**PREVENTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

**by Simon Moss**

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| **The importance of this issue** |

Sexual harassment has become an increasingly significant issue at universities. After years of advocacy from many communities, in 2016, the Australian Human Rights Commission administered a survey to gauge the prevalence, nature, and reporting of sexual harassment and sexual assult at Australian universities—part of a campaign called Respect Now Always.

The results were startling. For example, about 50% of students reported they had been targets of sexual harassment and 26% at the university. Furthermore, about 7% of students reported they had been targets of sexual assault and almost 2% at the university. The figures were similar, but lower, at Charles Darwin University.

The most common manifestations of sexual harassment included inappropriate leering, intrusive questions about private lives or comments about physical appearance, and offensive jokes of a sexual nature. The perpetrators were most other students but sometimes tutors or lecturers. Many targets of sexual harassment did not report the problem because they felt such behavior is regarded as normal in Australia. The Appendix presents the 10 key actions that all universities have pledged to implement.

You might feel this issue is not relevant to you. You might perceive yourself as too kind to be a perspetrator or too resilient to be a target. But, these assumptions demonstrate limited awareness of both the complexities and nuances of this issue.

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| **Common misconceptions** |

To demonstrate these complexities and nuances, please decide which of the following statements are true or false.

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| **True or false?** |
| Relative to other women, women who supervise other people are especially likely to be the targets of sexual harassment. |
| People who have been the target of many, rather than one or two, instances of sexual harassment are more likely to attempt to convince themselves these incidences were insignificant |
| Women have have been the target of sexual harassment are often less likely to appear conscientious at work |
| Men who frequently perpetrate sexual harassment are more likely than other men to maintain eye contact while speaking to women—especially younger women |
| If people believe the intelligence and character of humans is fixed rather than modifiable, they are more likely to reject information in workshops that diverge from their preconceptions |
| In a bar, as closing time approaches, people feel that individuals of the opposite sex seem more attractive. This feeling of attraction, however, does not last until the next day |

If you believed that any of these statements were false, you are incorrect. Each of these statements have been substantiated empirically.

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| **Obligations of PhD and Masters by Research candidates** |

To help research candidates understand the subtleties of consent, communication, and support around sexual matters, first watch Consent Matters, available at <https://studying.epigeum.com/how-it-works>. In particular, from this site

* Press Register Now, and then complete the details. Register using your your @cdu.edu.au email address
* You should then receive an email—either in your inbox or junk male—to activate your account
* Then log in and choose Consent Matters – Australian Version from the list of online courses available.
* To complete the course, progress through the topics listed on the left side.
* Once you finish the course, download the certificate as proof of completion

In addition, you should read the CDU policy on preventing sexual harassment and the code of conduct. Use Google to identify these policies. As these policies imply

* If you observe sexual harassment or assault, you should report this behavior as soon as possible—because victims may be reluctant to report initially
* In particular, you could telephone or email a contact officer. The contact officer has received training to offer guidance and advice as well as to refer you to the appropriate person.
* For the details of these contact officers, proceed to <https://www.cdu.edu.au/opc/contact-officers>

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| **Contacts** |

If you ever feel unsafe on CDU, please consider the following contacts

* For concerns about security, contact CDU Security on 8946 7777.
* To complain about other staff or students, email [complaints@cdu.edu.au](mailto:complaints@cdu.edu.au)
* To seek the support of an advocate, email [advocacy@cdu.edu.au](mailto:advocacy@cdu.edu.au)
* For counselling, contact CDU Counselling Service on 8946 6288 or [counselling@cdu.edu.au](mailto:counselling@cdu.edu.au)
* If after hours support is needed, contact CDU After Hours Telephone Crisis Support: 1300 933 393

The National Support Line—1800 572 224—is also available until November 30. Furthermore, in the future, CDU will train contact officers. These individuals are the first people to contact if you experience issues around harassment, discrimination, violence, bullying, or conflict.

For more information about these services, you can watch <https://digmedia.cdu.edu.au/ssdcms/ipublic.do?u=775ac0f0cd46494> especially between 9.14 to 9.55, 22.05 to 25.20, 32.40 to 37.00, 37.43 to 41.05.

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| **Appendix: Key actions in the university** |

As a consequence of Respect Now Always, all universities have agreed to 10 key actions. This table summarises these actions.

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| **10 key actions** |
| **Education programs**. These programs utilize the latest evidence to help students develop respectful relationships—relationships that prevent sexual harassment or sexual assault. |
| **Recommit to the campaign**. Universities will commit again to Respect. Now. Always. They will, for example, enhance the visibilty of this issue and support services as well as disseminate campaign materials an orientation weeks. |
| **Supervision guidelines**. Several associations will, together, develop guidelines to guide the interactions between research supervisors and postgraduate students |
| **Training for university staff**. All staff, including executives, will receive training on these issues—such as awareness of unacceptable behaviors and responses to sexual harassment. |
| **First responder training**. The training will equip specific individuals on how to respond effectively and compassionately to disclosures of sexual assault and sexual harassment. |
| **Training for university counselors**. Mental health specialists at the university will receive training on how to offer support to individuals who disclose sexual assault or sexual harassment |
| **Best practice guidelines**. Universities Australia will develop a set of guidelines on how universities should respond to reports of sexual assault or sexual harassment |
| **Support line**: Universities Australia will establish an interim national telephone referral and support service. In the interim, Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia will operate this service |
| **Subsequent surveys**: Another survey will be administered in three years. |
| **Education in college and residential halls**: Training and resources will also be directed to college and residential halls |