgments

University of Southern Queensland (UniSQ) would like to thank students and staff and most importantly those directly impacted by concerning experiences like sexual violence for their input into the development of this framework. UniSQ would also like to acknowledge the specialist guidance in developing this Action Plan from Our Watch (2021) and Universities Australia (2023).

## Content Warning

This document uses the term 'unwanted or concerning experiences' to collectively explain many different experiences including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic and family violence, physical violence, threatening behaviour, discrimination, harassment and bullying. Therefore, this document contains content related to sexual assault, sexual harassment and other unwanted or concerning experiences. If you would like to speak to someone for support, there are a range of free and confidential support services available and listed at the end of this document.

## Intersectionality

This Action Plan recognises that unwanted or concerning experiences such as sexual assault and sexual harassment is further impacted by other personal factors including Aboriginality, age, race, ability, sexual orientation, sexual identity, and socioeconomic background. This intersectionality must be considered when determining fairness and equity in opportunities, rights, and responsibilities and in the development of resources and campaigns (Carman & Farha, 2023).

## Background

In September 2021, Universities Australia launched the second National Student Safety Survey (Heywood, et al., 2022; Nisbet et al., 2022), which collected data on the scale and nature of university students' experiences of sexual assault and sexual harassment. One report of sexual harassment or sexual assault is one too many, and the results of the 2021 survey indicate that we can improve our work in addressing sexual harassment and sexual assault in our universities.

Changing unacceptable attitudes and addressing the drivers of sexual harassment and/or sexual assault across society is complex and requires a sustained effort. UniSQ is proud to promote gender equality and is committed to doing better in addressing sexual harassment and sexual assault.

In 2022, UniSQ implemented Safer Communities to address the need for a coordinated response to threat management, and this includes:

- Coordinator, Safer Communities
- Assessment and Monitoring Behavioural Risk (AMBR) Team
- Safer Communities Reference Committee, and
- Systems infrastructure for reporting

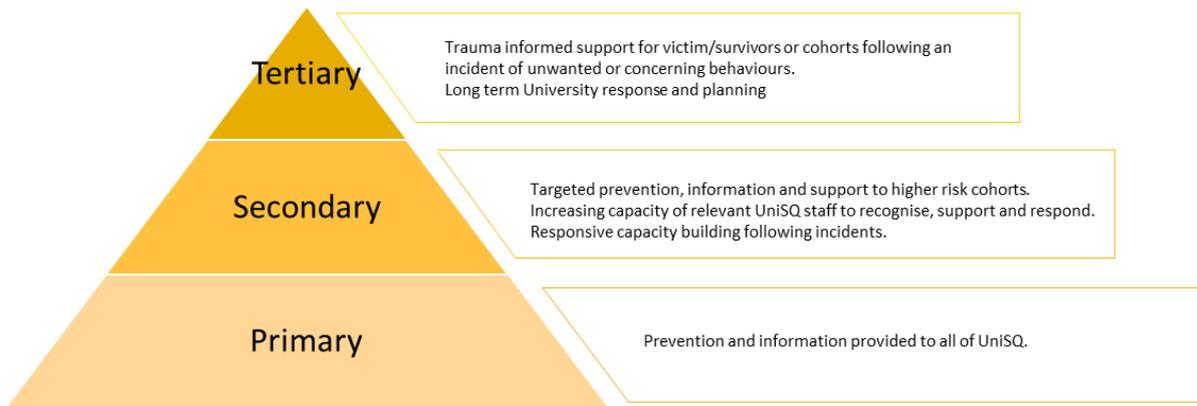
## Governance

The Safer Communities Reference Committee (SCRC) oversees the implementation of the Safer Communities Action Plan 2023 - 2025 which is reviewed every three years with internal and external stakeholders. The SCRC meet quarterly and reports to the University Safety Committee, through the Student Portfolio Safety Committee. The sub-committee of the SCRC, the Assessment and Monitoring Behavioural Risk Group (AMBR), case manages complex student behavioural complaints and reports quarterly on an analysis of trends to the SCRC. AMBR meets monthly and as needed for responsive case management.

## Our Safer Communities Approach

The Safer Communities model was originally developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 1989) and is aimed at supporting communities in coordinating their efforts to cultivate a culture of safety and respect. At UniSQ, Safer Communities covers not only sexual assault and sexual harassment, it also extends to psychosocial hazard management, and concerning and unwanted behaviours, for example, bullying, discrimination, harassment and domestic and family violence.

UniSQ will utilise a public health model (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2014) to prevent and respond to concerning and unwanted experiences at the University and will provide a trauma informed support service.



## Our Underpinning Principles

Five core principles underpin Safer Communities activities at UniSQ

| Principles                         |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Trust</b>                       | UniSQ will increase our trustworthiness within our community by being transparent and relatable throughout unwanted or concerning experiences   |
| <b>Adaptable and Responsive</b>    | UniSQ will be timely, flexible, and adjust to emerging trends and feedback around unwanted or concerning experiences  |
| <b>Maximise choice and control</b> | UniSQ will be victim/survivor led in matters of unwanted or concerning experiences, honouring them as the experts in their own lives and allowing them to direct the pace and scope of support and ensuring they understand all justice seeking avenues available |
| <b>Prevention</b>                  | UniSQ will renew our prevention efforts and innovate to clearly explain key concepts and dispel myths around unwanted or concerning experiences   |
| <b>Trauma Informed University</b>  | UniSQ will work towards being a Trauma Informed University that recognises the emotions, psychological, and behavioural symptoms of trauma may play in a person's life  |

# Our Action Plan

## Aim

The Safer Communities Action Plan provides a map for implementing the Safer Communities approach over the next three years (2023 – 2025).

## Objectives

1. Promote a culture of safety and respect in the student context, including reducing the risk of psychosocial hazards impacting students, and addressing the drivers of unwanted behaviours, sexual harassment, and sexual assault.
2. Provide clear and transparent policies, procedures and processes, to provide a student-centric supportive response, including confidential methods of making formal reports or concerns regarding unwanted behaviours and sexual misconduct to the University.
3. Analyse and report on trends in regard to unwanted behaviours within the University community to develop evidence-based interventions.

## Evaluation

Progress towards achievement of our objectives will be monitored by the Safer Communities Reference Committee.

- Students reporting or disclosing unwanted behaviours are satisfied with the trauma informed support they receive through the Safer Communities support.
- At-risk cohorts have an increased knowledge of reporting and support options available at UniSQ.
- Students feel safe at UniSQ.

## Our Focus Area

UniSQ has been led by the results of the National Student Safety Survey, the work of Our Watch – Educating for Equality (2021), and the *Managing the Risk of Psychosocial Hazards at Work: Code of Practice* (2022) in the development of our focus areas.

| Principles  |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Prioritising the wellbeing of students who have experienced sexual assault and/or sexual harassment through:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protective measures (such as class scheduling adjustments)</li> <li>• Supportive measures (such as quick access to trauma informed support staff)</li> <li>• Referral to access specialist support</li> <li>• Care coordination support across the University</li> </ul> |
| <b>Targeted Education and Awareness campaigns covering:</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rigid gender stereotypes</li> <li>• The impact of language</li> <li>• The objectification of women</li> <li>• Online harassment</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Support for those who use unwanted or concerning behaviours through:</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trauma informed support staff</li> <li>• Holding people accountable for their actions and decisions</li> <li>• Referral to access specialist support</li> <li>• Care coordinator support across the University</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Education and Awareness raising activities focused on</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular promotion of Share a Concern reporting channel</li> <li>• Specialised services to support reporting and accessing support</li> </ul>   |

## Key Actions

### Primary Prevention

- Implementation of a sexual harassment and sexual assault policy suite.
- A review of existing local Residential College policies, procedures, and processes in relation to sexual assault and sexual harassment to enhance referral process with specialised support provided in the Wellbeing team for Residential Colleges students.
- Creation of trauma informed guides for reference when updating UniSQ policy and procedures; for managing informal complaints; for recognising the behavioural symptoms of trauma and how to refer to support; and for decision makers in formal complaints and grievances.
- Clear and plain student focused language referring to consent and respectful relationships including:
  - consent,
  - respectful relationships,
  - rigid gender stereotypes,
  - online safety,
  - understanding what are unwanted or concerning experiences,
  - Supporting psychosocial wellbeing for students
  - Awareness campaigns developed to address nuances in student cohorts (e.g., Residential Colleges students, international student).
- Development of awareness campaigns 'supporting disclosures' materials and training for staff to support reporting of behavioural concerns and managing disclosures from students; promotional materials to increase awareness of reporting options.
- Renew and incorporate the student UniSQ Respect. webpage into the Safer Communities webpage, including visibility of the Safer Communities Action Plan.
- Online and in-person by-stander awareness training options for students, including:
  - Mandatory training for Residential Colleges staff
  - Psychosocial hazard training, including training pertaining to the *Managing the Risk of Psychosocial Hazards at Work: Code of Practice* relevant to students.
- Implementation of training for staff regarding positive duty to prevent sexual assault and sexual harassment, by-stander awareness, managing psychosocial hazards in the workplace and other relevant legislative support.
- Identify foreseeable hazards, and implement that could give rise to psychosocial risks within the system of implementing teaching and learning and implement controls to support psycho-social health and safety of students.
- Complete and monitor Safety Risk Assessment (SRA) templates for psychosocial hazards for students, including our positive duty to prevent unlawful discrimination and sexual harassment perpetrated by third parties (students).
- Embed wellbeing, safety and behavioural education within programs.

### Secondary Prevention

- Development of a training module for students on receiving and managing disclosures from peers
- Development of a training module for staff on receiving and managing disclosures of sexual violence and unwanted behaviours from students in order to support students and referrals to student services
- Strengthen relationships with non- UniSQ residential organisations to support them with resources and training programs
- Strengthen relationships with UniSQ clubs, societies, and student leadership activities to support them with resources and training programs
- Training will be provided to contractors with first-responder responsibilities

- Training for staff in recognising the behavioural symptoms of trauma and when to refer for support.
- Training for staff cohort teams (e.g., Student Administration, Executive leadership) in trauma informed communication with students.
- Training and development of support resources for Graduate Research Supervisors in in power and control, professional boundaries and respectful relationships within the supervisory relationship context.
- Training for lecturing staff in managing difficult conversations and disclosures from students.
- Development of an educative module (Turnaround Programs) for identified students engaging in concerning or unwanted behaviours to support development of culturally and behaviourally appropriate student behaviours.

## **Tertiary Prevention**

- Improve student awareness of reporting options and support available through Safer Communities, with a focus on confidential support and reporting options.
- Improve data collection and analysis with the provision of quarterly reporting to Safer Communities Reference Committee.
- Analyse and report on trends regarding unwanted behaviours within the University community to develop evidence-based interventions for approval by the Univeristy Safety Committee.
- Refine and further promote Share a Concern to encourage reporting of concerns and connection to support.
- Ensure student voice is included in the development and implementation of the Safer Communities Action Plan and instate Safer Communities student ambassadors.

## References

- Australian Institute of Family Studies. (2014). *Defining the public health model for the child welfare services context*. Child family Community Australia Resource Sheet. <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/defining-public-health-model-child-welfare-services-context>
- Carman, M., and Farha, T. (2023) *Intersectionality in Primary Prevention, Safe and Equal*. Accessed: [https://safeandequal.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Intersectionality-In-Primary-Prevention\\_A4\\_FINAL\\_01.pdf](https://safeandequal.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Intersectionality-In-Primary-Prevention_A4_FINAL_01.pdf)
- Heywood, W., Myers, P., Powell, A., Meikle, G., & Nguyen, D. (2022). *National Student Safety Survey: Report on the prevalence of sexual harassment and sexual assault among university students in 2021*. Melbourne: The Social Research Centre.
- Nisbet, L., Halse, G., van Esbroek, E., Heywood, W., Powell, A. & Myers, P. (2022). *National Student Safety Survey: Qualitative research on experiences of sexual harassment and sexual assault among university students in 2021*. Melbourne: The Social Research Centre.
- Our Watch (2021). *Educating for Equality*. Accessed: <https://media-cdn.ourwatch.org.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/03/03162916/1.1-Educating-for-Equality.pdf>
- Universities Australia. (2023). *Primary Prevention of Sexual Harm in the Univeristy Sector: Good Practice Guide*. Universities Australia. Accessed: <https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/policy-submissions/safety-wellbeing/good-practice-guide/>.
- World Health Organisation (WHO). (1989). *Manifesto for Safe Communities*. Stockholm.

## Support Services

### **1800 Respect**

1800 737 732

1800respect.org.au

### **13 YARN**

13 92 76

13yarn.org.au

### **MensLine**

1300 78 99 78

Mensline.org.au

### **UniSQ Student Wellbeing**

07 4631 2372

[student.success@usq.edu.au](mailto:student.success@usq.edu.au)

### **UniSQ Employee Assistance Program**

1800 808 374

assureprograms.com.au