

National Student Safety Survey FAQ page



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What is the 2021 National Student Safety Survey?

Australian universities have commissioned and funded the National Student Safety Survey (NSSS) which is conducted as part of Universities Australia *Respect.Now.Always.* initiative, a world-first, sector-wide program aims to prevent sexual violence in university communities and improve how universities respond to and support those who have been affected.

The survey will collect data on the scale and nature of university student experiences of sexual assault and sexual harassment.

At UTS, we believe that everyone has the right to study and work and live in a safe and respectful environment and we are proud to be an active member of the *Respect.Now.Always.* campaign. As places of higher learning and research, universities are in a unique position to promote gender equality and prevent violence, and the NSSS provides students with the opportunity to use their voice to help meaningfully shape UTS's future actions in helping achieve this.

I need help, where can I find support services?

- If you're on or off campus and in immediate danger or need urgent medical attention, please call emergency services on 000 or contact [UTS Security](#) on 1800 249 559.
- UTS provides a free [specialist](#) and [general counselling](#) support service where a counsellor can provide you with confidential support and assistance, and discuss [other steps and](#)

[options](#) with you.

- Any UTS student or staff member can [report an incident of sexual assault, indecent assault or sexual harassment](#) at any time.
- If you're a UTS student experiencing sexual assault or if you are a student or staff member concerned about someone in the UTS community, please contact the [UTS Sexual Assault Support Line](#) on 1800 531 626. This sexual assault support line is operational 24/7 for UTS students, with calls answered by or referred to trauma informed counsellors.
- If a UTS friend or colleague confides to you either [face to face](#) or [online](#) about an unwanted sexual experience or a distressful situation, be compassionate and let them know support is available.
- Information about [UTS Sexual Assault and Harassment Reporting Privacy Notice](#).
- UTS has a series of [community and support services](#) you can connect with
- If you would like support to help you deal with domestic, family, or sexual violence, call [1800 RESPECT](#)
- If you or someone you know is struggling, support is available from [Lifeline](#) on 13 11 14 or [Beyond Blue](#) on 1300 22 4636
- Access [mental health support services internationally](#)
- [The Employee Assistance Scheme](#) is a free, confidential counselling, coaching and support available to all UTS staff and their immediate family members
- MensLine Australia: can be contacted on 1300 78 99 78, or via [mensline.org.au](#)
- QLife, a referral service for LGBTQ people can be contacted on 1800 184 527 or via [qlife.org.au](#)
- Australia wide [university support and safety services](#)

When will it run?

The national survey will run from Monday 6 September to Sunday 3 October.

Who is conducting the survey?

The survey will be conducted by the [Social Research Centre](#) (SRC) in partnership with leading violence prevention expert Associate Professor Anastasia Powell of RMIT University.

Who has been selected to take part in the survey?

The survey will randomly sample students from universities across the sector. For most universities, 10,000 students will be sampled. For universities with less than 10,000 students, all eligible students will be selected to participate. The selection of students will take into account factors like gender, year of study, residency and level of study to make sure the sample is representative.

Is participation in the survey compulsory?

No. Participation in the survey is voluntary.

Will anyone be able to identify survey participants?

No. The survey results will be confidential, de-identified and aggregated.

Why is the survey being conducted?

The survey is being conducted as part of the *Respect. Now. Always.* initiative with the aim of measuring the prevalence of sexual assault and harassment experiences among students at Australian universities. It will also measure broader perceptions of safety and views towards student campus life. This in turn will help to understand the context in which these behaviours occur, understand help seeking and reporting behaviours, and inform universities' services and responses for student safety and wellbeing.

How do I take part in the survey?

From 6 September to 3 October 2021, students will be randomly selected to participate in the survey to ensure results are representative of the student population. If you have been randomly selected, you will initially be approached via email. Some students may also receive an invitation via SMS.

If you are not selected, you can still have your say by visiting nsss.edu.au from 6 September to 3 October.

When will the results be released?

De-identified and aggregated data will be released in 2022 once the results are collected and analysed by the Social Research Centre and Associate Professor Powell.

What is involved if I am invited to participate?

Participation is voluntary and involves completing an online survey. The survey questions will take most people 10 to 12 minutes to complete. No matter your circumstances, views or experiences, your participation in the survey is important as it will help ensure the results of the study accurately represent the views of all students at your university.

How did the Social Research Centre source my contact details?

Universities have provided information about you to the Social Research Centre for the sole purpose of conducting the survey. All information is treated confidentially and stored on a secure computer system.

Once the national survey data collection is completed, all survey responses will be permanently de-linked from contact information used to invite you to participate, meaning that there will be no information in your survey responses that can identify you.

All personal information will be destroyed by the Social Research Centre as soon as practical on completion of the research. The Social Research Centre complies with the Australian Privacy Principles, you can view more information about their privacy policy [here](#).

How long will the survey take to complete?

The survey will take 10–12 minutes to complete.

Will the survey be different to the 2016 survey?

The survey builds on and extends the foundational survey conducted in 2016. But there will be key differences, including behavioural questions on sexual assault. Comparability between the prevalence rate of the 2016 survey and the 2021 survey will be limited.

Will Covid-19 affect the results?

The survey will ask students about their experience of violence since starting university, regardless of where it occurred. If students have experienced violence, students will also be asked whether this occurred at university, including at any kind of university event, place, or occasion, whether on or off campus. Universities are concerned about these behaviours happening in student communities, whether they are on campus, off campus, on public transport, a student's home or online.

There are concerns worldwide that COVID-19 may have led to an increase in gender-based violence and online abuse.

UTS's recognises that the current COVID-19 situation is a challenging and isolating time for many of our students and we encourage you to reach out for [help and support](#) if you need it.

Is there ethics approval?

Yes – both the national survey and qualitative research have received ethics approval from a Human Research Ethics Committee.

The survey will contain highly sensitive questions. Student and survivor safety and wellbeing will be at the centre of the entire survey process.

UTS will continue to provide access to [counselling and other support services](#) during and after the survey to support our students.

Will only students who are currently at university be able to participate?

Only students currently at university will be randomly selected to participate in the survey. This is to guide further action and policies for current students.

All current students, whether or not they have been selected to participate in the survey, will also have the opportunity to share their story anonymously online by visiting nsss.edu.au from 6 September to 3 October. In depth accounts of student experiences, and students' suggestions for how universities can continue to improve, provides vital context for the Social Research Centre's final analysis.

The Social Research Centre wants to hear from those who have experienced sexual harassment, sexual assault or other unwanted sexual behaviour. It may be something that happened on-campus or off-campus; among university friends or staff; during participation in sporting clubs, student societies or other social gatherings; in student accommodation or on university fieldtrips or competitions. You can be either a current or recent (within the last 5 years) university student to take part.

Sharing your experiences of what happened, how you were or were not supported, and what universities can do better, is important. Your experience will inform universities' responses to student safety and wellbeing into the future.

Will students be able to stop and start the survey if they need?

Yes. Students will be able to stop and re-start the survey at any time to ensure they can take breaks if they need.

Support numbers and hyperlinks to relevant services will be on screen the whole time as students participate in the survey. Student safety and wellbeing will be at the centre of the entire survey process.

Did students and survivors have input in the survey process?

Yes – the Social Research Centre and Associate Professor Powell engaged students, survivors, experts and key organisations in the design of the survey.

Were LGBTIQ+ and international students consulted?

Yes – they were engaged as part of the survey development process.

Will universities be providing support to students during the course of the survey?

All universities have on campus [counselling services](#) available for students – as well as phone and online services.

Key support numbers will be provided to all survey participants while they do the survey.

Students will be able to stop and re-start the survey at any time if they need to take a break.

What have universities done since the first survey?

Since the survey results were released in late 2017, universities have implemented 800 major actions to prevent and respond to sexual violence in their institutions.

This includes first responder training for student leaders, consent and bystander training for staff and students, and working with students to co-design prevention programs.

Since 2017, Universities Australia has:

- partnered with student groups, survivor and victim advocates and the sexual violence response sector to develop best practice guidance for the sector, including [on responding to reports of sexual violence](#), and [respectful supervisory relationships](#)

- developed an online training module for all university staff on the drivers of sexual violence
- established a community of practice across the sector, with more than 200 university staff as members, sharing best practice and amplifying the reach of their efforts

In early 2019, [Universities Australia](#) partnered with [Our Watch](#) and the Victorian Government to develop a whole-of-institution approach to stop violence before it starts. Called Educating for Equality, this project examines all aspects of how a university operates, including research, teaching, student life and community activities. The model has been piloted and refined with four universities (Monash, La Trobe, Southern Cross and Western Sydney). A comprehensive set of resources and tools developed as part of the project – including an implementation guide, key messages and training – was provided to the sector in March 2021.

Technical questions

Are there language services available for the survey?

Rigorous testing conducted by the Social research Centre in partnership Associate Professor Anastasia Powell showed that translation into other languages is not necessary. If you need language assistance with the survey contact [UTS HELPS](#).

I'm having technical problems accessing or doing the survey, where do I go?

If you require technical support accessing or doing the survey or have questions about the survey itself, please contact the Social Research Centre's free-call helpdesk. You can:

- phone for free at 1800 023 040
- email safetysurvey@srcentre.com.au, or
- visit the SRC website at www.srcentre.com.au/our-research/safety-survey

Further information

If you have any questions about being invited to participate in the survey, or would like to opt out of the study, you can free call [1800 023 040](tel:1800023040) or email safetysurvey@srcentre.com.au.

Related links

- Social Research Centre [NSSS information page](#)
- Universities Australia [FAQ page](#)
- [Support services](#)