Secondary Analysis of 2021 National Surveys of Staff and Student Experiences of Sexual Violence and Harassment in Irish HEIs

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Content Warning

The survey analysed in this report asked about personal experience with sexual misconduct, specifically sexual harassment and violence. Some of the language used in this report is explicit and some people may find it uncomfortable. Information on how to get help, if you need it, can be found below or here: https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2021/04/Links-to-supports.pdf

Service	Phone	Web
Text 50808	Free 24/7 support in a crisis – Text **'HELLO' to 50808**	https://www.textaboutit.ie/
Samaritans	National helpline - 116 123	https://www.samaritans.org/samaritans-ireland/
Dublin Rape Crisis Centre	24-Hour National Helpline at 1800 77 8888	https://www.rapecrisisireland.ie/ https://www.drcc.ie/
HSE		https://www2.hse.ie/services/satu/where-to-get-help/
Sexual Assault Treatment Units		https://www2.hse.ie/services/satu/
Safe Ireland		https://www.safeireland.ie/
Women's Aid	24-Hour National Helpline 1800 341 900	https://www.womensaid.ie/get-help/support-services/
Men's Aid	National confidential helpline 01 554 3811	https://www.mensaid.ie/
Local Gardaí		https://www.garda.ie/en/crime/sexual-crime/
HSE My Options	My Options freephone 1800 828 010	https://www2.hse.ie/services/unplanned-pregnancy/
LGBT Ireland	1800 929 539	https://lgbt.ie/

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Overview of the survey

In April 2021, at the request of the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Simon Harris, T.D., the Higher Education Authority (HEA) conducted national surveys to monitor the experiences of students and staff in relation to sexual violence, harassment in order to create a robust evidence base for further policy and funding decisions in relation to tackling sexual violence and harassment in higher education institutions (HEIs). The HEA established an expert Advisory Group on Ending Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment in HEIs in January 2021 to support this work. In collaboration with this advisory group, the HEA Centre of Excellence for Equality Diversity and Inclusion developed and ran national surveys of staff and students to monitor their experiences in April 2021. 11,417 responses were received (7,901 students and 3,516 staff). The results of the staff survey are now presented in this report. The report provides a picture of staff attitudes towards and experiences of sexual violence and sexual harassment, as well as their awareness and confidence in HEI policies, processes and initiatives in the area.

The surveys of staff and student experiences were conducted online using Microsoft Forms between 12 April and 5 May 2021 by the HEA. The survey content was adapted from the Sexual Experiences Survey (SES) content used in the Active* Consent / USI national survey of students in 2020 (Burke et al., 2020). This was in turn an adaptation of the Administrator-Researcher Campus Climate Collaborative (ARC3) Campus Climate Survey (Swartout et al., 2019). These sources were edited and adapted by the HEA ESVH Advisory Group. The ESVH Advisory Group also included additional statements and questions based on their analysis of what was required in a comprehensive survey tool relevant to the Irish higher education sector.

The surveys were introduced by an extensive information section and warnings concerning the content of the survey, data protection and confidentiality. Each section of the survey included an introduction, and particularly sensitive sections of the survey asked staff members and students whether they wished to respond or skip the section concerned. Links to supports were provided at several points in the survey.

Summary of Findings and Identification of Recommendations

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) Student Survey and Staff Survey reports published in 2022 provided a detailed item-by-item breakdown of survey responses for each group of respondents to the online surveys that were disseminated nationally across the Higher Education sector in 2021. The secondary analysis of the quantitative survey data compiles the individual survey items into a set of key indicators. This was achieved by aggregating survey items into sets of related variables – for instance, by compiling an overall rape myth belief score, campus environment perceptions score, and so on. This produced a set of key indicators to deploy when assessing similarities and differences in survey responses associated with particular groups of student of staff respondents.

The grouped and totalled item responses are used to analyse the participant cohorts reported on in the previous published reports, and extends to groups that were not focused on in the previous work completed on the data set. The secondary analysis of the quantitative surveys focuses on:
- Staff and students who identify as bisexual
- Staff and students who expressed relatively high levels of rape myth beliefs
- Students who experienced sexual violence while incapacitated
- Students engaged in a postgraduate taught programme
- Students engaged in a PhD or Masters by research
- International and non-international students
- Staff grouped by salary and contract types
- An intersectional approach to staff and students that accommodates sexual orientation, gender identity, and staff role

The follow-up secondary analysis of the original data sets also provided the opportunity to analyse the open-ended qualitative comments that were provided at the end of the surveys by students and staff. As this is the first time these qualitative data have been analysed, the resulting reports are provided as two separate, in-depth thematic analyses.

Recommendations

The socio-ecological approach to culture change is taken as a basis for formulating a set of recommendations that arise from this secondary analysis of the student and staff survey responses obtained in 2021. That approach proved to be a good fit for the findings. It sets the issues of sexual violence and harassment documented in the HEA survey findings in a broader context of power and marginalisation, while foregrounding the Higher Education institution as a setting that can, through policy and related action, achieve the potential set out in the 2019 DFHERIS framework 'Safe, Respectful, and Positive: Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment in Irish Higher Education Institutions'. The findings demonstrate the strengths, willingness, and potential of staff and students to achieve the policy goals set out in the 2019 framework. The findings also explore the high rate of violence and harassment documented in the student and staff survey responses, including the experiences of high risk groups, and the work required to have effective policies for prevention, investigations, and secondary support that are trusted by all groups.

This set of recommendations is proposed mindful of the HEA Implementation Plan 2022-24 that was introduced following the publication of the survey reports in 2022, and of sectoral changes that have taken place since 2021, including those that are linked to the HEA Implementation Plan. For instance, the appointment of sexual violence and harassment prevention and response managers at each HEI nationally has increased the capacity at institutional level to engage with several of the main issues arising in the secondary analysis findings. The recommendations are also framed as an

input to the planned development of a further strategic document to review and update the 2019 DFHERIS strategy.

In this context, the recommendations are intended to crystallise the applied implications of the findings that arose from the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data provided by students and staff. The recommendations highlight issues that underpin prevention and response in university-based systems, such as preventative and secondary awareness raising and education related to institutional policies and implementation strategies. As such, the recommendations are relevant at a sectoral level, for individual institutions, and for future HEA and DFHERIS strategy development.

Clearly, innovation and change are taking place in these domains at present. The findings nevertheless demonstrate that focused development is needed over a sustained period to permeate the whole institution and to reach all groups. The recommendations also highlight particular student and staff groups whose survey responses came to the fore in the secondary analysis. Females, non-heterosexual sexual orientations, people with a disability, and particular job roles were shown to be associated with greater risk for experiencing SVH. While those high risk groups tended to have the most positive attitudes to issues such as consent and bystander intervention, they also tended to hold the least positive appraisals of their own ongoing safety, and of institutional responses to SVH. The findings arising from these group-based and intersectional analyses suggest priorities for targeting groups with different needs in the university community.

Recommendation 1: Institutional Awareness Raising, Education, and Training for Students and Staff Members

This recommendation highlights the role for awareness raising, education, and training that was identified by both students and staff in their responses to the HEA surveys. References to education relevant to prevention and secondary response were distinctive as an area of positive commentary in the qualitative responses made by both students and staff.

Whereas qualitative responses typically described institutional responses and personal experiences in negative terms, awareness, education and training were highlighted as an area where progress had been visible and tangible. Further development of these resources was viewed as a requirement to address gaps in skills and institutional capacity to address SVH. For instance, staff and students who were already providing support to others asked for better support for such informal networks of support. Education was also seen as a means to increase the visibility of consent and SVH within the institution, and ultimately to achieve lasting culture change.

The quantitative analysis demonstrated specific education and training needs associated with particular staff and student groups. This poses a challenge for institutions, as a wide range of views were expressed across different groups, from those who did not view SVH as an issue, to females, non-binary people and males who felt discriminated against, and an increasingly internationalised and diverse student population. Some male participants felt that their voices had become stifled in their Higher Education institution, while at the same time, some of the female, non-binary, and LGBT+ participants indicated that their voices had not been heard.

Content areas and skills most often referenced included:
- Awareness raising and education inclusive of consent, sexual violence, and harassment, including training on consent, bystander intervention, and on being supportive following a disclosure.
- Understanding what is meant by sexual violence and harassment, the legal obligations and rights of individuals, the institutional and community systems available to report SVH and

provide support, how the university responds to complaints, and remedies that support continued engagement of complainant and respondent with the academic environment after an allegation of SVH has been made.

- Inclusion and recognition of diversity. The secondary analysis produced evidence of everyday sexism and gender stereotypes, along with homophobia and transphobic reactions, which point toward imbalanced power relations. Intersectional analysis revealed that particular sub-groups in the student and staff community had lower levels of organisational trust and limited knowledge of institutional processes. Outreach to these groups by institutions is important to build their confidence and knowledge.
- Awareness raising, education and training has often portrayed a primary role for staff members in leading out on student-focused initiatives, less so as a group with direct experience of SVH themselves. While support for staff in leading initiatives is an ongoing need, given the continuity of staff members in the organization, the secondary analysis findings also point to the unaddressed needs of staff who have been directly impacted by sexual violence and harassment themselves.

Recommendation 2: Adherence of Institutional Policies for Complaints and Investigation Processes to Quality Criteria

A fundamental issue underpinning much of the commentary from staff and students on complaints and investigations is that the institutional policies that they engaged with were not fit for purpose. Considerable work has taken place since 2021 in this area, resulting in policy reform and redesign across a number of Irish HEIs. However, it is critical that all institutions have policies that address each stage of the survivor or victim's journey, from recognising the occurrence of SVH, to informal reports to making a formal complaint, the investigation processes that subsequently unfold, access to meaningful outcomes of investigation, appropriate communication of the outcomes associated with the policy, and follow up support. Institutions should be able to demonstrate in a transparent manner that their policies and procedures adhere to a set of agreed external criteria that reflect best practice internationally.

Recommendation 3: Enhanced Institutional Capacity to Manage Reports of SVH and Associated Complaints, Investigation Processes and Outcomes

Building on the need to have well developed policies, many staff and students saw a gap between an institution having a policy, on the one hand, and having the systems in place that result in meaningful implementation.

The qualitative and quantitative findings of the secondary analysis of student and staff survey data suggested widespread deficits in institutional capacity to manage reporting processes, whether at unit and departmental level or in central institutional offices such as HR. Particular groups of students and staff who experienced higher levels of harassment and sexual violence tended to evaluate their personal safety less positively. Further to this, they had more negative perspectives on institutional procedures and the practical supports available to victim survivors and advocates who support them.

These findings go beyond the need to enhance formal policies, and highlight the importance of institutions putting in place a training and implementation infrastructure. This encompasses efforts to make sure that institutional processes are disseminated and communicated to all groups in the university community. The findings demonstrated communication priorities ranging from overcoming negative perceptions of institutional processes, to addressing information and knowledge gaps among particular staff and student groups.

It should also be noted that implementation processes typically not only have centralised components but often utilise initial, often informal reports at unit level. Besides having these processes configured as effectively as possible, so that the pathway to engaging with institutional policy is clear, students and staff highlighted the importance of information and support being trauma-informed at all stages of engaging with reporting and complaints.

Capacity building throughout an institution is required before it can be reasonably expected to achieve a high standard of implementation of complaints and investigation processes. For instance, capacity building is likely to be required with respect to skill sets in areas such as:

- Academic and professional support staff involved in academic programme management who need preparation in how to respond to student needs.
- Members of the research community, from researchers in early career positions through to those who occupy senior roles in research groups and administration.
- Training in trauma-informed informal supports at unit level, including preparation of line management to provide signposting and initial levels of guidance on investigations processes.
- Engagement of senior management to have greater consistency in how leadership can be exercised in setting in place the conditions for a culture of respect and responsibility in Higher Education institutions.
- Enhanced student and staff capacity to receive and signpost disclosures while in non-specialist or peer support roles.
- Access to specialised therapeutic support for victim survivors of sexual violence and harassment.
- As a reference point, description of the competencies required by individuals who adopt particular roles in the complaints and investigations process.
- Specialised training for staff members who have responsibility for components of investigations and complaints processes.
- Training organised around the skills required by individuals involved in the management of reports, complaints and investigations, to foster consistency for complainants and respondents.
- Supporting training needs for particular roles via access to ongoing supervision, upskilling, and refresher training.
- Organisational supports for sustainable systems, such as acknowledgement of roles related to consent and SVH in workload models.

Recommendation 4: Survey Data Collection

The commentary from survey respondents on particular aspects of the survey content was useful in pointing to enhancements in future survey design. Wording of questions, the format of response options, inclusivity of language, and the coverage of topics were all remarked on by respondents. There is also a need to promote and support the surveys to achieve high response rates, and outreach to all groups within the university community. This should lead to the re-design of the national survey supported by a stakeholder group, and clear terms of reference for the survey. Given the period elapsed since the 2021 national surveys of students and staff, there is a pressing need to plan for and conduct another HEI survey.

In addition, it is important to build the capacity of Higher Education institutions to conduct shorter, targeted annual or biennial surveys. This would allow for closer monitoring of the impact of initiatives and the evolving needs of the university community. Having institution-specific findings and information would allow for dissemination to the community, and provide a stronger basis for input to prioritisation and action planning.

Summary of Research Findings

Analysis of the qualitative data collated through the open-ended questions included in the staff and student surveys

Purpose: Categorising these data and drawing out common themes and useful learning.

Staff qualitative comments – Key findings

Of the 3,516 staff member responses to the online student survey, 889 provided typed responses to the open-ended comment question (25% of respondents). Open-ended qualitative comments provided by staff members were analysed using thematic analysis. These comments encompassed variation in staff views on sexual violence and harassment, direct and indirect experiences of these issues, institutional responses and supports, and the responsibility of Higher Education institutions with the wider societal context.

Some staff had been directly affected by SVH themselves, and described the negative, often ongoing impact that it had on them. Many of these staff had found the institution to be unsupportive at some level – at the local academic department or unit level, or at the central level of the investigations and complaints process typically involving Human Resources departments. Other staff had been indirectly affected. They described observing worrying attitudes or behaviours, alongside support and assistance offered to students or staff colleagues. Further to this, a minority of staff members described not having experienced or witnessed sexual violence or harassment taking place in their HEI. Some of these staff members accepted that these experiences might be occurring outside their awareness, while others disputed that SVH was an issue at all in the HEI.

A number of comments were made that described how casual sexism appeared to be acceptable in the workplace. This sense of tolerance extended in a smaller number of cases to sexual and homophobic comments and imagery. Working in such an environment contributed to the sense of harassment being minimised or even accepted as the norm in the work culture for some staff members, by unit managers or in everyday workplace culture. Traditional gender expectations were described, for behaviour in meetings or on social occasions, that were frustrating and demeaning for some staff members. In this context, doubt was expressed that everyday sexism constituted harassment, conveying a sense of minimisation or self-stigma.

Staff qualitative comments reflected limited knowledge and understanding of the policies, procedures, and reporting mechanisms linked to sexual violence and harassment – that either staff or students could engage with. These limitations were barriers to feeling empowered to make complaints, and were further linked to caution, lack of confidence, and limited capacity to make reports or follow through with complaints.

Some staff expressed the view that the university prioritised the defence of institutional reputation and self-protection mechanisms in the face of a complaint. In particular, these comments highlighted that institutional motives might include protection of members of the university who had achieved success, by raising income, in their research, or by virtue of attaining seniority. An appearance of institution non-response was inferred from the lack of track record in successfully bringing forward complaints, at least in relation to tangible consequences for perpetrators. The perception among staff who responded was that complaints would be unsuccessful or the outcomes of the process would be inconsequential.

Limited knowledge of the complaints process, along with internal barriers including social practices such as casual sexism, combined with the perception that there was limited knowledge and capacity

of complaints processes existing at unit level. Managers at unit level were seen as not being trained or prepared to support staff members affected by SVH on an interpersonal level or with respect to the institutional procedures surrounding complaints and investigations of SVH.

There was divergence with respect to perceptions of senior institutional managers' support for and engagement with SVH policy and practice in HE institutions. In some cases, senior managers were described as leading out to create culture change, whereas other instances portrayed senior managers as being resistant to change. Nevertheless, encouraging signs were referenced. Relatively newly established institutional Equality, Diversity & Inclusion units were held up as providing fresh expertise and leadership in Irish HEIs in this area.

Direct and indirect references to institutional complaints / investigation processes were largely negative in tone. The processes that staff encountered or had heard of were not responsive to individual needs and were seen as not being trauma-informed. Very few accounts of successfully navigating the complaints process were provided in the staff comments. When described, it was seen as an unsatisfactory process that had not provided redress. In contrast, in many instances the process itself had added to the duress, trauma, and career impact perpetrated on survivors to begin with.

Comments from staff suggested that, compared with students, staff members had relatively little access to supportive services that would help them manage on a personal level. Some staff members who made comments had provided disclosure management and advocacy support to their colleagues and to students as well. However, they were concerned that they did so without training and could be unsure about how to protect the best interests of the person affected by SVH.

Younger female staff members, particularly those in research positions, described feeling isolated and that they had few options after being sexually harassed. Some staff working in the research environment viewed themselves as being outside the mainstream of academic and professional support service posts, often with limited awareness of policies and services concerning SVH. The power differential between these staff members and their managers was described as a significant factor that made it especially difficult to report harassment or have a complaint thoroughly investigated.

Finally, awareness raising, education, and training were regularly highlighted as an important priority by staff members in their open-ended comments. Staff saw these initiatives as a method to help address the problems, limitations, and gaps that they described. In addition to offering corrective steps to address these problematic issues, education and training were seen as a positive and refreshing form of engagement that was associated with achieving culture change. A comprehensive approach to education and training was advocated by staff members. There were challenges noted in achieving this vision – such as the difficulty of staff finding the time to engage with training, and in reaching out to all categories of staff who needed it, including staff on short-term contracts.

Student qualitative comments – Key findings
Of the 7,901 responses to the online student survey, 1,426 students provided typed responses to the open-ended comment question (18% of respondents). Open-ended comments provided by students gave a range of accounts of the sexual violence and harassment (SVH) that they had experienced. The incidents described included rape, stalking, unwanted touching, sexist and sexual comments made online and in-person, in addition to harassment. References were made to perpetrators ranging from friends, to lecturers, other students, and strangers.

These experiences were associated with an ongoing impact that encompassed trauma, self-blame and regret. In turn, this impact was described as affecting personal wellbeing, the ability to engage successfully with the academic environment, and their friendship networks. Personal reactions included anger, hopelessness, alienation, and mental health distress. Some students described trauma arising not from the personal experience of sexual violence, but due to a false allegation that they were perpetrators.

Gender was an important organising focus for the comments made. Female students saw the culture around them as facilitating purposeful patterns of perpetration by men. For their part, male students described their experience of sexual violence and harassment as being trivialised by others. These reference points are indicative of the importance of factors such as cultural socialisation, identity construction, and power relations in making sense of the comments that students made. While traditional gender roles were engrained by the time of entering college, knowledge and skills development concerning consent, sexual violence and harassment had lagged behind.

Gender inequality, silencing, privilege, excuses, and marginalisation were described in the student comments, and linked to how sexual violence and harassment is seen in society. This pattern of socialisation had begun earlier, during the post-primary school phase, a period when the societal system was first seen as having failed young people. Students wrote that meaningful and empowering education on consent, sexual violence and harassment had not been sufficiently prioritised.

Students described being unprepared to manage the incidence of sexual violence and harassment when it occurred. This was reflected in comments about lacking the knowledge and ability to respond, with respect to experiences that affected them personally, their friends, or wider peer groups.

Sexual violence and harassment were subject to critical interrogation by some students, who disputed and disbelieved that these are common experiences. A related set of comments described the actions that students should themselves take if they wanted to avoid being victimised. When these comments arose, they typically referred to dressing more modestly and not engaging in excessive drinking.

Students described the ideal role of the Higher Education institution with respect to sexual violence and harassment as providing a supportive space for investigation, personal support, successful social and academic re-engagement. However, the comments that students made about what they actually experienced depicted the HEI system as failing them on each count. The students who described sexual violence and harassment in the open-ended comments were largely unprepared to manage what had happened to them, and this was compounded by the feeling of being unsupported by their institutions. It was they who had to adapt to a social, academic, and institutional culture where trauma was not provided with anything like the due regard that was merited given the impact that it had on them.

HEIs were seen as contributing to a lack of preparation of students to label and respond to sexual violence and harassment when it occurred. The institutions were also evaluated negatively with respect to the social and institutional context that students experienced following an incident of SVH. Students complained that their ability to process the experience was impaired by a lack of control over having unwanted, ongoing exposure to the perpetrator, the issue of perpetrator students not being prepared to take responsibility for their actions – as reflected in refuting or denying what they had done – and unsupportive or uninformed responses from some peers and friends. Examples were provided of silencing of victims by perpetrators, while regular encounters

with perpetrators in classes and social circles were distressing as the victims seemed to have no agency or control.

The greatest level of criticism for HEIs arose from additional trauma and distress that arose for students who had engaged the institution. The investigation and complaints process, access to personal support, and assistance with academic re-engagement were all criticised by students. One issue arising initially was lack of knowledge about the process of redress or investigation. This was followed for a number of students by those who described an active breakdown of trust when the system of investigation and complaints was engaged. In contrast, there were few examples cited when the system had provided timely, specialised supports or a non-traumatising investigations process.

Peers and friends were not felt to match up to the ideal of being knowledgeable, equipped with the skills to signpost, support or intervene. Instead, these networks lacked understanding of HEI responses, might take sides, or struggle to assimilate the experience in a way that they could provide support. Indeed, examples were given of peers who perpetuated the ongoing culture in which assault and harassment was continuing to taking place.

The importance of peer culture was reflected in the experience of sexism and harassment on campus in academic and social environments. In particular, peer behaviour when socialising was remarked on as particularly offensive, often when peers had been drinking alcohol. The off-campus social environment was a particularly high-risk area for exposure to assault and unacceptable behaviour. At times, the behaviour of men could be said to be manipulative and disingenuous. Examples were given of men seeking a sexual outlet devoid of respect or genuine interest in the individual, feigning friendship in pursuit of exploiting the other person.

Students sought concerted action on the part of institutions to address access to specialised supports and trauma-informed investigation processes. An overhaul of university investigation processes and interpersonal support was sought. This extended to the impact that SVH could have on the academic experience and progression of students. The comments made addressed issues such as how academic programmes should have strategies in place to make accommodations for individuals in placements, classes, or project groups. As they were in a direct position of engagement with students, staff members involved in academic programme management were identified as requiring greater awareness and enhanced capacity to respond in such circumstances.

Students wrote about the positive impact that education and training could have. Comments were made that institutions should have the goal of ensuring that all incoming students are competent in understanding what is meant by sexual violence and harassment, the systems available to report it, how the university responds to complaints, and remedies to support continued engagement with the academic environment. Support for personal development was also recommended, so that students would be confident and skilled in positive, active consent. This would create the conditions for cultural change, so that students' wishes would be respected and sexual decision-making would be based on respectful, mutual communication.

Enhanced peer understanding and the capacity to respond to friends affected by sexual violence or harassment was also prioritised as an issue for education to address. These views were illustrated by recommendations to support students to be supportive in the case of disclosures of SVH or when responding in the role of an active bystander. Students identified the importance of education and prevention taking place in First Year of the college experience, in a manner that reached male students in particular. Consistent with the ecological model that speaks to addressing cultural

change, education should be building on strong foundations achieved during the post-primary experience, and ought to continue further into the college experience beyond First Year.

Exploration of the responses from high-risk categories

Purpose: To draw out specific insights or lessons to inform practice.

a. Staff and students who identify as bisexual

Compared with heterosexual staff and students, bisexual staff and students tended to have significantly different scores on the quantitative key indicators included in the surveys. Additionally, different scores on the survey indicators were observed for several of the sexual orientation minority groups (e.g., gay, lesbian, and queer).

Of the 3,516 staff respondents, 126 described themselves as bisexual, 149 as LGBTQ+, 48 as asexual, 111 had another orientation or preferred not to say, while 3,082 staff were heterosexual. Compared with heterosexual staff members, bisexual staff members reported higher levels of sexual harassment, less positive views on the campus environment, including perceptions of institutional engagement and policy, institutional reporting and investigations, and institutional barriers and resistance. While more willing than heterosexual staff members to engage in training and education, they were more concerned about campus safety, and had stronger beliefs that SVH was an issue for the campus community.

Among the HEA Student Survey responses, there were a total of 1,359 students who identified as bisexual, 5,562 heterosexual students, 590 LGBTQ+ students, and 145 asexual students. Bisexual students had a different pattern of responses to heterosexual students on nearly all of the key survey indicators. They reported higher levels of sexual harassment, sexual violence, less positive views on campus environment and their campus safety. Nonetheless, bisexual students had greater engagement with education resources, information on SVH provided by the HEI, had more attitudes to positive consent and bystander intention, and displayed lower levels of rape myth beliefs.

b. Students who experienced sexual violence while incapacitated

Depending on the category of sexual violence, there were between 914 and 2,075 students who had experienced sexual violence while incapacitated (using sexual touching, oral sex, and anal sex as reference categories). These students were compared with students who responded to sexual violence items but did not describe being the victim of violence while incapacitated (n = 2,019-3,887), and students who did not respond to the sexual violence items in the survey (n = 770-1,939).

When compared on the key survey indicators, significant differences were noted between students who had experienced sexual violence while incapacitated and other students. Significant differences included the observation of higher rates of all forms of sexual harassment experiences among students who had been subjected to sexual violence while incapacitated. This group also had with less positive views of the campus environment, including less knowledge of supports and reporting processes, less positive perceptions of personal safety, and greater exposure to resources on sexual violence and harassment. Students who had experienced sexual violence while incapacitated anticipated less positive peer reactions to SVH and lower levels of consent literacy than other students, but also had more positive attitudes to consent and bystander intervention.

Analysis of the responses of specific student cohorts

Purpose: To ascertain any significant differences between particular student cohorts and the wider student population, or any specific lessons emerging that relate to these cohorts specifically.

a. Students engaged in a post-graduate taught programme
When compared with students studying at undergraduate level (n = 6,592), PGT students (n = 769) described lower levels of harassment, but there was not a significant difference in the prevalence of sexual violence among undergraduate and PGT students.

PGT students described significantly higher levels of knowledge of policies and supports regarding SVH, while nevertheless having significantly less exposure to educational resources and HEI-provided information about SVH. They described significantly more positive perceptions of their campus safety, lower rape myth belief acceptance, but also lower scores on positive consent attitudes. No significant difference was identified between PGT and undergraduate student groups on perceptions of the HEI taking reports seriously, the perception of SVH as an important campus issue, or attitudes to bystander intervention.

b. Students engaged in a PhD or Masters by research
Compared with undergraduate students, PGR students (n = 471) described lower levels of experiencing all forms of sexual harassment and most forms of sexual violence on quantitative survey items. PGR students had significantly lower scores than undergraduates on the belief that HEIs would take a report of SVH seriously, but had more positive perceptions of their own safety.

As with PGT students, the PGR student group had less exposure to information about SVH from Higher Education institutions and lower levels of engagement with consent promotion and support activities. While having lower rape myth belief scores than undergraduate students, the PGR student group also had less positive attitudes to consent. There was no difference between PGR and undergraduate student groups on verbal consent behavioural intentions, knowledge of supports and reporting mechanisms, perceptions of SVH as a problem on campus, bystander intentions, or preparedness to support a peer with a disclosure.

c. International students
In their survey responses, international students studying in an Irish Higher Education Institution (n = 736) displayed significantly lower prevalence on a number of forms of sexual harassment than students who were not international students (n = 7,134). These included sexist and sexual hostility, unwanted sexual attention, sexual coercion, and harassment via electronic communication. This difference between international and non-international students extended to significantly lower prevalence of most forms of sexual violence, including non-consensual sexual touching, oral sex, vaginal penetration, and attempted anal, oral or vaginal sex. International students also had higher scores on perceptions of having knowledge about supports and reporting procedures for SVH, a stronger perception that SVH is an important issue, and higher levels of perceived personal safety.

International students described significantly less engagement with consent promotion and support activities. Turning to attitudes and perceptions of personal capacity, international students perceived themselves as less capable of supporting peers with disclosure of SVH than non-international students, and had lower scores on passive consent behavioural intentions.

Analysis of the relationship between staff salaries and contract types, and SVH experiences and attitudes

Purpose: To assess differential attitudes and experiences between staff groups and the implications for practice.

Contract Type

The contractual status of staff were grouped into four main categories: Permanent full-time / part-time (n = 2,631), fixed term full-time / part-time (n = 697), hourly payment (n = 69), staff who preferred not to say (n = 44), 'other' or more than one of the other categories (n = 77). Only the first two categories had sufficient staff numbers to justify a statistical analysis. Survey responses on key survey indicators were compared between staff on a permanent contract and those on a fixed term contract.

There were relatively few significant differences on the survey key indicators between staff on a permanent or fixed-term contract. Permanent staff had a significantly more positive perception of institutional clarity of response and knowledge of procedures related to SVH reporting. They were also more likely to have heard consent issues being discussed by staff.

Pay grade

Five pay grades were indicated in the survey for staff members (up to €45,000, n = 824; €45-60,000, n = 763; €60-75,000, n = 492; €75-99,000, n = 933; €100,000+, n = 367). The remaining staff members chose not to indicate their pay grade (4% of the respondents). For the purposes of analysis of key indicators by salary level, the staff were grouped into two salary groups: Up to €75,000 (n = 2,079) and over €75,000 per annum (n = 1,300).

Staff on a salary higher than €75,000 viewed themselves as more able to respond effectively as a bystander and to a disclosure of SVH, and were more likely to have heard consent being discussed by students and staff. Staff in this category also had higher scores on perceptions of personal safety and in their perceptions that SVH was a significant issue for their HEI. Staff with a salary higher than €75,000 had significantly greater confidence that their HEI had effective policies and commitment to address SVH, that their HEI had clear responses to SVH, and higher scores on items concerning awareness of training and messaging. At the same time, staff with a salary less than €75,000 were more willing to be involved in training.

Exploration of responses from staff and students with high levels of agreement and belief in 'rape myths'

Purpose: To determine whether useful lessons can be drawn to enhance targeting and content of interventions.

Staff members and rape myth beliefs

Staff members who chose to respond to the rape myth belief questions in the survey provided responses on three sets of rape myth belief questions about women ('she asked for it', 'he didn't mean it', 'rape myth beliefs about males') and a set of rape myth beliefs questions about men. These responses were compiled into one overall score. The staff members were then divided into 'high' (n = 761) and 'low' (n = 2,070) rape myth belief categories. Once put into these groupings, the two categories were compared on the key survey indicators.

Staff in the 'high' rape myth beliefs category described significantly lower prevalence of sexist and sexual harassment. They had significantly stronger beliefs about their safety on campus, and saw the campus policies as more effective, with more positive attitudes about the clarity of the institutional

response to SVH, and the belief that their HEI would be supportive of victims. They were also less likely to see SVH as an important issue for the campus. Staff with relatively high rape myth beliefs had significantly less positive consent attitudes, were less likely to have heard staff or students discuss consent issues, and were significantly less likely to feel responsible to intervene as a bystander.

Students and rape myth beliefs

Students who chose to respond to rape myth belief questions on the survey responded to the same set of items as staff did. Student responses to these items were compiled and categorised into 'high' (n = 1,770) and 'low' (n = 5,000) rape myth belief categories. There were consistent significant differences in student responses to the key survey indicators when student responses were grouped according to 'high' and 'low' rape myth belief categories. Significant differences were noted on all forms of sexual harassment and on two of the types of sexual violence referred to on the survey (non-consensual sexual touching, attempted anal, oral, or vaginal sex).

Students who had relatively high rape myth belief scores viewed the institutional policies and responses to SVH more positively than students who had relatively low rape myth beliefs. They also had significantly lower perceptions of SVH as an important issue on campus, less exposure to consent promotion and support activities, and stronger beliefs about their own personal safety.

There were significant differences between the 'high' and 'low' rape myth groups of students on all indicators of attitudes, behavioural intentions, and self-appraisals of capacity to respond. Students with higher rape myth beliefs had significantly lower positive consent and bystander intervention attitudes. They had a less positive view on responding to a disclosure of SVH, higher passive and nonverbal consent behavioural intentions, lower verbal consent behavioural intentions, lower consent literacy, self-appraisal of the ability to support bystander intervention and disclosures.

Intersectional analysis of staff and student survey responses

Purpose: To analyse how relationships between sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity and disability interact with experiences and attitudes related to SVH.

Intersectional analysis of staff survey responses

As a first step toward an intersectional analysis, male and female staff members' responses on the key survey indicators were compared. This initial round of analysis demonstrated consistent differences in responses to the key indicators in the survey by gender. Compared with males, female staff members had experienced significantly higher levels of sexual harassment, sexual violence, and had a less positive view than males on each indicator of institutional policies and responses regarding SVH. They had significantly lower scores on the measure of rape myth beliefs, felt less safe, and agreed to a greater extent that SVH was a problem on campus. However, male staff members had significantly higher scores than females on measures of personal capacity, such as receiving a disclosure, making a bystander intervention, and feeling responsible to intervene.

Gender was then combined with two intersecting categories (job role, sexual orientation) to explore distinctions within male and female groups that may arise when these categories are combined. Job role was used to compare survey responses by:
- Male academics (n = 655)
- Female academics (n = 1,095)
- Male professional support / technical staff (n = 296)
- Female professional support / technical staff (n = 1,026)

Male academics and professional support / technical staff did not differ significantly in the incidence of sexual harassment or sexual violence that they had experienced. Male academics did have significantly less positive views of institutional policies and responses to SVH, institutional support for victims, and willingness to engage in training. They were also less likely than male support staff to indicate that they had heard staff and students discuss consent-related issues.

By comparison, there were more consistent differences in the survey responses of female academics and professional support / technical staff. Female academics experienced significantly higher levels of sexual harassment than female support staff, and also differed significantly from them on each key indicator related to institutional policies, validation and support for victims, awareness of training. With regard to attitudes and self-appraisal of the capacity to respond, female academics were significantly more likely than female support staff to indicate that they felt a responsibility to intervene as a bystander, but were less likely to say that they had heard consent being discussed by students and staff, and were significantly less willing to take part in consent or SVH training. Female academics had significantly lower scores on personal safety than female support staff.

Overall, female academics were impacted by violence and harassment to a greater degree than any of the other three sub-groups. This group also held less positive views of how the institution was responding to SVH. This group had the lowest level of personal safety levels, and agreed to the greatest extent that SVH was a problem on campus. Male academics were the least likely of the four sub-groups to have heard sexual consent issues being discussed by students or staff over the previous four years. While they had a relatively high sense of responsibility to intervene as bystanders, male academics were the least likely sub-group to indicate that they would engage in training on consent or SVH.

Sexual orientation was used as an intersecting variable with gender to direct a second round of intersectional analysis of staff members' survey responses. This took place by analysing the survey responses of the following groups:
- Male heterosexual staff members (n = 907)
- Male non-heterosexual staff members (n = 128)
- Female heterosexual staff members (n = 2,159)
- Female non-heterosexual staff members (n = 178)

Male non-heterosexual staff members experienced significantly higher levels of sexual harassment and sexual violence compared with heterosexual males. They had less positive views of the institutional response to SVH, which was reflected in their view of policies and supports for survivors. They felt significantly less safe than male heterosexual staff members, and were more likely to have heard consent issues discussed by students and staff in the recent past.

Female non-heterosexual staff also had a distinctive experience compared with female heterosexual staff members. They too had experienced higher levels of sexual harassment, and were less confident that the institution was responding effectively to SVH. Compared with female heterosexual staff, female non-heterosexuals had significantly greater concerns about SVH on the campus, were more likely to have heard students discuss consent issues, and felt a greater sense of responsibility to intervene as a bystander.

Overall, male heterosexual staff were least likely to have experienced sexual harassment or sexual violence, felt the greatest level of personal safety of the four sub-groups, and were least likely to have heard staff or students discuss consent issues. They had the greater sense of confidence in the institutional response to SVH – as reflected in their views on institutional policy and supports for victims of SVH.

Intersectional analysis of student survey responses

To initiate the intersectional analysis of student survey responses, an analysis of student responses to the HEA Student Survey was first carried out using gender to examine responses on the key indicators from the student survey. This established that gender was an important organising factor given the consistent nature of the differences identified between male (n = 1,640), female (n = 6,051), and non-binary (n = 167) students.

Consistent differences were identified between male and female students on the HEA Student Survey indicators. The only non-significant difference between males and females was on the number of consent and SVH promotion and support activities that were engaged with. There were a number of differences between female students and non-binary students on the HEA Student Survey indicators. These were noted with respect to three forms of sexual harassment, whether the HEI would take a report of SVH seriously, engagement in consent promotion and resource activities, and with most indicators of attitudes, intentions and preparedness to respond to SVH.

Differences were consistently noted when male and non-binary students' survey responses were compared. The only indicators where there was not a significant difference between these two categories was in the perception of SVH as a significant issue, information received from the HEI about sexual violence and harassment, perception of negative peer reactions to SVH, consent literacy levels, and self-appraisal of bystander intervention preparedness.

The initial gender-based analysis of student responses was then extended to an intersectional analysis of gender and sexual orientation based on the following groups:
- Heterosexual female (n = 4,312)
- Heterosexual male (n = 1,237)
- Non-heterosexual female (n = 1,552)
- Non-heterosexual male (n = 367)

Non-binary students were not included in this analysis. Although there was a sufficient number of non-heterosexual non-binary students (n = 151), there was a low number of non-binary heterosexual students in the sample (n = 7).

Compared with heterosexual female students, non-heterosexual female students had experienced significantly higher levels of sexual harassment and sexual violence. Non-heterosexual females also had significantly less positive views of the institutional response to SVH and in the appraisal of their own level of knowledge of reporting procedures. Nevertheless, non-heterosexual females described higher levels of engagement with consent promotion and support activities and in having received information from their HEI about SVH. The same sub-group had significantly different scores on the measures of attitudes and evaluations of preparedness to respond. Female non-heterosexual students had lower scores on rape myth beliefs, and higher scores on nearly all of the remaining indicators in this section – from self-appraisal of disclosure and bystander intervention preparedness, to verbal consent behavioural intentions, positive consent and bystander intervention attitudes.

Turning to the analysis of differences between heterosexual and non-heterosexual male students, a similar pattern was noted. Non-heterosexual male students had higher levels of sexual harassment and sexual violence, while at the same time having lower levels of confidence about institutional responses, knowledge of related procedures, and more negative views of peer reactions to SVH. They also had significantly greater engagement with consent promotion and support activities, lower

rape myth belief scores, higher positive consent and bystander intervention scores, and higher positive behavioural intentions toward verbal consent.

A separate intersectional analysis was made using gender and disability. In this case, the student numbers for each sub-group were sufficient to include non-binary students. This resulted in the following groups:
- Female students with a disability (n = 1,192)
- Male students with a disability (n = 223)
- Non-binary students with a disability (n = 93)
- Female students without a disability (n = 4,614)
- Male students without a disability (n = 1,359)
- Non-binary students without a disability (n = 58)

Survey responses made by female students with a disability differed consistently from those made by female students without a disability – across experiences of sexual harassment, sexual violence, personal safety, perceptions of the institutional response, their understanding of SVH reporting and institutional supports, and nearly all indicators of attitudes and personal readiness to respond to disclosures and as an active bystander.

A broadly similar pattern was noted when comparing the responses of male students with a disability to those of female students with a disability. Males with a disability described higher levels of sexual harassment compared with males without a disability, and some instances of higher levels of sexual violence (being made to perform anal or vaginal sex, attempted anal, oral or vaginal sex). Compared with males who did not have a disability, males with a disability had lower scores on personal safety and the measure of HEIs taking reports seriously and providing support. Reflecting the pattern seen when comparing females with and without a disability, males with a disability felt more prepared to support someone with a disclosure of SVH, had more positive bystander intervention scores and lower rape myth beliefs.

The final comparison made was of non-binary students with a disability and non-binary students without a disability. It should be noted that, given the lower numbers of students in these two categories, fewer significant differences in scores could be expected. Compared with non-binary students without a disability, those non-binary students who had a disability had higher levels of exposure to harassment via electronic communication, sexual violence (non-consensual vaginal penetration, attempted anal, oral or vaginal sex). This group was also less positive about whether the HEI would the report seriously and provide support to victims of SVH.

Overall, out of the six sub-groups, the non-binary and female students with a disability experienced the highest levels of sexual harassment. Females with a disability had the highest levels of sexual violence, whereas males with and without a disability had the highest levels of confidence in the institutional response and in their own safety. There were similar trends between females with a disability and non-binary students with a disability in their attitudes on rape myth beliefs, positive consent and bystander intervention attitudes, perceptions of negative peer reactions to SVH, and verbal consent behavioural intentions.

Qualitative Analysis of Open-Ended Student Responses to the Survey

Overview of Responses

Of the 7,901 responses to the online student survey, 1,426 students provided typed responses to the open-ended comment question (18% of students). By gender, this included 17% of female students (n = 1,050), 19% of males (n = 315), 27% of non-binary students (n = 47), and 33% of students who preferred not to indicate their gender (n = 14). Described in terms of sexual orientation, 17% of heterosexual students (n = 927) provided an open-ended comment, as did 19% of asexual students (n = 28), 21% of bisexual students (n = 285), 20% of gay and lesbian students (n = 71), 23% of queer students (n = 55), 29% of students who had another sexual orientation not listed on the survey, and 22% of students who preferred not to say their orientation (n = 37).

In entering the comments made into a qualitative data set for analysis, corrections were made for continuity to minor typographical errors such as variant spellings and mistyping. Some truncation of quotes presented in the findings took place to focus on the information most relevant to each theme. Redaction of words and phrases was also carried out to preserve non-identifiability of participants. Participant characteristics such as gender identity or sexual orientation are explicitly referenced on occasion when relevant to the point being made, minimal information on participant demographics is provided beside this to assist in achieving functional anonymity. Each student comment included in the report is distinguished by a four-digit numerical identifier (e.g., 0845) that refers to the student's participant number.

Thematic Analysis

The comments were clustered into a set of themes that map on to a socio-ecological model, placing individual experiences into a systemic perspective that includes interpersonal relationships, peer and friendship groups, the academic programmes that students took part in, along with the support units and investigations processes organised by Higher Education institutions. The themes also refer to broader societal influences, such as gender-based norms and expectations alongside other earlier socialisation experiences prior to coming to college.

The socio-ecological model is used extensively in research on consent, sexual violence and harassment in the Higher Education environment (Jones et al., 2020; Lagdon et al., 2024; McMahon et al., 2021, 2022; Moylan & Javorka, 2018; Stockman et al., 2023; Walsh et al., 2021). This approach is particularly relevant here, especially in relation to models that examine trauma using a systems perspective (Campbell et al., 2009; Wasco, 2003). The socio-ecological model was therefore used as an organising framework, because of its fit to the data, applicability to communication of findings, and the design of the recommendations.

For example, Campbell et al. (2009) drew on Bronfenbrenner and Morris' (2006) ecological theory to propose an organising system for a campus and community analysis of sexual violence:
- Individual-level factors corresponding to demographics. For instance, we understand from quantitative analysis of the survey findings that female and bisexual students are more likely to describe having experienced sexual violence and harassment.
- Assault characteristics position the victims of violence in relation to the perpetrator, for example whether the perpetrator was known to them and the nature of the assault.
- The survivor's experience is meaningfully understood in the context of their microsystem – the peer and friend socialisation practices that can help explain the presence of incapacitation from alcohol use as a common factor in assaults, or the degree to which social support is immediately available following a disclosure.

- Meso and exosystem levels of the campus ecology next come into play, illustrated by the victim's engagement with professional supports and institutional processes in the HEI.
- Macrosystem factors further shape experiences at individual level, through gender roles, the societal construction of expectations for sexual violence victimhood and perpetration, and policy-based factors such as the emergence since 2019 of the 'Consent Framework' to end sexual violence and harassment in Irish HEIs.

This complex range of factors have direct and indirect influences over the incidence of sexual violence and harassment. They also help to determine the impact that these phenomena have for survivors, including the self-appraisals, meaning-making and interpretations that survivors engage with when writing about what has happened to them.

The pain and trauma that arose for many of the survey respondents is plain to see in the comments that they offered. Nonetheless, in reviewing the open-ended comments, marked differences between students were noted in attitudes toward sexual violence and harassment. Some students considered that sexual violence and harassment are not common, while others wanted to highlight false allegations. Consequently, at times the data set gave rise to competing or contradictory values and perspectives. The write up of the open-ended comments does not pit these views against one another. The students' written comments are simply represented and enabled to speak for themselves.

The analysis drew on Braun and Clarke's (2022) interpretive approach to thematic analysis. The comments were reviewed and organised into themes reflective of the socio-ecological model underpinning the analysis. A sub-set of quotes are included in the write up of these themes, illustrating more widespread trends from the corpus of written responses. The interpretive approach adopted is to comment on quotes taken from the data set, grounded by re-printing largely complete entries from a range of students that evidence the experience, attitudes, and values described in the themes. Interpretation took the form of close description and commentary on language use as techniques to assist the reader to unpack the rich meaning available in the student comments.

Overview of Findings

Students used open-ended comments to provide accounts of the sexual violence and harassment (SVH) that they had experienced. Victims wrote about trauma, self-blame and regret, traced back to incidents that ranged from rape to stalking, unwanted touching, sexist and sexual comments made online and in-person, as well as harassment perpetrated by friends, lecturers, other students, and strangers.

The students who described these experiences referenced an ongoing impact, one which reached out to affect personal wellbeing, their ability to engage successfully with the academic environment, and friendship networks. Reactions such as anger, hopelessness, alienation, self-blame, mental health distress, academic stress, and social isolation were commonly described. Not all of the students who wrote about trauma referred back to the personal experience of sexual violence. Some students wanted to highlight the suffering that they experienced due to a false allegation made that they had perpetrated violence.

Gender emerged as a key reference point in the comments. Female students saw the culture around them as facilitating purposeful patterns of perpetration by men. Male students described the trivialisation of their experience of sexual violence and harassment by the people and culture around

them. Taken together, it was clear that students from any background or demographic may be victimised and could feel unsupported or unheard.

Sexual violence and harassment were experienced in a context of earlier cultural socialisation, identity construction, and power relations. Traditional gender roles and patterns of socialising had become engrained by the time of entering college. However, the development of knowledge and skills concerning consent, sexual violence and harassment had lagged behind. Students appeared to be unprepared to manage sexual violence and harassment when it occurred. They lacked specific knowledge and skills to respond, with respect to experiences that affected them personally, their friends or peer groups.

Sexual violence and harassment were subject to critical interrogation by some students, who disputed and disbelieved that these are common experiences. A related set of comments described the actions that students should take themselves if they wanted to avoid being victimised. When these comments arose, they typically referred to dressing more modestly and not engaging in excessive drinking. These views set out an agency-based view in which the socio-ecological system was not the problem, that the problem was not as significant as has been portrayed, and that students should rely on themselves to avoid coming to harm.

Moving on to the role of the Higher Education institution, the university is often understood as being responsible for providing a supportive space for investigations, personal support, along with successful social and academic re-engagement. The comments made by students depicted the HEI system as failing on each count. HEIs were seen as contributing to the lack of preparation to label and respond to sexual violence and harassment, having not sufficiently rolled out or mandated appropriate levels of education. Further to this, the institutions were evaluated negatively for the post-SVH social and institutional context that students experienced. These factors proved significant in accounts from students of how they processed the experience and responded to it. This was illustrated by their lack of control over ongoing exposure to the perpetrator, gender-based privilege typically described as male students who refute or deny what they have done, and unsupportive or uninformed responses made by peers and friends.

The greatest level of criticism for Higher Education institutions arose in the additional trauma and distress that arose for students who had tried to access the investigation and complaints process, personal support, or sought assistance with academic re-engagement. Beyond a lack of knowledge about how to access the process of redress or investigation, an active breakdown of trust occurred on many occasions when students did engage the system of investigation and complaints. These system failings were not matched in the comments by examples of when the system had provided timely, specialised supports, or a non-traumatising investigations process.

Peers and friends were not felt to match the ideal of being knowledgeable, able to signpost, support or intervene. Instead, these networks appeared to lack understanding of HEI responses, might take sides, or struggle to assimilate the experience in a way that would result in comprehensive support. Indeed, references were made to peers perpetuating the ongoing culture in which assault and harassment continued to take place. While sexism and harassment were portrayed as taking place on campus, there was even more frequent exposure to assault and unacceptable behaviour when socialising, which was compounded by alcohol use. At times, the behaviour of men was said to be manipulative and disingenuous, founded on seeking a sexual outlet devoid of respect or genuine interest in the individual, extending to feigning friendship in pursuit of exploiting the person sexually. Examples were provided of silencing of victims by perpetrators, and of encounters with perpetrators in classes and social circles that the victims seemed unable to control.

The student experience emerged in the findings as a particular context in which sexual violence and harassment were experienced. Yet it was further shaped by familiar societal issues, such as gender-based inequality, silencing, privilege, excuses, and marginalisation. A pattern of socialisation into these forms of inequality had begun earlier, during the post-primary school phase, a period when the societal system was first seen as having failed young people. Meaningful and empowering education on consent, sexual violence and harassment had not been sufficiently prioritised.

The students who described sexual violence and harassment in the open-ended comments were largely unprepared to manage what happened to them. They went on to feel unsupported by their institutions. It was they who had to adapt to a social, academic, and institutional culture, one in which trauma was not provided the due regard that was merited, given the impact that it had on victim survivors.

In response, students sought concerted action on the part of institutions. This picture arose by implication from the description of current patterns of access to specialised supports, and trauma-informed investigation processes. This would not only require the rethink of university investigation processes and interpersonal support. It would extend to improvements to how academic programmes make accommodations for individuals in placements, classes, or project groups. Based on the experiences described by students, staff involved in academic programme management required greater awareness and capacity in order to respond in the manner that students asked for.

Students did write in positive terms of the potential that education and training could have. There was hope associated with the provision of concerted, ongoing education on consent. This held different meanings. Firstly, that all incoming students are competent in understanding what is meant by sexual violence and harassment, the systems available to report it, how the university responds to complaints, and remedies that enable continued engagement with the academic environment. The positive potential for programming on consent and SVH was to ensure that people were able to engage with positive, active consent. The overall goal described by students was cultural change, so that students' wishes would be respected, with the cultural norm one of respectful, mutual communication.

Further to this, peer understanding and the capacity to respond to friends affected by sexual violence or harassment was prioritised, alongside an enhanced ability to act assertively as active bystanders. Students identified the importance of this work taking place in First Year of the college experience, in a manner that reached male students in particular. Yet, consistent with the ecological model that speaks to developmental progression, such education would be best served when building on foundations from the post-primary experience, and ought to continue further into the college experience, beyond First Year.

Student Comments on the Survey Methodology

A range of observations were made in the open-ended comments section on the nature of the survey. Considerable variety was evident in the responses made, from praise for carrying out the survey to criticisms of the premise of the survey, along with constructive points made about the construction of survey items and the need for surveys such as this to demonstrate inclusion. There was also valuable feedback from students affected by sexual violence and harassment on how the survey completion experience affected them. These reactions are summarised below.

Positive appraisals of the survey
Comments were made to express support for the survey and that remarked on its novelty. For example:

- This is a really good survey, asked important questions rather than just tip toeing around the subject, I'm really happy something is being done about sexual harassment (4429).
- This survey is the first time I have heard/seen sexual misconduct/ harassment experienced by men discussed since I started at my HEI (1435).

Several mixed statements were made, describing a positive reaction to the survey and suggesting further improvements:
- A well made survey in general, although one or two answers I left neutral due to ambiguity of the question. Due to its personal nature, the survey took much longer than expected, roughly 35-40 minutes (4625).
- Although a very good survey which definitely needs to be completed by a lot of people to give people the freedom sexually they deserve I do think a lot of the questions were not related to the context of how these situations happen and were sometimes quite poor questions at times but the majority did seem fair and were relatable (0556).

Although the survey was designed as an exercise to gather information, feedback was received that the process of survey completion was educational in itself:
- As a straight cis white male I found this survey valuable. Some of the questions brought up issues that I rarely or haven't really considered (4589).
- Deliberating over this survey is powerful - it raises awareness and educates in itself - a very worthwhile initiative (2639).

This feedback is described in more detail by the student (3396) in the quote below. The range of topics included in the survey is described as prompting critical thinking, which could help to shape informal discussions between friends:

> This survey is the first interaction I have had through a university that has ever provoked any questions about sexual misconduct and consent. My understanding of consent has been completely derived from my informal discussions with friends who are victims of sexual violence (primarily those who identify as women, or as queer men), along with my own experience with non consensual sexual advances. I think for many students surveyed this will be the first time they contemplate the implications of their sexual interactions with others. That fact alone probably speaks more to the extent of this problem than my survey response can. Thanks for asking.

Emotional response to the survey

Some of the student comments commented on the feelings and emotions that were elicited by completing the survey. For these students, it was a significant commitment to take part. Although challenging, it was said to be worth it to contribute to increased awareness of the issues. This student (2429) wrote that it was "great to feel heard": "Although it was distressing to complete this survey, it is also great to feel heard. I often feel like my difficult experiences pale in significance to others and that I am somewhat to blame".

The next examples further illustrate dual aspects of engaging with the survey. It evoked difficult emotions and memories, could cause one to query how well they are coping, but it was a positive difference to make to a problem that had affected them:
- I am non binary but I was born male and identified that way for most of my life. I was raped about a year ago. This survey really hit me and hurt me but I'm glad I did it and I felt the questions were necessary and I'm glad they were straightforward. I hope this survey does some good (5187).

- I have never talked about my sexual assault or rape story because I felt I could deal with it myself. This questionnaire made me realise that I do need help and that much more things I have experienced are distressing to think about (7526).

The next written feedback from a student (4145) is a complex response, highlighting how the survey was experienced in different ways and evoked several reactions. It was distressing to respond to the questions, but it also seemed to be a positive contribution to a better future. The student was at a particular point in their recovery and survivorship when the survey was completed, coming at a time when she saw the road ahead as quite long due to the impact of what had happened to her:

> I am a woman. All my female friends have experienced sexual violence in some shape or form. Even though this survey hurt to do I felt the need to do it, to benefit students in the future. My personal experience... I was in a toxic relationship … I lost friends. … There are long-term effects of these experiences, and other than therapy (which some people can't afford) there isn't a lot we can do to get over the PTSD. It's been [some time] and I thought I was ok but I'm not. I had … panic attacks doing this survey.

Inclusivity

The feedback from students on the survey content demonstrated the importance of taking an inclusive approach to the construction of survey items and guidelines. Students with different demographic characteristics felt that they had not been considered adequately by some of the questions. For example, this student (0691) indicated that, from the perspective of a minority sexual orientation, it was not inclusive for them: "A lot of these questions fail to consider that asexual people might have very different experiences or reasons for their answers, and as such might feel left out by the survey". These gay and bisexual students concurred on that point:

- I found the survey too narrow, each sexuality should have its own survey so you can get more detailed and accurate answers (0740).
- Please include more focus on queer sexual assault in future qs as the responses can be more nuanced (3631).
- This survey was done in very gender binary terms, meaning the results will be skewed and unrepresentative! (7310).

This non-binary student (2169) indicated that access to gender-neutral bathrooms was an example of an indicator that should be used to assess the degree to which a university supports non-binary students to have the same conditions as other students. They noted the connection to definitions of violence and harassment:

> Not having gender neutral bathrooms is a form of sexual violence. … Just wanted to add this as an aside because it felt like the survey questions didn't reflect the full extent of how it defines sexual violence, namely: "It also refers to conduct that derogates, demeans, or humiliates a person based on that person's sex or gender".

This non-binary student (1945) provides several suggestions that provide insights on the importance of question wording ("binary language around male & female"), along with highlighting that women can be assaulted by women as well as by men, and that the needs of non-binary students are also important in survey construction:

> The binary language around male & female/men & women needs to be changed. Women can be sexually assaulted/raped by other women also. Alongside this, there should be a section for non-binary or gender non conforming people as they can also be victims or perpetrators.

The next student comment suggests that the survey may not have felt inclusive to some students who are in a relationship. The student (5640) wrote that: "A lot of the questions say something along

the lines of 'despite saying no' … I didn't say no because it was my boyfriend at the time who was behaving inappropriately, just because I did not say no does not make it okay. I think some of these questions could have been phrased better to be inclusive of all situations. People in relationships also have these experiences with their partners".

This male student (0293) felt that the questions were not designed to include his experience as a man who has been subject to sexual harassment: "As a man I have been faced with other women making sexually inappropriate comments to me before but when I completed the survey it felt like it was primarily catered for women instead, with the terminology and questions seeming to imply that it was focused on women". Other male students made a similar point. In this example, the student (1826) connects his feeling that the survey was oriented toward groups to the belief that men are not subject to violence or harassment, which he identifies as an inclusion issue that needs to be addressed:

> This survey was geared very towards homosexual males, non-binary genders and females, and while the majority of sexual assaults occur to these groups of people, … heterosexual males that have experienced sexual assault … seem to be the forgotten party due to stereotyping and males being seen as the strong and sexually driven person that always initiates sexual assault which is not the case. … More awareness and supports need to be implemented in HEIs for all groups, and not just the majority.

Negative reactions to survey
Some of the comments made were to critique the premise for carrying out the survey. Some of the students who responded considered it a waste of time (e.g., "Ultra left wing bullshit", 7255; "This is a pointless survey where the outcome has been decided before the results", 3062).

This student (0482) asserts that the survey contributes to a worrying trend of changing the meaning and scope of rape. The student is concerned about the impact of the survey and the broader scope of action in this area ("madness", "societally dangerous", "insanity"). They want this work to stop as it also adds to a crisis of masculinity:

> This is political correctness gone mad soon we won't know what rape actually means instead it will be when anyone says the wrong thing to the wrong person, this is madness and societally dangerous if groups think they can become the language or gender police this is insanity and we don't need anymore of it, most of these questions are extremely subjective and no wonder men's masculinity is at an all time low with these sort of surveys.

In the next example, a student (1899) suggests that the survey was conducted to give the appearance of action ("to appear as if they care"), whereas in fact nothing will be done:

> This is the most ridiculous survey I've ever seen in my entire life, and an incredibly poor attempt by [Government] to appear as if they care at ALL about sexual violence. This is just to look as if you're doing something about it, which in reality you are not. Absolutely awful.

Critical points about survey content or presentation
The range of student comments presented below demonstrates a need to review both how the survey is presented and the content of each set of items. This feedback is set out in sequence below.

Beginning with the presentation format of the survey on a phone, this student (4701) found the interface difficult to use: "This survey was extremely frustrating as I was doing it on a mobile phone and every time the survey told me I missed a question when I went to go back up the page it would reload to the original front page question 1. … it discouraged me from continuing and if it was not for my stubborn nature and the topic involved I would have quit ages ago".

This student (1731) indicates that descriptions of demographic factors such as gender need to be critically reviewed ("at the beginning of the survey, you asked about gender and listed the options man, woman, and gender non binary. it is not 'gender non binary' - it is just nonbinary, without 'gender' written in front - you wouldn't say 'I am a gender man' or 'she is a gender woman' so it's just 'nonbinary'").

This student (1983) identifies that an important part of the wording of the survey could be confusing: "Around the middle of the survey, the questions under the heading 'by someone related to your HEI' wasn't clear; It should be clearer if the question involved people hired by your HEI or attending it, or both". Another point of interpretation was raised by the next student (5447), who says that they found it difficult to respond to questions about topics on which they lacked a clear base of knowledge: "I am not sure if I was able to properly answer the first question regarding how my Institution might handle reports etc by students. My answers are assumptions about how they would handle the situations. Same goes for the questions how students may react".

A similar point is made by this student (5093), who indicates that they chose the 'neutral' option in response to a number of questions presented about how their HEI would respond to reports of sexual misconduct: "I answered neutral to many of them because I have never heard of anyone reporting sexual misconduct and honestly have no idea how they might react. I think this would be a deterrent in people reporting sexual misconduct".

This student (0287) reported having difficulty answering questions about male and female rape myth beliefs: "A lot of the questions were extremely specific and without context making it hard to choose a specific answer e.g. if a women is a slut she will eventually find trouble, or if a man is raped he has a history of sexual promiscuity, although these are in my opinion incorrect they are not necessarily completely incorrect making it difficult to answer".

The questions included in the survey on sexual violence attracted several comments and requests. For example, this student (7177) questioned how alcohol and drug use by victims is presented: "The questions regarding alcohol and drug consumption by either the rapist or the victim are extremely victim blaming". The next comment from a student (6899) suggests that more options are needed on some of the questions presented in this section:

> A lot of these questions require more options for answering them, such as "if both people are drunk it cannot be considered sexual assault." Was the sex consensual on both parts? Was it forced on one party? Was one of them forced to get drunk in order to have sex? Very unclear question which could have been phrased better to get a more accurate grasp of peoples opinions (6899).

This student (7491) asked for further options to be included in the list of perpetrator tactics:

> A note about the structure of the survey, it does not include emotional abuse tactics such as accusing partners of not loving/being attracted to them in order to pressure for sex. I have experienced and been pressured to initiate sex that I didn't want because my partner would melt down that I was not in love with them anymore if I didn't.

Experiences of Sexual Violence and Harassment

The following examples illustrate the accounts given by students of sexual violence and harassment that they experienced. The descriptions convey the trauma associated with these incidents. The immediate and long-lasting impact of being assaulted and violated are clearly apparent. The descriptions provided by the students have an additional role in situating the students in the broader context of survivorship, as they go on afterwards to engage with their college courses and peer

groups. Exposure to the perpetrator in academic courses and socially is identified as a particular point of stress and concern. The challenge of going through this process is intensified by lack of accommodation to their needs by the college authorities and social challenges faced in friendship groups. The capacity of friends, academic administrators, and support professionals to support people affected by sexual violence is questioned and critiqued.

A large majority of the incidents described were by women who wrote about violence and harassment they had experienced from men. There were frequent exceptions to this trend, including men who described being victimised by women and same-sex assaults (e.g., "Sexual assault towards men by other men is a massive problem and must be highlighted", 2706).

In the first example, this student (7234) describes being a victim of sexual violence while staying on campus ("Girls are severely targeted and it was the biggest regret of mine staying on campus as it wouldn't have happened if I was living elsewhere"). She describes a complete loss of control and capacity to respond ("never knew", "distraught", "couldn't stop", "pinned down", "couldn't move"): "Never knew there was someone behind me until I walked into my room and he followed. My dress was ripped when I woke up, I was distraught. I couldn't stop the act as I was pinned down to the point where I couldn't move. He threw my legs and arms around like I was dead, I felt I was".

In a familiar pattern, the perpetrator was known to the student ("I knew of the person just from campus, he was friends with my friends, but we never spoke"). It is understood that processing trauma can take time, and this student indicates she was unable to respond at the time but now wishes to address what happened: "In terms of my healing, I hope to take the matter down a more legal route to get justice. I just let the time go by because I was young".

A number of detailed descriptions of this nature were provided by students in recounting their experiences of sexual violence. For this student (1225), rape is met by denial, despite the numerous people she mentions who had the power and opportunity to stop it from happening when she was unable to do so herself:

> Rape culture is very strong in my college. Every girl I know has a story. Many of us were raped, told our story and called liars. I have no proof because I was unconscious, carried home and taken advantage of in my campus bedroom. No one stopped him. Not the club bouncers, not the taxi man, not campus security, not bystanders, not my roommates. He was sober enough to carry me home and rape me. He could have stopped himself.

This student (2463) ties together an urgent need for culture change with the Higher Education institution responsible for leading out on addressing the issue. Behind this request for change is the student's experience of repeated sexual assault, which has caused a pain that they have to live with while feeling a deep personal toll of that what has happened:

> Please help us educate more people (especially men) on consent. Please, I've been sexually assaulted so many times by men and I feel so empty and I'm in so much pain. I have to live with it but I feel like the light inside of me has gone out. Please stop them from hurting us. Save the future first years from having their college experience and lives ruined. Do more surveys! … this is the first time I've seen something like this college wide! Thank you.

The following description from a lesbian student (1760) describes how on one occasion the sexualised harassment she frequently experienced from strangers on nights out turned into a physical assault on herself and her partner:

> Generally also I have found straight men to be disrespectful towards lesbian relationships, we are sexualised which is extremely frustrating. I have had men try to have threesome with myself and my partner on nights out. After we stated we do not engage in sexual activities

with men, on one occasion a man grabbed me in a nightclub and started [biting me] after suggesting me and my partner have a threesome with him. We had to fight him off and leave the club.

In the next example, this student (1592) describes struggling with making sense of occasions when they had sex while not capable of consenting to do so ("being drunk or roofied"). They start by describing the situation faced by students generally when in this position: "During these nights they may have sex but are so black-out drunk they don't know they've done it until they wake up the next morning in the person's bed or are told by friends the next day". Next they move to a level of personal description, relating directly to having sex when incapacitated and unable to consent: "This has happened to me on a number of occasions (from being drunk or roofied) and it's an awful feeling the next day, knowing you may have given consent at the time but were so out-of-your-mind drunk it's hard to know".

In processing the experience, the student describes a narrative characterised by shame ("hugely shameful"). Having had sex they take responsibility for it ("my fault") while at the same time understanding they were not in a position to consent: "When you have sex while black-out drunk it feels like your fault. It felt like my fault, having sex with someone I didn't want to have sex with, not knowing if I'd agreed to it or they just assumed I gave consent because I was so drunk. It's a hugely shameful experience".

The theme of uncertainty is expressed again in the next example, in which a student experienced stalking. This student (7251) describes the harrowing experience of a male student breaking into her house following earlier stalking behaviours: "Had an experience of being stalked by a well-liked student in my class who eventually broke into my house". Beyond the stress and trauma of being subject to stalking, she conveys a sense of powerlessness to act when describing the obstacles to reporting that she experienced. The male student was "well-liked" and had prepared a narrative to discredit her, she felt her report would not have been anonymous and did not know how to respond: "Very little information on what to do in this type of situation. Found out he had spread rumours about me prior to this escalating so I would not be believed. Would have been unable to remain anonymous if reported".

The next student example also refers to not feeling able to respond, and adds in the issue of friends not having the preparation needed to intervene. In this incident the student (1637) was sexually assaulted by a friend in rented accommodation. Close friends were sympathetic but did not know how to support the student further. This appears to have influenced the student to not confront the perpetrator or make a report:

> A sexual assault I experienced was carried out by a friend in my rented accommodation. When telling close friends about the incident, I felt they didn't know how to react or where to suggest for help, just that they hoped I was ok. I never confronted the perpetrator (a male friend) and pretended nothing happened because I was afraid of the outcome.

While friends were well meaning in the previous example, but lacking in preparation for signposting further supports, this student (6355) received advice from her friends that she should not take any action after an incident of sexual harassment. They prioritised the perpetrator's interests over hers. She describes lacking knowledge herself as to what her options were, and repeats twice that there is a more widespread lack of understanding among other students:

> You're never told what to do when it happens. When it happened to me and I asked my friends for advice, they told me not to report it because he "didn't mean" to sexually harass me and I shouldn't put his course in jeopardy. Loads of people don't understand the long term effects and consent should be mandatory in college. It's really scary the number of

people who don't understand it. … You need to raise more awareness, honestly, I don't feel like many people understand how scarring it can be to be assaulted, raped or harassed. It's not talked about nearly enough and this needs to change.

A number of students described their experience of sexual violence and harassment as having long lasting effects for them ("I know in my experience, being sexually assaulted is an experience that will follow me the rest of my life and often unconsciously become a part of my daily life and psychological state", 7873). For some students, the incidents they experienced were repeatedly refreshed in their minds because of continued exposure to the perpetrator in the college and social environment. In this example the situation is ongoing because the student (0703) and her friends feel unable to confront the men who raped her:

We should be taught how to confront our friends. The two men who raped me at different times are still friends with some of my friends who know about it because it's easier to not confront them. However it is very difficult for me to see them. I don't want to tell my friends not to talk to them, but I don't want to be around them.

The issue of dealing with ongoing exposure to the perpetrator in social networks comes up again here for this student (4496). She is dealing with a lot because of the impact of the event itself ("It has totally upended my comfort with intimacy, and caused me a lot of hurt and frustration"). She has felt unable to tell her friends what happened, and the man who raped is regularly encountered as a member of a friend group. While she tries to deal with the aftermath of the rape alone, her pain is exacerbated by what she sees as his "flourishing with no consequences": "The most painful thing is seeing the man who raped me in my larger friend group, and not being able to explain to our mutual friends what he had done because of the stigma. I felt it was easier to deal with it by myself, and not to tell anyone. It is incredibly painful to see him flourishing with no consequences".

Here we see a student (3890) describe the difficulty of being in the college environment. She remarks on the intense reaction she has to seeing the perpetrator there while coping with uncertainty over what other people know about the incident ("can completely cut out your social battery"): "Going back to a college environment after rape / sexual assault by someone in the college can be extremely overwhelming. Seeing them and their friends / trying to understand if they know about the incident etc. can completely cut out your social battery". The social stress and personal distress she experienced made it hard for her to engage with her student experience, and she asks for better procedures to be put in place to deal with this situation: "While there is support for individuals after an incident like this I found it hard to just be a student again afterwards so I feel like there should be some sort of help/support/protocol for that kind of situation".

Examples were also provided in student accounts of having to deal with being with the perpetrator in the academic environment. This student (4226) was repeatedly harassed and made a report about it. They were dissatisfied with the outcome of the process, stating that the perpetrator was supported whereas they were not, while their requests about group work were ignored:

A member of my class sexually and physically harassed me [repeatedly]. I reported this to the college and the other person was given counseling, and it was quickly forgotten. I now have to attend class every single day with this individual … My wish is that this person would have been taken out of my class as a result of their actions, however in realising this wasn't an option I asked that in light of group work, presentations etc. I do not be put in groups with this person [but I was put into a group] with this person.

The student goes on to emphasise the impact of this situation, which compounds the original harassment. They describe their current situation in terms of "extreme stress", attending the doctor, being "infuriated" and being "given absolutely nothing": "This has resulted in me dealing with

extreme stress related to college, to a point in which I have had to go to the doctor multiple times. I am infuriated about how this even was handled. … I have been given absolutely nothing".

The issue of secondary trauma and distress is described here by a male victim of sexual assault by a female. This student (0433) identifies that lack of support "socially and institutionally" has had a greater toll than the sexual assault. He says that male victimhood does not fit with the conventional narrative model for sexual violence (men "can't become victim to these actions"). Therefore, it is seen as unacceptable and confrontational to say that it happens:

> Generally speaking, support for male victims is almost non-existent. Both socially and institutionally. Impact on mental health is worse than the sexual assault. Especially in my college, men's experiences are seen as an insult to women. The narrative goes that all men are awful and can't become victim to these actions. I have always felt afraid to speak out in fear of being misunderstood by women and afraid of the guilt of accusing a woman of sexual assault.

The student found support through social media groups, which helped alleviate his isolation, commenting that current social norms "make us feel as though we can't be hurt":

> I know of countless other men who have experienced this through small social media pages. These pages are the only support I have and are the only reason for me to keep going. Isolation and guilt are the only feelings I have felt up until finding these like-minded men who understand how sexism goes both ways and that "male privilege" is just a way to make us feel as though we can't be hurt.

The sexual violence and harassment described in the open-ended comments was typically caused by other students. This was not always the case. A number of examples were given of staff members as aggressors and harassers. This example is edited from a longer submission, but preserves the student's sense of having been exposed to numerous inappropriate behaviours by the same staff member:

> When I was an undergrad, I was given the opportunity to do a one-on-one [supervision] … he began to make inappropriate comments. … I wasn't really sure what he was implying and it was very uncomfortable. … Another time, we had been having a meeting and were laughing about something. He got up to [go to another room] and when he came back he said [someone else had asked] about why I was "moaning" in his office. This was really embarrassing. I believe I had been only laughing normally and he made it sound like I was being really inappropriate with him. Another time, … He sat very close and [made personal comments] … he kept touching my shoulder as well. … This all really affected me, but I think it also shows how some of this can be subtle too (4716).

In this example, a student (5989) describes having observed unwanted touching of PhD students by a senior academic. The student recognised the behaviour as inappropriate, but felt that they were not in a position to react. The PhD students themselves were also disempowered to act on this form of harassment:

> I observed a male senior lecturer touch inappropriately PhD students. … I felt uncomfortable but I felt it would be better to not say anything as I was afraid to get involved and the consequences for my research. It was clear for me that the lecturer used his power position to maintain the silence of my colleagues. The female students seemed upset with the situation but ashamed to say anything.

The issue of power relations with academic staff is remarked on in the next example from a student (6924), who also felt unable to act. They took into consideration the same factors as the previous student, namely fear ("afraid") and wariness of the potential consequences from a powerful lecturer

and the possibility that their colleagues would support him: "I received unwanted attention from my lecturer, I didn't report it because I was afraid of not being believed. also this man marks and may supervise my work and I was afraid of retaliation from him and/or his colleagues".

The point about what level of action and support would be forthcoming from other staff members is addressed again in this quote from a student (5857). There is a concern expressed about the informal system of local remediation not being thorough or effective. The opportunity to address this outside of a formal complaint was not taken, and the student suffered the consequences, both personally ("terrified") and by missing out on their education:

> I was sexually harassed by a lecturer ... for [a period of time]. I told my department head [and a staff member who acted as an advocate for students]. All that came of it was a chat between the lecturer with the [advocate for students who] ... told me [they] had had a chat with him. I never heard anything more of it. I expected more. ... I found it very stressful and I hated going to college afterwards. I remember being in ... [teaching room] that had tea making facilities and a fridge - he walked in, I had my back to him but I knew by his voice it was him. I was terrified as it was after his meeting. ... I missed a lot of classes after that!

Several comments were made by students about the culture around certain Students' Union organisations. These included examples of positive support and assistance provided by members of Students' Unions ("When I had a rape threat [made] about me on campus, I felt very unsafe. The Student Union Representatives were very helpful and comforting, and contacted [a senior staff member] for me", 0867; "the Student Union and occasionally lecturers/tutors are the only people I hear condemning or mentioning", 2145). Separately to these positive comments about solidarity, perceptions were expressed that, in some cases, student leaders used the power they had to facilitate harassment:

- Student Unions are notoriously centred around groups of predatory boys who are popular (5679).
- SU officers themselves may organise talks and then go and grope women on night out / pressure them and make them uncomfortable. The performativeness makes it feel like a slap in the face for victims (3847).

Pervasive Daily Harassment Culture

Many female students described sexual violence and harassment to be pervasive and commonplace. They wrote about it in terms of their direct personal experience and in making observations about what they knew from their friends. It was also written about in relation to on-campus and college-related experiences that extended into comments on wider society.

In the first example presented, a female student (5083) wrote that the experience of assault or harassment is "part of being a woman" in contemporary Irish society. Due to its ubiquity, it is not subject to zero tolerance every time it occurs but instead is "brushed off":

> As a woman, sexual harassment and assault are way too normal. Nearly all of my friends who are girls have experienced assault or harassment. I have too. But it always feels like just part of being a woman and is brushed off.

The same student went on to say that the culture supports these actions through forms of humour and social beliefs. She finishes by translating this acceptance into the personal meaning it had for her, that walking on the street makes her feel at grave risk:

Instead of being take seriously like it should be. I have also heard sexist jokes and attitudes towards sexual assault that are sickening from both men and women. Sometimes just walking home feels like a potential death sentence. Something has to be done!

Here a female student (7680) describes a sense of oppression linked to the social culture of being out at night as a college student, an oppression associated with male students. That culture is both hard to avoid ("extreme", "toxic") and alarming on a personal level ("personally terrifies me and many other girls I know"):

There is a toxic and depressing culture of extreme sexuality in university and even starting college men seem to expect a place where they can get sex and women easily, where their sexual needs will be met. Plus the extreme emphasis on sex, namely hookups, and the way men talk about women, personally terrifies me and many other girls I know.

She felt that the culture permeated into the college environment. She distinguishes between programming and education felt to be necessary and more frivolous depictions of sexual activity, which should be found through choice rather than being so visible:

Societies or students bluntly expose you to sexuality. On my registration day at campus male students from the SU gave us an introductory talk and "funnily" threw condoms at us and waved them around, I felt really embarrassed and frustrated because I don't want to be forced to be exposed to that kind of thing, and it must also be hard for religious students to deal with. … I wish colleges would make any sexual discussions, lectures, or promotions other than about consent and assault as they are essential, more hidden away and that people would have to actively seek them out to be exposed to them.

A number of shorter written comments reflected the view that, firstly, exposure to harassment from other students was commonplace, but secondly that it had a chilling effect with far reaching effects: "Catcalling is a near daily occurrence, and even if it doesn't happen I know myself and many other female presenting friends are scared when we leave our houses bc of it" (4363). Some LGBTQ+ students remarked on harassment they had experienced on the basis of their sexual orientation, including this lesbian student: "We encounter a lot of abuse/hate as a result of our choices / orientation. People think that they can change us" (3027). This experience of being singled out extended to trans and non-binary students, as illustrated in this quote: "On many occasions (by many different people) I have been asked very inappropriate/personal sexual questions as a result of being trans" (4334).

Moving more specifically to understanding how a culture of normalisation, threat, and high prevalence of sexual violence translates to the college environment, this female student (549) wrote that it was a mainstream, pervasive part of women's experience: "I have attended two universities and about 90 percent of young women that I have come across, myself included, have experienced non-consensual sex / sexual assault / rape or sexual harassment".

These descriptions can be further reviewed with respect to the campus and the wider experience. Here, the college campus is portrayed as an environment where women have to check themselves in an effort to avoid harassment: "Always thinking twice about what we wear (as females) due to unwanted attention / comments/ groping / catcalling. Many female students and staff are affected by this daily, among many other things" (4375).

In this comment from a female student (6453), the blurred boundaries between the campus and the surrounding social environment came to the fore. First, the student describes sexual assault as a continual feature of nights out. The impact of this is underscored ("you're shaken and can't believe it"), but this is set against becoming habituated to assault ("you just get used to it"):

Being sexually assaulted on nights out is beyond commonplace, at home but especially in Dublin. The first couple times it happens you're shaken and can't believe it and all that, but then after a while, you just get used to it.

The same student went on to put this in the context of being at college. While an assault may have taken place off campus, the perpetrator could well be familiar on campus. Yet it is not seen as worthwhile to make a report. While what has happened is wrong, reporting is weighed against social costs and the continual nature of assault, with the conclusion that "it doesn't seem worth it":

Nobody is going to want to report anything because then it becomes a thing. Especially in college, the chances are you're going to see the person; go to class with him, know his friends. People who are going to want to be on his side automatically, and it doesn't seem worth it to say anything against all those people, especially not for something that at this point just seems like an occupational hazard.

Other students' comments describe the complementarity of the campus and the surrounding environment. The campus is not separate from what is happening more widely in society: "As a woman I often do not feel safe walking around especially at night. I think this also stems from experience outside of college and is then carried onto campus - therefore making it a societal problem – not just a college experience one" (4679).

Yet the campus was also seen as a hot spot for harassment to occur. In the next description, a female student (6402) described feeling exposed to harassment when running for exercise on the grounds of the university: "The level of harassment of women while exercising is very concerning so much to the extent that if I was going to exercise eg go for a run during college I would do it as far away as possible from campus". The next example from a female (4871) indicates that "walking around on campus" can result in continual harassment: "Walking around the campus dressed completely modestly I was beeped at and cat called by 3 separate cars full of men in the space of 30 mins. People need to be taught that this behaviour is not acceptable" (4871).

This female student (2519) provides an insight on the toll it took to live "on guard" against sexual assault, and contrasted this with her right to have a safe environment, especially as a paying customer for her educational experience: "It is exhausting and draining to constantly be on guard to make sure I don't get sexually assaulted at any time, but especially on campus when I am paying to be there and deserve to feel safe- any time of day or night".

This quote from a female student (2822) describes workplace harassment arising as a healthcare student. First, the student describes sexist harassment, before moving on to recount an example of sexual harassment and how it made her feel:

As a healthcare student lots of comments re suitable specialties for a woman, comments re having children, comments re what your spouse or partner does for a living to allow you to return to learning. One experience of a male … practitioner asking for help with something which required me to bend down and then clearly looking down my top, felt very uncomfortable but totally powerless to say anything as a student.

The contrast has already been noted between harassment and violence being completely unacceptable, while nonetheless being described as happening on a regular basis. This was described as leading to a situation of having to live with it as an "occupational hazard" of being a student (6453). But it continued to take a toll – leading to students living in fear and feeling powerless about remedying the situation. Another person may disregard the student's right to be free of violence or harassment across any number of situations, set against a daily culture where zero tolerance or pushback seemed like an unattainable ideal. The incidents that students described

range from apparently casual, opportunistic harassment or violence to deliberate, premediated efforts to manipulate and assault. With danger coming from so many directions, manifested in multiple forms, and without apparent resolution, adaptation to a culture of harassment nonetheless took a toll.

The next quote from a female student (4476) depicts the struggle against accepting the normalisation of this culture. In the first part, she describes her friend's exposure to a range of harassing actions by a male student:

> I have a friend … who was sent dick pics by someone on campus. Even though my friend clearly did not want to receive these pictures, and at some points was in a sexually exclusive relationship, the person didn't seem to care. He also propositioned her for a threesome out of the blue despite them showing no interest, and being in a relationship with a girl at the time. When the man heard she was dating a woman he said the girlfriend would be welcome to join too.

Next, the student puts this repeated harassment in the context of her experience to date. Describing such incidents as "so standard", we can see her struggle to maintain a continuity between the principle of respectful behaviour and the reality of apparently casual disregard for her friend. She finishes her quote by looking for the university to drive culture change through education that will reinforce the standards of behaviour that people should be able to expect from one another:

> It's sad that stuff like this is so standard, especially from men. Even when I was telling her that stuff like this isn't ok and that she doesn't deserve to be treated like this, she just shrugged it off because she is so used to it. I have heard of many similar stories on campus. There needs to be much more training when people enter college as to why unsolicited nudes and unprompted sexting is inappropriate.

The state of acceptance on the part of the student's friend is recalled in this observation by another female: "Almost every girl I know has been harassed but don't even know it BC they have been conditioned to think being unclear about consent is 'normal'" (1708). Building on the previous example of harassment that included the use of electronic means of communication, this female student (4656) wrote about online gender-based harassment where peers were rated and judged. For her, this collective form of social policing was pervasive:

> An [Internet] group was set up which slut-shamed girls in our year using posts, pictures and comments for the clothes they wore, the people they had slept with / kissed or simply the way they looked. Sexual harassment is present online and does not require physical contact or proximity to another person.

A range of settings were identified as being high risk for sexual violence and harassment, from those integral to the academic experience, such as placements or fieldwork, to social environments that featured pervasive alcohol use:

- A major concern for sexual harassment and violence is fieldwork where students can be far away from campus or on college grounds that are unfamiliar to them and thus feel more vulnerable (5193).
- To me the biggest risk of sexual violence is when out in social groups, especially with people you do not know very well. Some people do not seem to be able to draw the line between appropriate flirting and causing distress by being too touchy or forward. Alcohol is definitely a complicating factor in these situations and can make the victim feel responsible and the assailant feel blameless. It is very difficult to have conversations about these topics with anyone (1016).

Disbelief, trivialised: Male experiences of pervasive harassment

A large majority of examples cited above are from comments that female students provided on the survey. These depict an emerging picture of society and the college experience where women feel exposed to risk and harm on a regular basis, in a culture that seems stacked against change or remedy. Yet male students also contributed their experience of lacking power or visibility when they have been assaulted or harassed. This contributes to an overall sense where victimisation can occur to anyone in a manner that makes the survivor feel they have limited options, demoralised by the perceptions of others, and powerless to overcome the reactions they receive.

In the first example of male students' reflections on how their experiences are responded to, this student (3155) states that attention to harassment mostly focused on males as being responsible for it ("A lot of what I see is targeted towards guys and how they act"). However, in his experience, men can also be subjected to the pattern of sexual assault and harassment described earlier by female students when socialising:

> I often see a blind eye towards girls who sexually assault guys, forcing them to kiss them, grinding on them, grabbing and touching them. This has happened to most of my mates and yet it is never identified as an issue even though if it was the other way around there would be murder.

The male student went on to describe an incident that happened to him, portraying it as minimised by peers and staff members:

> Examples like this occur all the time and is a clear double standard that is always being broke. I've had a woman force herself to kiss me and people including staff have laughed and joked about it. These are the type of questions that need to be also asked.

In the next example from a male student (0025), we can see the student position his non-drinking status as having enabled him to make valuable observations about what happens among students on nights out. He writes that male students were likely to be sexual harassed. The female perpetrators were protected from censure because their behaviour was trivialised ("it's only a bit of craic"): "I've seen just as many men getting grabbed on dance floors as I have women, … the multiple times I've been grabbed inappropriately and reported it to bouncers etc, or just have it laughed at by her friends because 'it's only a bit of craic'".

The next male student (5568) draws on their experience working in the nighttime economy to inform us that he has been regularly subjected to unwanted sexual touching while trying to do his part-time job. This extended to harassment based on his sexual orientation ("regularly given abuse for being gay"). Repeating the experience of the male students cited above, the experience of male victims is said to be trivialised by staff members ("just told to get over it"). In addition, as some male students commented, there is frustration at a double standard of how harassment of a female worker would be supported:

> As a student working in a nightclub as a gay male, regularly inappropriately touched by females without my consent when I'm just trying to work so I can afford to go to college. Regularly given abuse for being gay as if I made it up to say I'm not interested in the person. No support from nightclub management re men being victims of sexual abuse or assault, but then completely different story if it happened to a female member of staff. It's something that is seen to not exist to male staff, just told to get over it.

Disbelief about sexual violence and harassment
Some of the responses made by students about sexual violence and harassment stated that the phenomenon was overstated. These comments were typically made by male students. For example, this student draws on his conversations with female friends to challenge the view of other women that harassment is commonplace, also indicating his willingness to act assertively to intervene if he

were to see harassment taking place: "A lot of my female friends claim that sexual harassment is not as common as some women claim it is and from my experience this is true I've only ever seen it happening once and I put a stop to it" (1852).

In this response, another male student (0442) indicated that forms of sexual violence such as rape are not common ("rape is extraordinarily rare"). He was concerned that surveys and college-based responses were contributing to an overly inclusive concept of sexual violence:

> This whole 'rape culture' thing is absolute nonsense. You are wasting your time. Rape is extraordinarily rare. It is not having sex with someone while you are both drunk, unlike what many people think. … The way people go around saying 'oh yeah, I was raped', when they had consensual sex which they later regretted trivialises actual rape.

This student was vehement that victims of rape "should" go to the Gardaí: "The only response that should be made by someone who was raped is to go to the Gardai. No Karen sitting in an office in the college will do any good". He is concerned about the impact on men of the perceived widening of the terms of sexual violence, arguing that the ramping up of college-based responses are part of a wider social trend of "cancel culture":

> Men are terrified of being accused of rape, even after consensual sex. It's this college obsession with rape that is fuelling this, and of course the extremely concerning cancel culture and guilty unless proven innocent mantra that has exploded onto the scene with the Paddy Jackson trial etc.

Arguing for a definition of rape where someone should clearly say 'no' or physically act to try to stop the act, the student conveys his frustration and concern:

> If someone doesn't say no or give any sort of clear indication they do not want to engage in sex before or during, how in God's name are you meant to know?? Do you want people to be telepathic??? The questions being asked in this survey are like something out of Little Britain or South Park for Christ sake.

Advice about how to behave
Some students used the open-ended comment section to attribute sexual violence and harassment to negative changes in cultural norms and lack of personal responsibility. It was suggested that other students should keep themselves safe ("Drink less, stay safe and don't engage with strangers just because you are at college", 0755) and that standards of behaviour have disimproved ("Big part of the problem is erosion of traditional ethics and morals", 0080). These comments gave advice on standards of behaviour that other people should follow, with the implication that someone who is victimised bears some responsibility for what has happened to them, as described by this student (7291):

> Adults are for the most part responsible for the situations they allow into their lives. A lot of the questions on this survey involve drink culture, how young adults dress when engaging in drink culture or how to behave in this kind of environment. A lot of this could be avoided if people did not engage in drink culture.

The language used in this comment by another student (0963) puts the victim in the causative role ("put themselves", "protect themselves"):

> My hope and wish would be that young persons would put themselves at risk less and protect themselves against and avoid these sorts of attacks. For instance, establishing boundaries early in the relationship and engage in less risky behaviours being fully aware of the importance of sexual relationships and would assign a meaning other than momentarily pleasure to sex.

Further comments proposed that victims of violence or harassment have responsibility if something happens to them due to what they are wearing, how much alcohol they drink, and should not "blame others". These comments feature aspects of rape myth attitudes, as indicated in below:

- If people want to get merry they should cop on + not be so vulnerable eg wear jeans or skirts that cover your bum, underwear and tights, shoes that you can run in, and not think it's hilarious that they are too drunk to be able to pull up their pants. I am no prude but they need to realise that they also have a responsibility to protect themselves and each other from potential predators (5758).
- Generally if investment was put into teaching people to be capable of defending themselves, an emphasis on personal accountability and responsibility our environments would be much safer (0258).
- The whole "woke" or "cancel" culture is such B.S people these days are too soft and have a constant victim approach to their own behaviour. Most people refuse to take responsibility for their own actions when at fault and instead prefer to blame others (2893).

Reporting and Investigation

In this section a range of features associated by students with HEI reporting and investigation are presented. Taken together, these suggest a challenging environment for students considering making a report of sexual violence or harassment. Considered from social, academic, supportive, and investigative perspectives, the students who made comments on the college environment typically described barriers and lack of support.

College culture: Not a safe place to disclose
This student (4381) gave their view that it is challenging coming forward to disclose an incident of sexual violence and harassment in higher education. They cited the culture of groping in social situations, referred to above by students, as resulting in minimisation of the harm arising from harassment: "There is also the 'norm' in society today where people can openly grab or touch others in a sexual way in nightclubs, pubs, and other social settings where sexual assault is rampant, and people simply brush it off because what can be done?". They cite "stigma" and "repercussions" associated with student culture in higher education that does not support people to feel "safe" to disclose:

> A major issue among Universities and Higher Institutions in Ireland is that when people come forward with their stories they are met with stigma and abuse online and in person. It does not feel like a safe place for people to seek help and many are scared of the repercussions they may face from the college society itself.

In the face of these social factors, the student wrote that the Higher Education institution needs to be proactive in establishing the conditions for disclosures to come forward through a comprehensive range of action:

> HEI's need to take active action in educating everyone on consent and boundaries, and ensure that perpetrators are held accountable and victims are supported so that the campus community can feel safe and supported too.

The students who wrote about institutional responses to sexual violence did not view this proactive response as being in place. By contrast, they pointed to a number of features in the college ecology where failings could be readily identified. Overall, the student responses suggested a set of key challenges to pose about institutional readiness:

- The institution demonstrating a proactive commitment and an openness to student complaints

- Supportiveness of the staff members who manage academic programmes when incidents are brought to their attention
- The response of the college investigation process when a report or complaint is made
- Ensuring that survivors of sexual violence and harassment have their needs for investigation and support met by the institution

Disinterest rather than commitment and openness

Student observations and comments on the visibility and commitment of HEIs pointed to a perception that the college was disinterested and not active in establishing an active and open tone toward sexual violence and harassment. This student (2145) viewed their college leadership and structures as disengaged on these topics:

> Before this survey the only time I have seen the HEI directly interested in sexual harassment / assault issues was when we were shown a [short] video on consent at the beginning of First Year. Apart from that, the Student Union and occasionally lecturers/tutors are the only people I hear condemning or mentioning it. Be nice to know the higher ups give a damn about this kind of thing every once in a while, especially after … case last year … Why on earth would students feel safe to report such things when that happened? And an occasional email is not enough. Actively supporting this is 10000% necessary, its not nice to be unsure of whether or not those in charge of my HEI would acknowledge harm I potentially went through.

For another student (5924), the responsibility seemed to fall on to students themselves to avoid being raped or assaulted: "Colleges can fall into the attitude that people should learn how to avoid being raped or assaulted as opposed to blaming the perpetrators". This student (0158) had engaged with the reporting process, but came away feeling that the institution was not concerned about students at all: "When I reported my sexual assault to my school, they did nothing about it. Institutions do not care about the well-being of the students sometimes. In the end, it's a business".

In the next example, the student (0711) may be referring to the college or to peers when describing resistance encountered when seeking support after an assault. The response they received privileged the perpetrator's needs, recalling the rape myth beliefs that excuse such behaviour:

> He comes from a nice family, 'he didn't mean it', 'you don't want to ruin his life do you?' are not appropriate responses to a victim of sexual assault. He didn't care much about bothering me and MY life when he decided to grab me all over. I don't want to think of his life. He should have thought of that before he committed a crime. Drunk people know not to go robbing banks. They should also be able to stop themselves from groping girls.

Ineffective responses from college courses

This student (0267) relayed their understanding that concern by students on their course about a male student's assaults was met with inaction: "A single person in my course was reported to the [senior staff members] by multiple females after he assaulted them and he did not care, and did absolutely nothing". In this example, a student (4699) sought support from a staff member following sexual harassment from another student on their course. They described being "shamed" by the staff member:

> From personal experience, I was shamed and rebuked by a staff member when I approached them about my experience of being subjected to sexual harassment by another student with whom I had just completed a … placement, and was due to begin another … placement.

The student was not assisted in their request to avoid being placed with the other student again. Instead, they had to have significant contact with the student who had harassed them and was left feeling disempowered:

I was given no assistance in seeking a placement swap and had to complete [it] in the same area with this student. I have also since been placed on … projects … with this person as I believe it would be futile to raise the issue again. I regret my decision to bring this issue to a member of staff and would have little confidence in them to deal with the issue of sexual harassment/assault appropriately.

A similar scenario was described by this student (2927), who described their friend's experience of being let down by staff who organised a placement:

Friend was a victim of sexual misconduct by another member of college course, the two were placed together on placement so my friend made an informal report to staff in higher education to request reallocation for placement, did not give full details but disclosed enough information to understand the situation, no action was taken by staff and friend forced to complete 10 weeks of placement with this individual.

College investigation processes

A number of examples were provided of having indirect knowledge of college investigations and responses to incidents, based on the experience of friends. These examples depicted the system as unresponsive and ineffective:

- A friend of mine reported sexual assault to the university and it was handled terribly (0353).
- I am aware of numerous cases where students were raped and I have heard very little about actions being taken or those students being supported by the college (3082).

Moving on to students' direct experience of the investigations process, the tone of the student responses was also one of disappointment in meeting an inadequate system in their HEI. In this example, the student (0867) contrasted the warmth of the Students' Union response with the minimal response and disrespectful approach of the senior staff member they consulted with:

I felt very unsafe. The Student Union Representatives were very helpful and comforting, and contacted the [Senior Staff] for me. However, when I met with the [Senior Staff] to discuss the matter, [they were] extremely unhelpful. [They] just told me that there's nothing they can do, and when I mentioned that I had one possible suspect, [they] did not even ask me for a name of this person. I was in and out of [their] office in less than 5 minutes. This caused me to lose a lot of trust in my institution.

In the next example, a student (1562) indicated that they had been raped after a night out. The rapist was another student who resided at the same campus accommodation facility. They described the structures they engaged with outside of the college, but these sit in contrast with the lack of engagement from their own university. They felt let down and had to manage being in the same environment as the student responsible for the rape:

After a night out I was raped. After this I took all the steps I was told to by the … rape crisis centre. I had a forensic examination, I reported the incident to the guards, I took all the steps I was supposed to and … I am still dealing with the aftermath of that trauma which has changed everything in my life. My higher education institution was made aware of this and so were campus security. However I was never contacted in any way by anyone in my university to enquire how I was doing or if there was anything that could have helped me. That person still lived on campus accommodation and I had to get up each day and face that.

Other examples of not being taken seriously were provided by students. In this instance, a student (1928) described an inappropriate response from a staff member: "After an incident of a student who may have recorded me during sex without my consent I tried to report it to my institution but was not taken seriously and I felt the staff member dismissed me as trying to cause trouble for the offender".

In this instance, the university was resistant to listening to the student's needs. A student (4182) had been sexually harassed by a lecturer for a long period, and after making an initial reported that was "somewhat brushed under the carpet", they subsequently made a complaint. The student was in the midst of the academic year and did not want the lecturer to grade their assessments. Following a disappointing initial reaction, the student had to suggest an extreme remedy before they were listened to:

> [I] pleaded with authorities in the college to let other lecturers grade my material instead. This didn't happen. I also pleaded with them to get him to give me an alternative assessment, since we had to do an oral presentation. The alternative given, was the option of me sending on a recording … along with my presentation. I had to threaten to contacting [the Government ministry] in order to resolve the situation before my concerns were taken seriously.

In this example, a gay student (1329) wanted to highlight that the need for the provision of security services in the university to be provided from a position of greater awareness and training:

> [College] has too many male security guards on patrol, especially at night. This could make women and members of the LGBTQ+ community feel unsafe. Furthermore the private security firm … is intimidating. Security members should be trained in consent and LGBT allyship. It does not feel like they are here to protect students currently.

This international student (1637) described feeling "marginalised" and "worthless" following an investigation of staff behaviour by the university. For them, the issue was in the university siding with the staff member:

> When cases of misconduct or maltreatment between students and lecturers are observed. Please take a neutral view and investigation. DO NOT SIDE WITH THE PERSON WITH GREATER POWER. It is very evident from experiences that NOTHING is done especially if the case involves staff and students. Marginalised students are considered worthless!!!!!. Most particularly marginalised international students.

The consequence for the international student was to feel unsafe and not valued, hoping that they will come to be treated in accordance with their right to "dignity and respect":

> It is appalling that after so much is sacrificed to leave your home country for better education, you come to a place where you don't feel safe at all. All you have is a bitter experience and a silent prayer that no one goes through the experience. Regardless you wake up each day and the next day looking ahead for a better future and safe haven where you are treated with dignity and respect because you are a human (1951).

Meeting student needs for investigation and support

Students described wanting a system that could be engaged with successfully across a range of incidents, but the system was not seen as meeting this need. Personal supports for students who had experienced sexual violence or harassment, such as counselling, were seen as inadequate in scope and specialisation. Student comments about the investigation process are presented below, moving from initial descriptions of beliefs about the investigation process to personal experiences of having engaged with the process. In this example, the student (0389) viewed the HEI process as relevant only in cases of rape, while other forms of sexual violence were not seen as fitting the criterion for investigation:

> Although I personally have never experienced any sexual misconduct, I have close friends who have and from what I've seen, people feel they can only report the most serious of cases like rape, and basically anything lesser they feel it won't be taken seriously and they should just get over it.

The next student (4379) raises a query about what constitutes "proof" and the belief that engaging with the investigation process will be traumatising. This relates to the previous quote in that proof such as having attended a SATU unit with evidence of rape may be viewed as being compatible with the standard required to engage with the university process. Even if the student feels they have the level of proof that might be required, "shame" is a further barrier to making a complaint. The student makes a differentiation between self-stigma associated with victimisation and the shame that is "assigned" to survivors by others:

> Disclosures about sexual harassment and sexual violence are common, but everyone knows that nothing will happen if they are reported since proof is hard to come by and reporting often leads to a re-traumatisation. The shame experienced by and assigned to survivors of sexual violence is significant and will keep most from reporting, even if they would have some kind of proof corroborating their experience.

This student (1981) states an extensive list of challenges and barriers to engaging with the investigations process. Note the use of the term "we" in the quote below, indicating their belief that this is a shared understanding with peers:

> A huge reason people don't come forward is cause consequences for sexual assault for the offender are rare. Usually, if the offender is a student and is contacted, they'll know who they assaulted, and that person becomes a further target. Even when we report cases of assault, we're told that legal recourse is unlikely by … whichever relevant university party you report it to. There isn't enough security on campus at night, and when incidents happen off-campus the university feels less responsibility for doing anything about it. It's hard to have proof for assault, and it's even harder for victims to come forward immediately. Especially when we don't clearly get what constitutes assault or violence, and we only find out later. The burden of proof is really high, and when we can't meet it, it only alienates those of us who do come forward.

The quote presented above summarises the issues put forward by other students and suggested why so few complaints were made:
- Uncertainty over what sexual violence and harassment entail.
- That there is a limited scope for making a complaint (especially if it took place off-campus).
- The threat of being further victimised by the perpetrator for making a complaint.
- Difficulty of providing "proof" and the level of proof required for a positive finding.
- The idea that offenders rarely face consequences.
- Feeling let down and alienated by a negative finding.

Turning to students' direct experiences, this student (4550) experienced the frustration of being unable to make a complaint against their perpetrator using their HEI system for investigation as they were in a different college. They also return to the issue of "proof" referred to above: "I couldn't report him because he attended a different college, and because while it was absolutely sexual assault, it was not aggravated or violent and it wasn't rape so there was no proof".

In the next example, the student (0591) shared a complex situation involving concerns about intimidation by the perpetrator and lack of confidence in the institution. They felt that it was not possible to engage with the Gardaí ("I have no concrete evidence with which to build a case"), or their college ("I wouldn't know where to go or what good would come of it"):

> I had an experience at an off campus party where I was … raped. I cannot remember this incident [but found out the name of the male student responsible, who was from the same college]. I didn't contact the guards because I have no concrete evidence with which to build a case. I didn't contact my college because I wouldn't know where to go or what good would

come out of it. … I am scared that if word gets out people will side with him because of his high social reputation.

The student did not feel sufficiently knowledgeable about the institution's systems for complaints or support ("I don't think my university would like the look of a rape case"), but described a situation where they needed considerable support ("humiliation", "I don't see a way for things to get better"):

I don't think my university would like the look of a rape case to have to deal with. It is humiliating … Even more harrowing this happened at a party, … I can't remember exactly how I was violated. … I don't see a way for things to get better.

This example from another student (1972) describes a complaints process where the guilty party has not been punished. Moreover, the perpetrator has made things difficult for the victim and for a wider circle of others including this student:

He still attends that school, and no restrictions have been put in place to keep him away from her, or to keep other women safe from him, all because the college thought he was "sorry". To clarify, he was reported to the college, and there was an investigation made. When it concluded [he reported the students involved in the complaint] … I had to undergo … gruelling interviews and anxiety-induced panic attacks for something I had every right to do.

Support for survivors

The interpersonal supports available to survivors were described as inadequate to meet their needs ("College doesn't not have a good system for supporting victims of sexual violence. There is a lack of support and information", 0068). In this example provided by another student (4803), the college was described as not having a comprehensive policy in place to allow for student complaints. Here the word "care" reappears several times, in the context of the college not caring for its student: "If the assault didn't happen on campus, the college couldn't care less. I know so many people who have been sexually assaulted and they don't care".

The student goes on to describe the support response provided following a sexual assault that took place on campus:

I just so happened to have a counselling session for something else. Upon hearing of the assault I was sent to a doctor and put on [medication]. This was followed up by [short] counselling sessions [each week for a month]. That was the extent of what the college did for me. … They have no time to properly deal with trauma as they are understaffed. … This event happened [several] years ago and it took [hospital] visits and a nationwide lockdown to face my trauma and get better.

This student (6355) describes the counselling response she received in her college as one that was lacking. The counsellor appears to have lacked specialisation to support a victim of sexual harassment, which made things more difficult for the student ("She made me feel worse"): "You should also check the on-campus counsellors because my one didn't help me at all. She made me feel worse and more scared and looked at me with pity for the hour. That's the last thing someone needs after being put in that situation".

Beliefs about false reporting

While a large majority of students who wrote about the complaints system described it as off putting and inaccessible, some students had concerns about the degree to which sexual violence and harassment were portrayed as commonplace. This assertion is seen in the following student's (2441) comment: "The vast majority of college students are not sexual harassers nor do they have any such intentions. Portraying sexual harassment as a widespread issue is quite disingenuous". A particular

issue that was raised in this context was a concern about false reports of sexual violence or harassment. Several of the students who referred to this described their direct personal experience of being subject to a 'false accusation'. In this example from a student (2835), we can see the impact that it had reflected in comments that the student was "humiliated" and how "damaging and destructive" it was:

> I have been subject to a false allegation of rape. It has been a massive source of hurt, distress and trauma in my life. I feel derogated, demeaned and humiliated every single day. This is a real form of sexual harassment. This is not a case of 'he said/ she said' - there is no ambiguity - the claim was completely fabricated … I do not want to take away from the true and unspeakably awful abuses that do happen. Please, please take abusive false claims seriously and incorporate this in your educational activities. Make it clear that this can and does happen. Offer support for people who have been falsely accused. Make it clear to accusers of false allegations how damaging and destructive their actions and claims are.

The student (1914) makes a more general observation about their impression of 'false accusations'. Their analysis is that these arise due to regret later after sex has taken place, describing this as "lying" and which "casts a shadow" over "real victims". This comment is reflective of a limited number of examples which put forward a similar position:

> With such overwhelming and support and attention given to anyone who claims rape regardless of evidence you incentivise people to do so. For real victims this can be helpful, feeling safe to talk about their experiences etc but from my own experience you get a lot of false accusations (usually informal) and its nearly always if someone regrets the decision at some point after the incident and doesn't want to be associated with the person. These accusations are extremely harmful to the person its directed towards of course but also to real victims of rape. Once it eventually comes out that a person was lying about a sexual assault it casts a shadow of doubt over everyone else who has reported incidents.

Preferences and Suggestions for Action: Education and Programming

A number of student comments described the need for HEIs to be proactive in offering education related to consent, sexual violence and harassment. Several reasons were offered for ensuring that this intervention is provided consistently to all students. These included the following rationale, to:

- Ensure that students are aware of where and how they can seek support in the case of assault or harassment.
- Clarify what is meant by sexual violence and harassment.
- Help students explore the meaning of consent and how consent principles should be implemented.
- Promote active bystander knowledge and skills.
- Counter a culture of everyday harassment seen in sexist jokes and comments.

In this example the student (3971) suggests that all First Year students should receive education as a means of connecting students with services and supports for sexual violence and harassment ("All HEIs should have a talk at the beginning of each year for all 1st year students as when my assault happened I didn't know what to do, where to go or who to talk to", 3971). A similar sentiment is expressed here, so that all students will know how to recognise sexual violence and harassment ("Clearer information to both genders on what exactly sexual harassment and violence are along with what is right and wrong in those areas", 7308).

In this quote, the student indicates that consent education should be a mandatory part of the student experience: "College is a great opportunity for young people to be well educated about

consent, it should be compulsory to engage in some sort of workshop" (0789). This student saw some progress being made in institutional initiatives, but argues that a sustained campaign is required to ensure that all students are reached: "I am very pleased to see some action being taken by [College] because I feel like this is a very important and relevant issue and sometimes it seems like people just want to avoid the topic when it needs to be talked about. I would also love to see more events/workshops on campus around the awareness of sexual violence and harassment" (3085).

In the next examples, consent programming is referenced, with the desire for education to help with personal preparedness, to address a culture of routine sexism among male students, and to promote engagement with active bystander initiatives:

- Although I'm generally really informed and go out of my way to learn, I still feel confused as to where consent starts and ends. So I imagine that those who aren't as informed would be completely clueless, which is worrying (1316).
- Categorically, there needs to be better information surrounding consent. There also needs to be some kinda programme/ plan/ lesson, I don't know, to get it through men's heads that they CANNOT make sexist jokes. They CANNOT make rape jokes (2818).
- We have an optional Bystander project that is encouraged, it ought to be mandatory. … all students should know how and when to intervene. Please make programs like this a necessary step in gaining access to college in order to make it a safe environment (5662).

This student (2245) wrote that it would have been beneficial for her to have had more access to stories of survival after a sexual assault, highlighting this as an important consideration when planning information campaigns:

Personally I would have found my own sexual assault much easier to deal with if consent was talked about more and if there were more stories about sexual assault survival. We talk a lot about preventing it, but having experienced is the hardest thing I have ever done and it would've leaned so much to me as a young person to see someone else who had gone through what I was going through. I got a lot out of this survey. Thank you.

This student (5977) wanted to raise the issue of harassment not alone arising from student culture, but from staff members as well. Programming and education should reach out to staff members:

Some teaching staff can have sexist and / or outdated views and their attitudes can be problematic. As HEIs comprise both students and teaching staff, it is important that initiatives are comprehensive. Harassment etc... does not necessarily just come from students.

Finally, a request is made by a student to have a sustained institutional response that reaches students at different points in their educational journey:

We did a sexual health and wellbeing course and learned about consent once in my current HEI and I feel this should be an annual thing as it really opened up discussions. As a graduate student, I had no such experience during my previous degree in another HEI. The difference in my knowledge at 18 and now at 24 are vast and I wish I learned about consent at a younger age as I believe it would have really benefitted me and my peers (3682).

Context and Culture: Unequal Gender Relations

Participants spoke about sexual violence and harassment taking place in a gendered environment, particularly with reference to societally expected behaviours and roles for men and women. Attitudinal beliefs linked to rape myths can be detected in some of these descriptions of gender

relations. Usually, gender was invoked to describe a source of inequality experienced by women, used implicitly or purposefully to normalise and perpetuate violence or harassment carried out by men. References to gender typically positioned men as seeking or exercising power, supported against a wider backdrop of how gender relations are played out. Nonetheless, several male participants made comments to highlight that their experience of victimisation had been minimised because their narrative ran counter to the cultural expectation that men are the aggressors.

The following examples situate gender relations as an important factor that situates sexual violence and harassment in a broader cultural context. These examples demonstrate an embedded and at times overwhelming set of social practices, which had already begun to emerge before entry to college.

Men devaluing and manipulating women
This description of male-female relations during the college experience by a female student (445) identified gender relations as predicated on a belief among male students that women are not equals, which in turn supports a culture of harassment. That is, if women are not equal, then their right to freedom from violence need not be valued:

> A lot of men I've spoken to genuinely don't seem to consider women as equals. … The way these men view women definitely contributes to the escalation of sexual harassment or violence.

The student viewed masked male motives obscured by subterfuge, drawing on her general beliefs about the culture she has experienced. It is not all men that she refers to, but "a lot of men", however their impact is reflected in the experience of "a lot of women" as indicated in the next part of the quote:

> It also makes it very difficult for a lot of women to formulate friendships with men without the fear of him getting angry later on for 'leading them on', because these men only pursued the friendship in hope of a sexual relationship in the future.

Here we see the implication of inequality is that these males are viewed as relating to women on a transactional basis, seeking friendship with the goal of a sexual relationship. Next the female respondent describes the direct experience of this culture in her friendship group, referencing unwanted sexual touching as well as the interpersonal aggression mentioned above. This practice seems to be done with 'deniability' in mind, using "gaslighting" as a defensive tactic to deflect personal responsibility:

> Since enrolling I've also had instances of male friends overstepping boundaries in terms of how they touch me or my friends. However it's done in a subtle manner that commonly leads to gaslighting when confronted.

This participant is talking about gender inequality and demeaning behaviour as a normalised feature of socialising during the college experience. While this is one context where it is played out, she positions it as something with deeper roots, evolving since teenage years and which in turn supports sexual violence and harassment to occur:

> This normalisation also can dangerously lead to sexual harassment or violence down the line and is something that needs to be discussed amongst men as it's a common issue that women have been talking about since teenage years.

In the next example, another female student (0546) refers to gender relations taking place in a culture where women are demeaned and expressed through normalised harassment. Her position on this is that "most people" not alone accept this situation but also defend it, naming it not as harassment but as "flirting" and "lad culture":

There is a culture of sexual harassment in Ireland that begins with sexist jokes, vulgar terminology used to refer to women, and unwanted physical advances under the pretence of "flirting". These behaviours are still accepted and defended by most people and described as "lad culture".

Next the student goes on to relate this culture to her direct experience. Now her description of the general culture is applied to make sense of how sexual assault that she has experienced personally are minimised by perpetrators and their supporters. She situates these incidents taking place in a social context away from the academic environment, but which are nonetheless student-oriented and infused with alcohol use:

Almost all of my unwanted encounters have been explained away by "lads just being cheeky", even when a guy around my age pressed me against a wall so I could feel his erect penis against my leg and asked me repeatedly to go home with him because "He could tell from how I looked at him". When I refused over 5 times, he called me a frigid bitch and walked away. His friend approached me and said he was "just a bit of a goer.". This is the kind of thing that occurs regularly on nights out where bars and clubs are filled predominantly with students.

This male student (1672) offers his perspective on the tactics used by some of the men he has known, a disingenuous effort to be friendly or helpful with a hidden motive in mind:

I've experienced countless men in my college course actively try to befriend/help female classmates just because they want to have sex with them. They literally seem to see the women in the course as something to fuck. Many times in first year guys would offer to help female classmates with work etc, while separately telling male friends that "she was a ride" (or similar) and that he was "getting close to having sex" (or similar)

It can be noted that the justifications offered for these unacceptable behaviours map on to several of the rape myth beliefs used to assess tolerance of sexual violence, such as the belief that a woman 'led on' a man to believe that he could get sexual gratification or that difficulty in controlling powerful sexual impulses is a condition of male experience.

Challenges to male victims being believed
A male respondent to the survey highlighted that gender can be used to make it difficult for a man to report an assault ("The girl who assaulted me accused me of assault. Rly difficult situation", 372). The next quote from a male participant (4082) describes gender norms as enabling a female to go unchallenged after she had sexually assaulted him and other men. In drawing attention to this as an inequality, he indicates that a man may be assumed to be the wrongdoer in an incident of sexual violence, even when he is the victim. His example problematises gender relations in a different manner to the more frequently cited inequality affecting women's experience of sexual violence and harassment. Now the tables are turned; a claim of a male being sexually assaulted does not fit with the expected narrative, a dissonance that can be a manipulated by a perpetrator:

The woman who assaulted me also assaulted … other people but everyone was too afraid to report it in case she said she was assaulted. She drove [at least one person to mental distress] and she is protected by the notion in society that men are rapists and woman are almost always the victim. This needs to be addressed. Nobody should feel afraid that they will be branded a rapist just because the person who assaulted them is a woman (4082).

Male solidarity with women
Some of the male participants made observations that acknowledged sexual violence and harassment to be commonplace and unacceptable. One male student (4445) described coming to this realisation ("Realising how prevalent the level of rape and sexual assault is here over the past

few years is utterly terrifying"). He advocated for more work to be done so that other men reach that understanding. This priority is compounded by his portrayal of the legal system as unresponsive to the needs of victims to be action taken ("Of my … closest female friends, [a number] have been violently raped but the college and police do nothing. Those that went to the Gardai didn't even get the case to court. One even had a message of admittance from the rapist"). For him, this challenge redoubles the priority of engaging men as allies to achieve culture change ("Things need to change and focus on educating young males in university should be [College's] top priority above all else").

In these examples, other male students described their horror and disbelief that sexual violence and harassment are frequent occurrences:
- As I man, I feel horrible for the many women who have to put up with sexual harassment on a regular basis. It is not fair and it needs to stop! (2611).
- I am a mid 20's straight white male. … every single girl I have gotten friendly enough with since I entered [College over five years ago] has had several sexual harassment/assault issues and that's only the ones I was close enough to have the conversation with! It is extraordinarily common and ridiculously underreported (2069).

Male reflection on personal behaviour
There was a limited number of examples of male students describing behaviour on their part that was unacceptable. In the first example from a male (2491), there is a tone of regret for his behaviour in the past, as indicated by his use of intensifying language ('deeply') and continual revisiting of what he did: "I am deeply regretful of what I did. The memory of it has haunted me ever since. I don't think I'll ever be able to forgive myself".

The next example shows a respondent (6922) who is unclear in how to label his behaviour. He does employ the term 'harassment' to describe it but qualifies the use of the term, saying that what he did was not "'out-and-out' harassment". He nonetheless described discomfort after reflecting on persistently pursuing contact with a woman who did not want to have a relationship, a behaviour that is reflective of an item used to measure harassment. He describes being uncomfortable about what he did ("not proud", it was "weird").

Rather than labelling it as harassment concludes his account by describing it through the rationale or reason that he provides for his behaviour ("loneliness"):
> I don't believe I harrassed her but I did potentially make her feel uncomfortable... we have not spoken in person for [some time] but I still re-read some messages and Whatsapp and look at her status ... out of sadness. Not proud of it (admittedly weird) but I don't believe it constitutes out-and-out harassment ... just loneliness.

The Wider Cultural System

Norms toward sexual violence and harassment in Irish society were referenced by some students as the wider context in which college experiences should be understood. For instance, this student (0517) said that "A lot of my answers relating to the college not taking the victim seriously or supporting them isn't necessarily relating to [College]. It's more that societal attitudes wouldn't support or believe them so then why would a university?". Post-primary schools were identified by students as a critical setting where these issues first emerged for them, and which should in turn be a focus for achieving culture change at the university level: "Almost all of my girlfriends have been sexually assaulted in their lives. I would struggle to name a girl who has had zero experience with some type of sexual assault. We need more education for boys and girls in school about these issues" (5643).

This student (0914) saw post-primary schools as a setting where standards are set as to how sexual misconduct is discussed and managed. Setting the precedent for not addressing it at this level has an impact on the expectations that students bring with them to college: "A lot of misconduct can happen in second level education (secondary school) as well and when it is never addressed there, the trauma or feeling that it is okay can be carried into first year in HEI with the students and if you are really interested in making students feel safe then it is necessary you address this too as it is really common to happen in secondary schools".

A similar view about the need to address sexual violence and harassment at the post-primary level was expressed by the female student (0547) quoted next. She had been raped prior to coming to college, but did not have knowledge at this time that she needed to make sense of what had happened to her:

> I experienced sexual misconduct in college and I understood what had happened to me better in college but before when I experienced rape and I had no idea about what it meant, how it would affect me mentally or even that I had been raped. So I'm glad to see a discussion about this topic but the discussion needs to be opened up to younger students because it is happening there too and there is no real understanding now but especially at that age.

In the next example, a female student (3109) also described learning through personal experience the value of having the knowledge when younger to name sexual violence and harassment, in order to be better able to support oneself and others ("we did not know what to do":

> Unfortunately, I did not have this knowledge in secondary school and neither did my friends. We had a very basic view of consent and sexual harassment and I am sad to say that I not only experienced it myself but watched it happen to my friends as well and we did not know what to do. I only recently came to terms and realised that what happened to me when I was in … secondary school was in fact a matter of sexual harassment … the reality is this can happen at any age and not just in college.

This student (7313) focused on the need to work with male post-primary students in particular to promote a positive consent culture and counter disrespectful 'lad culture':

> I believe sexual violence is inherently a male problem in most cases. Consent training NEEDS to be done before a boy leaves school. In an open and mature manner. Use literature to help this – The voices need to be open, creative and relatable … Education is key in my opinion. Before you get to college otherwise I believe it's too late your behaviours are formed.

Qualitative Analysis of Open-Ended Staff Responses to the Survey

Overview of the Staff Open-Ended Comments and Analysis

Of the 3,516 staff member responses to the online student survey, 889 provided typed responses to the open-ended comment question. This represents 25% of the total number of respondents. By gender, this included 26% of females (n = 627), 22% of males (n = 238), 39% of non-binary staff members (n = 7), and 42% of staff members who preferred not to indicate their gender (n = 17). Described in terms of sexual orientation, 24% of heterosexual staff members (n = 748) provided an open-ended comment, as did 19% of asexual staff (n = 9), 29% of bisexual staff members (n = 36), 36% of gay, lesbian and queer staff members (n = 54), and 38% of staff who preferred not to state their orientation (n = 42).

The open-ended responses were entered into a qualitative data set for analysis. Each staff comment included in the report is distinguished by a four-digit numerical identifier (e.g., 0845) that refers to the staff member's survey response. For continuity, corrections were made to responses to address minor typographical errors such as variant spellings and mistyping. In the presentation of findings, some of the quotes are truncated to focus on the information most relevant to each theme.

Words and phrases were edited out of quotes where appropriate to ensure that participants remain non-identifiable. This included excising references to the names of institutions, and those job titles or processes that could identify a particular HEI. Participant characteristics such as gender identity, sexual orientation or job role are only explicitly referenced in the findings section where relevant to the point being made. Otherwise, minimal information on participant demographics is provided to assist in maintaining functional anonymity.

Thematic Analysis

The analysis of consent, sexual violence and harassment (SVH) drew on Braun and Clarke's (2022) interpretive approach to thematic analysis to develop the narrative and commentary on the staff comments into coherent themes. This involved reviewing the comments and organising them into themes consistent with the socio-ecological model underpinning the analysis.

These themes are broadly similar to those presented in the analysis of students' open-ended comments to the equivalent HEA survey. However, there were important distinctions between the student and staff open-ended comments. The quotes given by staff members tended to have a greater word count, to reference organisational life, to describe investigation processes to a greater extent than students' quotes, and occupied a particular reference point arising from their work role and position in the HEI.

The themes developed from the staff quotes therefore explore the barriers, experiences, and consequences of reporting and investigations to a greater degree than was relevant for the student data set. It is also the case that the research literature on HEI staff members' experiences of sexual violence and harassment is less well developed, positioning this analysis as having a particular responsibility for exploration of the issues. A sub-set of the quotes associated with the themes is included in the presentation of findings, illustrating trends evident in the corpus of the written responses.

The interpretive approach adopted in the writing of findings was employed to describe and reflect on quotes from the data set. The style of presentation is grounded in re-printing largely complete entries from a range of staff members. These evidence the experience, attitudes, and values described in the themes. Interpretation took the form of close description and commentary on language use to assist the reader in unpacking the rich meaning and nuance available in the comments made by staff in response to the invitation for open-ended comments.

At times, the comments that comprise the data set supported competing or contradictory values and perspectives. The write up of the open-ended comments includes this range of perspectives and speak for themselves. The comments ranged from staff members who have been directly affected by sexual violence and harassment, to those who support survivors, on to individuals with no sense of these issues taking place in their institutions, and staff members who disputed that they could occur or take place. Similarly, the staff members reflect a range of roles and responsibilities in their institutions, from temporary staff through to senior managers, and include individuals who indicated that they had limited experience working in HEIs as well as those who have spent decades working in Higher Education in Ireland and elsewhere.

As a qualitative analysis, the intention is not to assert a representative and comprehensive depiction of consent, sexual violence and harassment among staff members in Irish Higher Education. Instead, the statements that a sub-set of survey respondents chose to leave in their open-ended comments have been reviewed and made visible for the reader. The participant comments are not endorsed or disputed in the analysis, but the patterns that emerge from the findings speak to how the HEI sector in Ireland was, at the time of the survey, still grappling with how to prevent, manage, and respond to sexual violence and harassment. It is clear that the goal of preventing SVH was yet to be achieved in the face of deeply engrained structural and social issues. However, clear priorities emerge for how further progress could be made toward that goal.

Socio-Ecological Model

In developing the thematic format for the presentation of findings, the socio-ecological model (see the student survey qualitative report for background) was used as an organising framework that enabled staff member comments to be grouped and interpreted. This was particularly useful given the suitability of a socio-ecological analysis for placing individual experiences into the wider social and organisational context, settings, and processes. In addition, the precedence of 'culture change' as a driving force in how consent, sexual violence and harassment are addressed in Higher Education points toward an ecological analysis of these issues.

The comments from staff members were clustered into themes derived from socio-ecological theory to place individual experiences in a systemic perspective. This perspective is developed throughout the report findings, grounded by staff member quotes. The findings broadly map on to the following features of the HEI system:
- Demographic characteristics.
- Career specialisation and stage of development.
- Participant job role with respect to how they engaged students, colleagues and managers.
- Individuals situated in the local unit level of organisation.
- Engagement with institutional leadership and offices.
- Reporting, investigations, support and complaints as a process distributed across different layers of the institution.
- Proactive awareness raising, education and training carried out by HE institutions.
- Societal norms for gender relations and SVH as they impact the institutional environment.

These features of the Higher Education sector are described in more detail below, showing how they apply to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) systems theory analysis of staff experiences:

- **Individual-level demographic factors that are helpful for analysing the written comments.**
  While they overlapped at times, female and male staff members more usually described rather different experiences and attitudes. Connotations and associations with gender regularly came up as a backdrop to the incidents described, as an interpretive lens for the incidents, and in reflections on each stage of the reporting / investigation process.
- Other demographic factors such as sexual orientation and age category were also relevant reference points for interpreting many of the comments. For instance, some of the older staff members described being informal points of contact and advocates for younger staff. Compared with the student survey, there was less diversity of sexual orientation and gender identity described among staff survey respondents. Where relevant, references to sexual orientation are made, but there is a continuing need for further exploration of these aspects of personal identity. There was relatively little explicit reference to cultural or ethnic identity, and similarly, further research on these factors should be carried out in the future to achieve a fuller understanding of their relationship to consent, sexual violence and harassment.

- **The individual's professional background and role in the organisation.** These features of the person's background place them in the HEI organisation. They proved to be important tools for making sense of the data. In particular, career stage (e.g., junior member of staff, senior staff member), area of work (e.g., professional support services, academic role, research role), and type of employment contract (e.g., permanent contract, precarious employment) were frequent reference points used when interpreting staff comments. Moreover, for those participants with responsibility for students, the role of the staff member (e.g., as a lecturer) grounded the guidance they provided to a student victim or how they experienced harassment from a student.

- **Exposure to sexual violence and harassment.** The nature of the sexual violence and harassment described by the staff members positioned victims in relation to the perpetrator and the environment around them. The incidents of SVH staff described typically differed to those provided by students in the 2021 survey. Sexual harassment taking place in the workplace from another staff member was the most frequent type of experience referred to by staff members.
- The relational context to the perpetrator was also distinctive. For instance, harassment often took place in the context of a power differential between senior / junior staff or was carried out by a more experienced colleague. Unlike the responses noted from the student survey, a number of staff wrote about the Higher Education environment as egalitarian and safe, reflected in comments that they had never experienced or witnessed SVH there.

- **Organisational membership in local unit groups and teams.** The duties and professional relationships that the individual staff members were engaged with during the working day comprise the microsystems in which experiences of SVH generally took place. In many cases the staff members had been in their post or other employments in the HE sector for some time.
- They had regular and stable interactions with particular colleagues, both individually and together as members of work teams at local level – in academic departments, research institutes, or professional support staff units. References were also made to reporting relationships with line managers, supervisory responsibilities for staff junior to them, and so on. This represents a high degree of mutual interdependence and environmental complexity. In turn, this was reflected in the experience of harassment and violence. Being embedded in the organisation at times meant that staff had access to resources (e.g., supportive, experienced colleagues), but was a contributing factor to harassment on other occasions (e.g., when harassment was taking place in meetings or informal social engagement).

- **The wider institutional hierarchy and offices.** Outside the local organisation at the unit level of academic departments, research groups, or administrative teams, the institutional ecology extended into overarching university administrative offices and institutional management. These represent the exosystem of the campus ecology. While some participants were members of these offices, most staff members worked in local academic or support units. The institutional response to SVH, and the formal complaints process, took place in offices such as Human Resources (HR).
- Typically, little reference was made to academic organisation at the level of Faculty / College or Directorate; the participants normally described their local units and then the centralised institutional offices and leadership hierarchy. The HR department in the university was frequently referred to, with senior management and leadership in the institution also commonly referenced.
- Distinctions that might exist between institutions in the Irish HE system are not explored in the findings that are presented. There were references to a number of institutions by name in the staff comments, suggesting that these institutions possessed more or less effective approaches for responding to sexual violence and harassment. Given the objective of the analysis to explore the Irish HE sector as a whole, and the potential identifiability of survey respondents if

institution-specific references are made, the possible distinctions between institutions are not described.

- It is acknowledged that greater complexity in the findings arise through factors such as variations on how institutional culture, the effectiveness of policies, and the responsiveness of HR departments are described. For instance, senior management are said to be responsive by some staff and resistant to change by others. However, it is also the case that the comments offered by staff members suggested different views of the same institution. Equally, the unit level organisation of the HE could differ from one department to another, negating the idea that an overall impression of one institution is appropriate. One overall conclusion that could be drawn is that, at the time of the HEA survey, there appeared to be considerable inconsistency and lack of standardisation in how consent, sexual violence and harassment were managed – between institutions, or potentially even within the same institution.

- **Reporting, complaints, investigations, and training.** The investigations and complaints systems in HEIs are explored in detail in the findings section. While the formal process for investigating a complaint made by a staff member was normally associated with HR, the extensive commentary provided on reporting, investigations, supports, policies and procedures cut across different institutional levels. The interaction of separate systems that takes place in this way is referred to as the mesosystem layer of an organisation. For instance, local departmental leadership may have been supportive of a staff member considering a complaint while HR were experienced as being unsupportive (or vice versa). The mesosystem analogy captures the complexity of seeking redress for sexual violence or harassment as a staff member, in which different levels of the organisation had to be engaged with, and how these components of the HEI appear to work differently across universities.

- **The wider culture – Gender relations and perspectives on SVH.** The macrosystem shapes individual experiences by creating the context for people's experiences within more local systems. They represent how the wider world impacts on daily interactions and on institutions. Thus, it is important to consider staff comments in light of descriptions of gender roles and societal expectations related to SVH, victimisation, and perpetration. In some ways the university was seen as leading societal responses to SVH, especially in educational programming and training. In other accounts, the university was seen as replicating gender-based patterns of power dynamics and victimisation. In yet further examples, it was seen as representing a worse version of society in that the HEI represented a relatively closed system with little transparency or oversight.

- The casual sexism and tolerance of harassment that many staff members associated with practices in wider society was seen as being reproduced in the university setting. However, for other staff, the HEI represented a relief from the need for hypervigilance and disrespect that they experienced in other parts of their lives. Contemporary societal trends were noted by some staff members, for example with references to a growing 'oversensitivity' with regard to gendered comments and having gone 'too far' with a 'woke' agenda. At the same time, national policy-led developments through DFHERIS and the HEA featured in positive appraisals and praise for the changes taking place in Irish Higher Education.

Overview of Findings

Staff experiences of sexual violence and harassment related to Higher Education are less extensively studied than those of students. The analysis of open-ended comments that was made as part of the national survey of staff members provided the opportunity to contribute an original perspective on the dynamics and context of SVH on this important topic in the workplace.

Key trends from the quantitative survey informing the qualitative analysis

The quantitative survey data highlighted that, over the reference period of the past four years, sexist and sexual harassment were experienced relatively commonly by staff members who responded to the survey. The quantitative responses also suggested that, while harassment was common, few of the staff members who had experienced harassment had gone on to report this to their institution. Furthermore, staff typically had limited knowledge of the relevant policies and procedures in their HEI, and a significant minority of staff agreed that the institution might label them as troublemakers if they came forward with a complaint.

This pattern of quantitative findings prompts several questions. For example, queries arise as to how staff members affected by harassment were impacted by their experience, in a setting characterised by limited official reporting and partial knowledge of policies. In addition, the query arises as to how other staff members responded to the apparent mismatch between their colleagues experiencing harassment and the limitations of the formal structures and knowledge around SVH. These give rise to questions about the extent to which harassment is seen as being part of the current HEI culture, the strategies that staff members have adopted to provide assistance, and willingness to contribute to culture change.

The quantitative findings also demonstrated that certain demographic groups were more likely to indicate that they had been harassed in the past four years, particularly women, non-binary, and research staff, younger members of staff, and bisexual, gay, lesbian, and queer staff members. A large majority of staff members who provided follow up information on the quantitative items indicated that the harasser was a member of staff (rather than a student) and was a man. Further to this, it should also be acknowledged that the significant rate of harassment experienced by male staff members suggests a lack of visibility of how men themselves have been affected.

Each of these factors required further exploration at the qualitative level to understand the context of these negative incidents, the responses and consequences experienced subsequently, and the personal impact that these incidents had. This exploration was a further focus for the write up of findings from the open-ended comments.

On a positive note, in the quantitative analysis a relatively high level of interest was demonstrated in becoming involved in preventative and supportive initiatives. A large majority of staff members agreed that, if such training was made available by their HEI, they would be willing to complete training on disclosure management, bystander intervention awareness, and consent awareness. Extending on this, a majority of staff said they would become involved at a more active level in supporting or managing initiatives, by facilitating student / staff resources or having a role in supporting these actions. Support for becoming involved in training was particularly high among women and non-binary staff, Research and Professional / technical staff, bisexual staff members and the youngest category of staff (aged 18-34 years).

The qualitative analysis provided the opportunity to go beyond the brief quantitative items on education and training to assess how staff would describe the preferred composition and format for these developmental opportunities. Given the relatively recent introduction of training on prevention, support for survivors, and enhanced investigation processes, it was important to assess how participants envisaged that such initiatives could be implemented and supported.

Divergence of views on SVH

The open-ended comments provided by the staff members were provided from different vantage points on consent, sexual violence and harassment. Some were informed by their own direct

experiences, while others were from indirect engagement following what they had witnessed or spoken about with students and other staff who they had advised. Some staff were writing from their general understanding of the HEI or second-hand information about incidents that they had been informed about. Taken together, these comments provided a resource around which to develop a thematic analysis of how consent, sexual violence and harassment were experienced and seen by the cross-section of staff who chose to leave comments at the end of the HEA survey. The following summary encapsulates the main observations and most pressing issues that emerged from the analysis.

A universally shared view on SVH was not forthcoming. There were points of divergence between staff. For instance, different views were expressed on whether SVH actually represented a significant issue for HEIs. The majority of those who commented wrote about concerns about SVH. These concerns included their own experiences of harassment and that of students who they had supported, a more general culture of sexism that helped to perpetuate harassment, and a system that could, at worst, appear to protect and promote individuals who were known within the institution to be harassers. This view co-existed in the data set of comments with that of others who wrote that, in some cases after many years of working in the HEI, they had not seen or heard about any examples of sexual violence or harassment. Some of these staff members resisted the idea that SVH was taking place, while others acknowledged that it may be occurring outside of their awareness.

There were other points of divergence, such as staff comments on whether the situation with regard to SVH was improving, remaining the same, or disimproving in their HEIs, and whether working conditions regarding SVH were better, the same, or worse when compared with Irish society more generally. Female participants tended to point toward males having perpetrated harassment, being more likely to be protected by senior staff, and that males generally tended to be the primary 'inside group' who benefited from the implicit power structures within HE institutions. Yet a number of the male participants indicated that, in their view, males could be harassed by females with impunity, and that the unfolding of equality initiatives now left them excluded and without a voice in the institution.

Casual sexism and gender roles

There was relatively little divergence apparent in commentary about the stages of the reporting and investigations process in HEIs. Those who wrote about this process tended to describe it in negative terms. More specifically, they tended to convey disappointment, frustration, silencing, partiality, lack of competence, and powerlessness when writing about it. Organising this summary into a set of stages relevant to reporting and investigations, participants wrote about the context of stereotyping, gender roles and casual sexism that informs whether someone would make a report. References were made to casual sexism being acceptable in the workplace. This extended to sexual and homophobic comments and imagery.

Working in such an environment contributed to the sense that harassment was subject to being minimised or even accepted as the norm in the work culture. In some cases, participants indicated that unit managers shared in sexist comments or turned a blind eye to them. Female survey respondents provided examples of being expected to make tea, take notes during meetings, having their bodies commented on by male co-workers, and being spoken over by male colleagues at meetings. Male survey respondents described assumptions by female colleagues that they could be touched or have their bodies commented on. These practices could operate as barriers to construing actions as incidents of harassment and to feeling confident about making a report.

Limited awareness of SVH policy and procedure comprised another 'pre-report' barrier that could be off-putting when making sense of an incident or in deciding whether to make a report about it. The HEIs did not appear to sufficiently promote information about relevant policy instruments. Comments were frequently made that, on the quantitative survey, staff members had picked 'neutral' responses when appraising institutional actions and policies because they did not know what their institution was doing in this area. Staff members who commented said that they probably could find information on policies if they needed to, but were not well informed on what these are or how procedures can be enacted by staff. There was also a sense that staff perpetrators typically possess power through having a high status or seniority in the institution. They were described in some comments as having a positive relationship with local unit managers or occupying a more senior grade than them. This power differential could also act as an impediment to victims choosing to make a report.

Such concerns were reflected in comments made by staff about why an incident of sexual violence or harassment had not been reported. It was felt that the level or type of proof required to successfully make a complaint would need to reach an unrealistic standard. Thus, the complaint would fail and the complainant might be subject to retaliation.

Other beliefs expressed by staff that may reflect the 'pre-report' mind set included presumptions about the institution's approach to protection and loss. The university was seen as wanting to preserve its reputation, retain high status staff members, maintain research income, and secure future student recruitment. It did not want to suffer reputational damage through the results of unfavourable SVH investigations or be seen as targeting students. It was assumed by some of the participants that the HEI would privilege the interests of senior staff members who possessed greater institutional utility than the complainant, because they generated more income or had a high professional status. Complaints about sexual violence and harassment were seen as issues that had not previously been acted on or typically resulted in consequences for perpetrators, therefore there was not a confidence that reports would go anywhere. Instead, they may be stressful to engage with, harmful to career prospects, and ultimately be either unsuccessful or inconsequential.

Informal queries and making a report

Detailed research on the responses that staff receive when they report incidents of SVH are largely unknown in the Irish context. The reactions of line managers, colleagues, the complaints investigation system, support services and senior managers in the university have not been studied in detail. Drawing on the comments made by staff members who completed the HEA survey, the responses that HE institutions provided to staff who had tried to register a complaint was seldom satisfactory.

In the initial phase of the process of coming forward, descriptions were provided of staff being discouraged from making a report about an incident, receiving no response or acknowledgement after making a report or complaint, or being asked to manage the issue themselves locally. Dislocation and inconsistency were remarked on by staff members, in that a single, coherent thread of informal discussion, initial reporting, and formal reporting did not appear to apply from the point of the line manager through to other university offices and the Human Resources department. Thus, a supportive first reaction from a line manager might be followed by an unresponsive or even resistant reaction from the next level of the university system for investigating SVH encountered by the staff member (or both staff member and line manager).

This situation was described in reference both to a staff member making a complaint about SVH themselves and when they would support a student who had such an experience. Some of the line managers and staff in a senior position who provided open-ended comments wrote about having

received little preparation previously, with respect to the interpersonal skills involved in supporting a staff member or how to assist someone to navigate the institutional response. Given this range of examples, it did not appear to be just one channel of communication or reporting scenario that was underprepared from a procedural or training perspective. A more systematic and standardised system of preparation may therefore be required to address this issue and, additionally, the confidence that staff members have in their institutional procedures.

Complaints and investigations processes

In the accounts of searching for an effective response following harassment or violence, participants typically wrote that few effective options were open to them in making complaints without becoming re-traumatised in doing so. These comments help to illustrate the impact that SVH had on survivors. It extended beyond their personal experience and recovery from an incident of violence or harassment. The responses of their departments and institutional offices contributed to the trauma of the original incident on many of the occasions that were described by staff. Moreover, staff members appeared to view the prospect of making a future complaint as less likely once the institutional complaints system had been encountered and experienced on a first occasion. This illustrates that an unsatisfactory process was in place, one that had not provided redress, but had in many instances added to the duress, trauma, and career impact that was originally experienced.

The SVH complaints systems encountered by staff members was described as onerous to engage with due to its complexity. In addition, they were generally referred to as lacking in person-centred qualities such as being trauma-informed and being oriented to the needs of users. Staff approached their engagement with the complaints system with limited awareness of institutional policies, as remarked on earlier. This was now matched by having little detail about the process of making a complaint. Policies and procedures were described as merely giving the appearance of offering a meaningful channel to staff for complaints on SVH. In fact, they could be seen as a 'box ticking exercise', there to show that a system was in place but that in practice there was only a limited chance of a meaningful outcome.

Moreover, there was a question mark over whether the staff responsible for putting the procedure into practice possessed the skill to do so, or had the preparation needed to conduct procedures in a trauma-informed manner. Having to engage a poorly designed and implemented complaints system was felt to result in secondary trauma for some complainants. There was a pressing need identified for building the capacity for trauma-informed responses at unit or departmental level, as well as in the professional services that are charged with managing formal complaints.

One particular issue that could result in progress was in having the opportunity to discuss a report with a well-trained individual on an informal basis, with scope to decide whether to make a formal complaint. The roll out of the complaints process was viewed as risk averse, mindful of legal action that could be taken by the individual respondents to complaints. Taking a complaint through this formal process was seen as challenging, especially for staff members who were on a short-term contract or otherwise lacking the same seniority as the individuals identified as being responsible for harassment. The descriptions provided of policies illustrated how their important purpose could be undermined by the implementation process and the ramifications associated with making a complaint. Complainants could have a vested interest in fostering their future career in the institution, and against this background the perception that the powerful were protected would mitigate against continuing a complaint to its conclusion.

Some staff members suggested that HEIs had no standing to investigate complaints of SVH. These staff members felt that complaints should be made directly to the Gardaí. Some of the comments in this vein expressed concerns about false reporting taking place. That is, when a report was

intentionally made by a staff member (or a student) with malicious intent. These comments tended to come from male staff members who described situations that were highly damaging for individuals who were falsely accused, with little scope for redress.

The procedural critique of the complaints systems in Irish HEIs led staff to wonder about why the institution appeared to not welcome complaints. Why was there a policy in place on investigating SVH that was not matched by a procedural framework to implement it consistently and fully? Different perspectives were offered on whether the apparent policy / practice gap arose cynically or due to lack of capacity. From a cynical perspective, having an ineffective system had the effect of perpetuating the situation. In effect, in conditions of low numbers of formal complaints and limited consequences associated with investigations, the institutional response to SVH seemed to be stifled. In turn, according to those staff critical of the complaints process, this meant that perpetrators could carry on with their harmful behaviour.

There was divergence in the references made to whether senior managers in HEIs were leading on culture change or part of a problematic status quo. The majority of the comments made were critical of senior managers' support for reporting and investigations of SVH. Staff comments conveyed negative portrayals of leaders in different ways, as potentially lacking interest or engagement in advancing a progressive agenda of culture change, as placing greater value on institutional reputation, or in enabling male harassers to attain promotions and positions of power. It was also noted that support could vary across the leadership of the same institution. Relatively newly established institutional Equality, Diversity & Inclusion units were held up as providing new expertise and leadership in Irish HEIs in this area.

Finally, there was criticism made of the support available to staff members who were affected by SVH, including those staff who incurred the additional strain of making a complaint. Comments from staff suggested that, compared with students, staff members had relatively little supportive services available to them to help manage on a personal level. Some staff members who made comments did offer disclosure management and advocacy support to their colleagues and to students as well. However, they were concerned that they did so without training and could be unsure about how to protect the best interests of the person affected by SVH. There was concern that this work was informal, and not acknowledged by workload assessment exercises. Nor did they want support that was offered informally to be relied on by the institution in the place of specialised, professional support.

Education and training

Awareness raising, education, and training were regularly highlighted as an important priority by staff members in their open-ended comments. Staff saw these initiatives as a method to help address the problems, limitations, and gaps that they described. In this sense, education and training were referenced as a corrective measure when they wrote about overcoming deficits such as line managers or HR not having the preparation required to manage their current responsibilities around reporting and investigations. Staff also saw these initiatives as representing positive steps, growing the capacity required for significant further culture change in their institutions. This would enable the institution to realise the potential suggested in the quantitative survey items on willingness to step up to deliver workshops on consent and bystander intervention.

Staff advocated for a comprehensive approach to education and training in HEIs. This extended to achieving widespread awareness of policies, procedures, and supports for people affected by sexual violence and harassment. As noted above, lack of knowledge of policies and procedures was commonly remarked on in staff comments in different contexts. Staff members also suggested that engagement with at least some education and training should be made mandatory for all staff, as

the only reliable means to ensure that any colleague or student could be confident of being able to have their concerns recognised and understood. It would represent a considerable step forward for the staff across the HEI to achieve personal understanding of the nature of SVH, the systems that their university has set up to respond, and how to signpost others to professional supports.

The staff members who described the composition of education and training referred to the need for realistic and meaningful content that would be conveyed using engaging, interactive means. Staff also spoke about the impact of workshops on consent and bystander intervention that had taken place across the HE sector. This emphasis on reaching out to students with engaging methods of education was one of the only consistently positive achievements that staff mentioned in the open-ended comments when describing the responses made by HEIs in recent years. It was seen as important that the same effort should be taken to engage staff members.

Nevertheless, there were challenges foreseen in rolling out education and training to staff. The burden of undertaking additional training was not to be underestimated in the context of other obligations that staff members had. There was also pushback on the idea of training being provided from some staff members who disputed the relevance of such work to the mission of the university. It was more common for comments to be made that education and training should be integrated with particular roles and responsibilities in the HEI. For example, if a staff member was to be a line manager, be responsible for managing a grant, or contribute to reporting or investigation processes, they would need to demonstrate satisfactory completion of particular training and preparation.

Several specialised forms of training were suggested as being important to provide to particular groups in the university. This included ensuring that line managers were able to respond to the needs of staff members who describe having been affected by SVH. Additional specific training needs identified included supporting informal supporters and allies to manage disclosures and provide signposting to professionals. Casual staff members and staff on short-term, precarious employment contracts were identified as a priority group to have their needs for information and skills met.

Intersectionality

The value of an intersectional analysis was demonstrated in the findings, particularly when exploring how career stage, specialisation and gender interact. Younger female staff members, particularly those in research positions, described feeling isolated and that they had few options after being sexually harassed. This was reflective of a more general trend whereby staff members on short term, precarious contracts felt more vulnerable and less able to make a complaint. Leaving the university was described by some of these staff members as the most viable option in the event of harassment affecting them.

This group of staff was also noted in the quantitative analysis as being at relatively high risk for experiencing harassment. Yet they were described as being outside the mainstream of academic and professional support service posts, often with limited awareness of policies and services concerning SVH. The power differential between these staff members and their managers was described as a significant factor that made it especially difficult to report harassment or have a complaint thoroughly investigated. Partly, this was due to a strong belief that their career options would be harmed if they questioned the behaviour of powerful male researchers.

Other references were made to these staff being dissuaded from making a report, not receiving any acknowledgement or follow up from managers and HR when a complaint was made. Certainly, these issues – which included low power, precarious status, relative isolation, limited knowledge, and prevailing informal norms for avoiding formal complaints – demonstrate that an intersectional

analysis contributes to our understanding of the burden that sexist and sexual harassment creates for the women who provided written comments.

Additional research should be carried out to conduct an intersectional qualitative analysis that examines the interplay of other characteristics. For example, further enquiry is required to explore how characteristics such as sexual orientation, ethnic background, and disability status could intersect with gender or career stage in the experience of harassment (Dawson et al., 2023).

Conclusion

Taken together, the socio-ecological systems outlined above provide a useful interpretive context for making sense of the comments that staff members made. The findings explore multiple perspectives of staff members. These range from descriptions of survivorship of sexual violence and harassment, allyship among staff members who assist their colleagues and students, and onto respondents who rejected the idea that these phenomena are commonly experienced at all. The social attitudes and assertions made were also varied – from the observations of staff who said that gender-based violence and sexist practices toward women are deeply engrained in working patterns, to staff members who have never encountered SVH, and on to male staff members who describe being impacted by reverse discrimination.

While the staff comments represented a diverse set of views, they tended to depict experiences of gender-based harassment, often grounded in sexist attitudes, that not only affected women on a personal level, but also disadvantaged their progression and fulfilment of career potential. The qualitative findings explored the background to and experience of SVH among staff members. These suggested that power relations are a critical issue for HEIs to attend to in creating culture change to prevent sexual violence and harassment.

Very few positive or supportive comments were made on the systems of reporting, complaints, and investigations that staff members encountered. A range of problems were identified, including a disconnect between policy and procedure, a perception of HEIs being unwillingness to act on concerns raised by staff (especially in relation to powerful individuals), a lack of integration or even coherence across levels of the institution from local units to university administrative offices, and limited access to specialised training and required resources. There was limited awareness of formal policies and procedures, yet an extensive informal network of support and advice, which is a promising resource that could be nurtured further. The perception that the HE community is underserved by policy and procedures extended to concerns about the welfare of students as well as staff.

Staff Comments on the Survey Methodology

Positive appraisals of the survey

The survey was described in positive terms in short comments ("excellent survey: well done", 3053, "excellent survey", 2577, "excellent detailed survey", 0649), with references to seeing the survey as well designed ("I thought the survey was well laid out, very clear and easy to complete", 3159). It was seen as having a useful function in the Higher Education sector: "Very glad you have created this comprehensive survey so staff and students can voice their concerns and experiences around these important matters. Thank you and well done!" (3483).

The HEA was complemented by staff members for implementing the survey:

- Well done on the survey, great to see this data being collected (2202).
- I am delighted this initiative is progressing and being talked about. Thank you (2991).
- Thank you for asking these important questions. Things need to change! (1742).
- Thank you for doing this survey and asking the right questions (0723).
- Thank you for undertaking this important survey (0120).

Some of the staff members described the survey completion process as a learning exercise as they reviewed their knowledge about the HEI's work on sexual violence and harassment ("Very useful informative survey. Makes you think outside your comfort zone!, 2840; "Very thought-provoking questions - there are gaps in my understanding. More to learn", 3248).

For this participant, there was a useful reflection on what they knew about the institution's policies: "Great idea - the survey alone made me realise how little I know about our HEI's protocols (if any) for dealing with these incidences" (0189). That sentiment was explored further by this staff member (0543):

> I think this is a brave survey to conduct in the context of historical conservatism around sexual matters in Irish society and commend the researchers for the honesty of the questions. The warnings about content were effective and sensitively outlined. There is lots for people to reflect upon when responding to questions in terms of their own behaviour e.g. circumstances that seemed 'harmless' but could've impacted very negatively on others.

This participant suggested it would be useful to compare the survey with the results of a follow up in the future: "I am delighted that this survey was completed and I would like to think it will be repeated again in a few years post implementation of action plans" (3234).

Negative reactions to the survey

There were a limited number of comments made by staff members that were critical of the survey having been carried out. This survey respondent (1880) was concerned that students were being primed to overly focus on sexual violence:

> HEIs should be centres of intellectual expansion and a place where lifetime friendships are made, not where students view each other as predators or constantly view themselves as victims. This survey conveyed an obsession with sexual misconduct, whereas in reality, most students and staff do not behave in such a manner.

The comment asserted that, in that context, the survey was "anti-male", and that besides surveys, outreach efforts on consent were not helpful:

> The undertone of this survey was certainly anti-male and devised with a male-phobic attitude which is extremely unhealthy. I find the issue of consent classes/training for students/staff to be juvenile at best and insulting at worst.

For this staff member (1107), the survey was approaching the topic in a biased manner that is driven by a particular ideology, which would determine the findings:

> The level of bias and ideological assumption in the premise of many of these questions is staggering. Serious questions need to be asked in relation to the methodology and objectivity if this research. … This survey feels like it has been constructed with the aim of generating specific predetermined outcomes which align with the researcher's ideological viewpoint.

Critical points about survey content or presentation

A number of observations were made in response to the open-ended survey item that critiqued aspects of the survey content or wording. Certain survey items were regularly criticised for their suitability, while including the parameter of 'the past four years' as a reference period for the survey was also questioned.

The use of 'four years' as the reference period for sexual violence and harassment was remarked on by a number of participants ("a lot of my answers would have been very different if they included experiences that happened more than four years ago", 1133). For these staff members, this had the effect of excluding events that were important to them, which had occurred prior to this period. Acknowledgement of prior incidents was important, as described by this participant (0677):

> We would benefit from a 'truth and justice' type tribunal at each HEI. There are decades of sexual assaults/harassment that have gone unacknowledged. The questions in this survey reference the past 4 years, … I have not experienced harassment in this time frame. But I did experience it for years as a younger woman in academia.

Several comments were made on the use of 'gender non-binary' as an option on the demographics section, with participants indicating that it should have been stated as 'non-binary'. This staff member (1155) refers to this, and also to their preference for more flexibility in describing sexual orientation:

> The questions on sex, gender and sexuality are not good - "gender non-binary" is not a correct term and it felt very strange having to choose this. Also the sexuality section - I identify as bisexual and queer. I think that these should be replaced with letting individuals fill in their own using their language.

A number of participants wrote in with feedback on the 'rape myth' section that was positioned toward the end of the survey. These questions state rape myths and ask participants to indicate whether they agree with the premise of the myths as stated. As such, they include terms that are pejorative. For instance, the word 'slut' is used in one item as an indicator of a rape myth belief. Participants were not in agreement that these items should have been included. Some were quite offended that this wording had been included. This example from a staff member (1077) describes why:

> I found one of the questions regarding my perceptions of sexual harassment to be very of offensive. I did not answer it so had to redo the survey so I could avoid it. It was the statement when the question "if a woman behaves like a slut it is not unexpected if she ends up in trouble" I object strongly to describe any woman's behaviour using this term. Nobody should be described as a slut.

Another section of the survey that attracted attention was the inclusion of items on institutional policies and practices, and on responses that the institution would have toward reports of sexual violence and harassment. Respondents wrote that they chose the 'neutral' response option as the best description of their knowledge and understanding, but that in fact a 'don't know' option would have been more appropriate:

- A "don't know" box would have been useful for some of the questions where it was not present. Some of the questions without one were contingent on having experience. In the absence of that experience, ticking any of the agreement levels would likely be misleading in assessing the data from the survey (2101).
- A lot of my answers are 'neutral' or 'don't know' as I am not aware of how to report issues with sexual harassment of violence in my HEI and don't know how they are dealt with - which indicates an issue in itself around communication/procedures (1271).

- A lot of these questions can't be answered as I haven't been involved or would not know about management policies (3374).
- I answered neutral a few times when I didn't know and didn't feel it was right for me to answer for someone else for a situation that I was never in myself (3042).

The inclusion of additional sections or topics was advocated by some participants. In these examples there is a request made for greater attention to intersectionality and for indicators of topics such as 'casual sexism' and personal safety:

- Ensure intersectionality is addressed in any actions taken to address sexual violence and harassment. I'm disappointed reference or acknowledgement to intersectionality was not present in this survey (2505).
- I feel that this survey should include further questions about more subtle harassment (leering etc) and safety on-campus (how safe do you feel walking from your office to your car, empty corridors etc.) These are the day to day issues that emerge. I also think questions exploring the issue of student harassment of staff should be included. I am aware of incidents where a student has acted in a verbally aggressive manner to numerous staff (on numerous occasions) (3462).

Staff Experiences of Sexual Violence and Harassment

In this example, we see a respondent to the survey (0827) describe the impact of being raped by an academic member of staff. The person went on to say that they had been threatened by the perpetrator, and were left with the discomfort of knowing that the perpetrator is a danger to others. The trauma they refer to has changed their life:

> I was raped by a senior academic … I have never reported it as I am terrified of retaliation from the man who did this to me. My career has been destroyed as a result of what happened. The enormity of the impact this event has had on my life cannot be underestimated. I'm still not OK, I have nightmares, can't sleep, can't eat.

More comments were made about harassment than about sexual violence. In this example from a staff member (0113) we can see both described. The description is made of sexist harassment that takes place frequently, facilitated by senior male staff members. In the same quote, an assault involving unwelcome sexual touching is referred to in the same office. It did not result in any sanction and was very upsetting for the staff member who was assaulted:

> In my office derogatory sexist and racist 'jokes' are frequently made and laughed along with by male management. I know of a case where a student grabbed the ass of a female member of staff and the male members of the team present laughed, and there was no follow up action, the female staff member was very upset.

Staff sexual harassment of students

In this example, a staff member (0553) describes having been informed about an academic who has systematically harassed students in their department: "This staff member has a penchant for dragging his students to the pub and having inappropriate sexualised conversations with them … The gist of what I am trying to say here is that my department has an in-house creep".

They go to recount instances where this has been happened, in the first he harassed students at an off-campus event:

> In the last … years that I have been working here … he has conducted himself inappropriately with [a number of] my friends. Once while accompanying a student [group]

on an overnight trip [verbal sexual harassment took place] This conversation happened in a pub.

No action was taken following this incident ("a number of students … witnessed this particular incident and some staff members too know about this but nothing ever came of it"). In another instance, the staff member behaved inappropriately toward the staff member's friend but appeared skilled in controlling how his behaviour appeared:

Being a serial offender he was very good at doing so in a way that made my friend feel that she was partly imagining or overthinking his transgressions and microaggressions. She had even complained to the department administrator and … [Head of Department] but nothing happened.

Several staff members spoke about the difficulty of explaining to others how harassment can take place in a work environment, particularly in the context of powerful colleagues having been responsible for it. This participant (0672) describes being traumatised by a senior staff member: "I've had to withdraw from a course in which I had enrolled for the purposes of professional development due to the behaviour of a senior staff member who treated me in a way that left me with nightmares and clinical anxiety". They go on to say that "it was not harassment of a type I could readily explain in such a way as its impact could be understood by someone who has not experienced it".

Staff members referenced the difficulty of explaining subtle forms of harassment which would be challenging to report, which was seen as "under the radar", "low level", and "overlooked", as in these three examples:

- A lot of harassment goes under the radar because it's hard to explain, and if you try to, it's easily gaslighted. You have not figured in psychological control here, or the strategies women have to use for self-preservation (0672).
- A lot of the harassment is low level stuff, like touching or inappropriate comments that you would feel uncomfortable reporting as it would be likely to be seen as an over reaction or a misinterpretation (e.g. he's just a bit touchy-feely and it was only your arm he was touching/stroking etc). I feel the university would react to a case against a student but not against a staff member unless it was quite severe (1719).
- Most incidents that I am aware are not severe in nature but I do believe most staff are very reluctant to speak up about minor incidents because they have experienced scenarios where comments and minor sexual misconduct are overlooked - unless it is very serious it is hard to raise concerns (0634).

Student sexual harassment of staff members

Examples were provided of the sexual harassment that staff members can be subjected to by student perpetrators (e.g., "I think verbal harassment by male students in my HEI needs to be treated more seriously, both I and my female friends have been shouted at and intimidated while running by drunk male students on a number of occasions", 2335). A common issue arising in these instances was that the institution did not take action in response to what happened. This participant (2385) suffered severe consequences after they had challenged unacceptable behaviour on the part of male students: "I was sexually harassed, victimised & targeted in an ongoing campaign by a group of male students after challenging sexually inappropriate behaviour". They were told to continue teaching as before, an experience that was "horrific": "I got no help whatsoever from my employer and was told in no uncertain terms that I must continue to teach the students. It was an horrific experience".

In the next example, harassment is depicted as an ongoing experience from male students: "It is tough being a female lecturer in a typically male dominated environment: … I have experienced inappropriate words and actions by students … towards me as a female lecturer, my male colleagues do not receive this type of abuse" (3305). The pattern of male students harassing female staff members is referenced by this participant (3333), who describes not knowing or being able to find out how to help their colleague: "I have witnessed male student on female staff intimidation. I did not know how to help this colleague, and found it difficult to find out how. This is I think a hidden menace in our sector. We tend to focus staff-staff or student-student issues".

This staff member (1440) was intimidated by sexualised harassment carried out by a student in their office during the course of a meeting. They felt afraid and unable to escape:

> A student touched his private parts suggestively for over 10 minutes in a 1:1 consultation … in my office, without anyone else present. He sat between me and the door … I was very afraid.

They tried to appear oblivious to the sexualised behaviour and the student's unsettling gaze. Internally, worried about what was going to happen next, they were aware of being unable to reach help:

> I felt that I had to pretend that 1. I was not aware of what he doing so obviously and 2. I was not aware of the awful look on his face and in his eyes. I was genuinely afraid that he would take it further … it was a late afternoon and I knew that the office adjoining mine was empty.

Looking back, this incident was traumatising ("I would genuinely say that I have suffered trauma from this incident"). In a second incident, a student was physically aggressive and sexually threatening: "In the other incident, a student put his arms around me and pushed me against the wall and made sexually explicit comments". The staff member has difficulty reconciling their professional position with these unacceptable and terrifying incidents: "I have respect and recognition as a valuable member of the community and this has now happened to me twice in 5 years".

Routine sexist and sexual verbal harassment

A number of staff comments described verbal sexual harassment that took place during everyday situations and social encounters in the workplace. Here we see sexist harassment taking place under the guise of making a joke or having the "craic", however the tone of the comments clearly convey that the staff member (2365) was personally offended:

> The general "craic" comments from a certain cohort of male staff members … commenting on my weight and looks, other female member of staff's weight and looks and jokey comments about my marital relations with my husband. Comments on what I wear and how I wear my hair also seen as a joke.

The participant did not give the appearance that this had upset her, but it had done. After reviewing the survey content, she suggests that she sees it differently now:

> All of this, I have ignored in the past, but it has been upsetting and embarrassing. This was all done in a jokey fashion in front of other staff members and having completed this survey, I realise how wrong I was not to have reported it.

At the same time, she also offers her appraisal that she would have suffered negative consequences if she had made an official complaint about the behaviour of her male colleagues:

> But then if I reported this, these male staff members would make my life difficult on campus and I don't feel confident the [College] would do anything to resolve this.

We can visualise a similar pattern of experience from this staff member (3522), who describes a staff restaurant environment where sexualised comments are made while being cloaked as "banter":

> Many male staff in canteen environments make suggestive remarks or innuendos about other members or staff/students and the comments are laughed off because they 'are all "friends" together, only having a banter.

This participant (1950) begins with a similar reference to unwelcome comments based on their gender: "I also had frequent unwelcome comments made about my appearance and my body". Their experience of harassment extended into persistent efforts to have a date, which were unwelcome and rebuffed:

> A male member of academic staff repeatedly asked me to go out with him, … despite the fact that I declined his invitation each time.

The comments went on to refer to being treated differently on work duties and opportunities because of their gender, which is another form of harassment: "I experienced being treated differently (ignored, excluded from projects, excluded from social gatherings etc) because of my gender".

In a fourth instance of harassment that they experienced, the staff member refers to discussion of sexually explicit material and pornography. The first example of this presented below was in the workplace, while there was a second incident where pornography was discussed while socialising with more senior colleagues:

- I was also aware of explicit materials being exchanged and discussed among my male colleagues in my presence in the workplace which made me feel very uncomfortable.
- I was [socialising] with … senior male colleagues and they discussed pornography at length which made me extremely uncomfortable.

Similarly, this participant (3097) provided examples of harassment that she had experienced from male staff members. The two examples referred to below describe unwanted touching where the men did not respect personal boundaries, on a particular occasion and on a repeated basis:

- One [senior academic] whom I did not know very well, kissed me on the cheek at a public … event … I had no time to react … I was not afraid but not happy to have someone in my personal space doing something so forward. I was reluctant to call him out as he is a senior respected person.
- The second situation was with another academic colleague who on many occasions would give me pats on the back, touch my clothed arms to say thank you for doing work for him. It was inappropriate and while I never felt scared, I was reluctant to call him out as he is also a senior academic colleague.

The staff member who experienced this points out that, on both occasions, she did not feel able to call out the males because each was in a position of power. In the third example, she describes another power differential at play when a senior male staff member sexually harassed her, causing her embarrassment and shame:

> A senior [staff member] got drunk attempted to kiss me in front of all my colleagues, I had to physically push him off me and he propositioned me [I] … was very embarrassed that all of my colleagues observed this. I also felt shame that I (not drinking) had done something to encourage this behaviour.

This survey respondent (2462) identifies harassment as a continuing problem, with harassment by a senior academic not being addressed (an "open secret"). As a result, covert risk management strategies were adopted by female staff:

> I have a long career in Higher Education in this and other countries and have seen widespread sexual harassment by male academics towards other staff and students. … I am currently aware of a senior male academic in my institution doing the same. It is generally an open secret and many women devise strategies of avoidance to protect themselves where they can.

The staff member went on to say that they saw some hope of slow change on harassment, but differentiated this from the topic of sexual violence on campus where visible initiatives were being implemented:

> Cultural change in the workplace on harassment will be slow but it is happening. … Sexual violence on campus is a different issue and is extremely serious. I welcome initiatives such as the bystander interventions and workshops around consent.

One staff member (0107) concluded that interventions on the part of the HEI on harassment are focused on students, with little realisation that staff members may experience harassment too: "It is as though the HEI treats the university as just a place for students and not a workplace where staff may experience harassment from other staff".

Male staff members' experiences of harassment

Some of the experiences of harassment described by the survey respondents specifically referenced men. The male participants who described these experiences often referenced their gender as being used by others to minimise or justify the behaviour of female co-workers toward them. For example, this participant (2689) says that the survey form did not include specific reference to sexual harassment by women, "which is not uncommon, often in verbal sexist comments, from the innocuous 'man flu' type concept to much more covertly and overtly sexual harassment by women in throwaway comments regarding male body shape, etc, which appears to be acceptable in the workplace".

Other participants felt that that there was an issue of equity that needed to be highlighted, that no one should experience harassment, but that when experienced by men it can be overlooked:

- I feel that there is inconsistency between what a man can say to a woman and what a woman can say to a man. Female colleagues have said things to me that as a man, it would be totally unacceptable for me to say to them. Sexism in all forms should be unacceptable (0442).
- I feel that the balance of discussion on this topic relates to offences committed against women. while the statistics support this, the instances of offences against men cannot be overlooked and must be included in the discussion (3266).

The rationale for silencing and minimisation in their case was distinct from that of women. The powerlessness of this male participant (2484) is reflected in their reference to "a one way street" whereby women have agency (they "can make" bullying statements) and men lack agency ("must shut up"): "Being a male now in a HEI is nothing nice. Woman can make disparaging comments about men, bully those who disagree with them. This is a one way street now. Men must shut up it seems".

This male respondent (0745) describes how a senior member of staff harassed him. This scenario is familiar from accounts given by female staff members, with a clear power differential and the

participant not wanting the behaviour to continue. However, it is distinct in that the behaviour was minimised because the harasser was a female and "I am a man":

> A senior female member of staff harassed me as a male member of staff several times; despite complaining and asking for this to stop it was treated as though it was not a problem because I am a man, despite the fact that I had less seniority and the attention was unwanted.

The participant draws out the implications of the gender dynamic: "If the reverse scenario was in play and I had made inappropriate comments or given unwanted attention I feel that I would have been disciplined". In contrast, he was repeatedly victimised by the senior female staff member and another woman who displayed no sense of the impact it had on him: "Another female member of staff kept encouraging the senior colleague to pursue me because it amused them and also kept trying to set me up despite me asking them to stop".

This male participant (1885) described being unsure how to interpret the behaviour of a senior female staff member. He describes being uncomfortable with her repeated unwelcome touching:

> I still don't know how 'serious' the incident was; a senior female member touched my shoulder and stood uncomfortably close to me, and this repeated some times. When I discussed it with my line manager, they were quite upset about it and told that the other staff's behaviour was inappropriate.

Because the behaviour was not explicitly sexual, he was uncertain of whether this was predatory behaviour: "My problem is that the borders of what is sexual harassment are blurry and when you are in such a situation you cannot know whether it is because the other person wants to be good to you or because they are sexually advancing". Put in this uncomfortable position, and ambivalent about the person's intentions, he adopted the coping mechanism of avoidance that was frequently described in quantitative responses to the survey: "However I did not want to advance the case only tried to avoid the person after these occasions".

A similar situation was experienced by this staff member (1899), whose negative experience reflects an assumption that a man would not object to being touched:

> As a straight middle class late middle aged 'white' man I often feel my personal space is invaded, and depending on the situation or not this can be welcome or not. However, the assumption by even people, especially women I don't know or even have power relationships who seems to feel entailed to touch at me amazes and sometimes irritates me.

The participant goes on to say that it also seems acceptable to discuss male sexuality: "My sexuality seems to be something too seems to be something can be discussed critically and personally, and again on occasions when there seems to be no respect shown me". He finishes by linking these experiences to an overall culture of sexist that affects other groups as well: "Of course, this occurs in an overall atmosphere of a sexism that mostly disadvantages women and minorities but I think it is part of the same sexism".

LGBTQ+ staff members' experiences of homophobia and harassment

Some of the experiences of sexual violence and harassment were specifically linked with being a staff member who identified as LGBTQ+. For example, this survey respondent (2468) identifies her sexual orientation as being associated with increased risk: "I would like to see greater articulation of the particular increased risk of LGBT+ people experiencing sexual violence and harassment (e.g. the intersection gender-based and identity-based harassment/violence a lesbian may encounter)".

Similarly, an intersectional account is offered here by one staff member (1263) who links their gender and sexual orientation together as a focus for male staff: "As a gay woman comments on my sexuality and sexual preferences have been frequently made by male members of staff in a sexually suggestive and propositional manner".

This lesbian member of staff (1198) related her sexual orientation to her exposure to male verbal sexual harassment. She indicates that she is exposed to these "locker room" comments because the male staff member includes her in the sexualised talk that he considers normal, and that she has not felt comfortable calling him out on his behaviour:

> [A male colleague] makes extremely inappropriate comments about women i.e. sexualising their bodies etc. … I am a lesbian so it is almost like he sees me as 'one of the lads' and I am subjected to locker room talk. Of course as a woman this makes me uncomfortable, but it is awkward to say so as we work closely together and also you are concerned about being branded 'too sensitive' or a 'snowflake'.

This staff member (2261) describes being harassed in the college workplace, attributing this to a shared, underlying culture across both staff and students:

> He and his friends are encouraged to behave the way they do by staff and students because of the belief that anything "offensive" and "politically incorrect" is a positive thing. The lecturers and demonstrators are openly sexist, racist, homophobic and transphobic in their classes and casual conversion and take delight in ostracising any student who does not feel this way. I am unable to use the department facilities because I am so afraid.

In the final example, this staff member (1483) also refers to a group of staff members who engage in unwelcome sexualised talk based on his orientation: "As a gay man, I find that my colleagues ask unwelcome questions about my sex life (or gay sex in general) more frequently than they ask their straight colleagues about these things".

He goes on to describe how a work colleague had recently disparaged another group member by referring to them having gay sex, as if this was something that was derisory or unacceptable: "The most upsetting thing to happen recently was in a group chat, where a colleague insulted someone (who wasn't in the chat) by suggesting they enjoy gay sex - the actual language used was very explicit, and I felt vulnerable, embarrassed, and upset by the situation".

Coping mechanisms

An extensive range and combination of sexual violence and harassment was described by staff members. It is of interest to consider how staff members responded to this victimisation – to what extent they viewed themselves, their peers, and the institution as prepared and ready to respond, or as being unable to assert their rights and make themselves heard.

A sense of powerlessness was evident in the examples cited above. Specific references were made that suggest staff members can feel powerless to stop a harasser, and that they may see their college as not being prepared to respond. Here a staff member (1709) describes feeling completely powerless to address an ongoing situation:

> Sexual harassment policy at my institution is not fit for purpose. I and several colleagues have been sexually harassed by one individual who we have all reported and yet he is still employed there and involved in teaching students. He is a sexual predator and there is nothing we can do to stop him harming others under the current policy.

This staff member felt that no one was prepared to respond to the sexual assault that they experienced, with the staff member themselves and their peers not listened to. In another example

from this staff member, they were sexually assaulted but could not bring this up with another staff member: "In another previous HEI (three years ago), I was sexually assaulted (groped) … on two occasions. I felt too ashamed to talk to a staff member at my then HEI". They did broach what had happened with friends, and there is a sense of being dismayed at the lack of support they received: "Though I talked to some of my friends about it and they more or less treated the person who assaulted me the same way they had before. They seemed to think the onus was on me to slap him or hurt him to stop this behaviour".

In contrast with this imagined reaction where the victim pushes back and takes responsibility for ending the assault, the staff member describes a reality of shame and self-stigma: "The reality was, I was too shocked to act or respond at all. I then felt ashamed for my own inaction and blamed myself for not being better at handling these kinds of situations". They finished the comment with their learning from this situation, that it is important to be able to recognise when a sexual assault is taking place: "I don't think people are aware of what sexual assault even means … Ambiguity allows the problem to persist".

Several participants described trying to arrange their environment to minimise the risk that they would otherwise encounter. They wrote about assessing all their movements, appraising their surroundings for risk, as in this participant's account (0672):

> Over the years I (and other colleagues) have at various times had to change the routes by which we travel around the building, avoided social areas for extended periods, used different entrances to buildings, checked corridors before exiting the office (during the day as well as by night), all to avoid harassment.

Another form of coping was to directly intervene. This staff member (3058) came up against inappropriate sexual language or derogatory comments:

- Students have complained to me that other students in laboratories are telling explicitly sexual stories, or using inappropriate language.
- I have experienced situations where students have openly engaged in loudly audible conversations in social areas, referring to other students as "f*ckin queers", "paedos", etc.

They felt they were able to carry out active bystander interventions to put a stop to the behaviour:

- I have had to intervene and tell students that this is unacceptable.
- I normally challenge these students … I don't like having to do this, in truth, but I cannot let it go unaddressed.

No Experience of Sexual Violence or Harassment

A number of participants used the open-ended comments box at the end of the survey to state that they had not experienced sexual violence or harassment in their Higher Education institution. For these participants, the workplace was safe and supportive ("I believe I work in a supportive and non-intimidating environment that encourages me and my colleagues to interact and behave in a positive manner", 0416).

This staff member (0659) references having been employed in a HEI over a long period of time without experiencing violence or harassment: "As a female member of university staff I have never been subject to sexual harassment, sexual violence or sexual discrimination in the course of my career. Never, not on one single occasion. I don't think my experience is unusual I think it is the norm".

This male member of staff (1146) describes having been in the same institution, across different roles from student to researcher, without witnessing any problematic behaviour: "[As an] undergrad, postgrad, and researcher, mixing with students and staff of all ages, I have never witnessed sexually inappropriate behaviour on or off campus when in their company professionally or socially". Another male staff member (2056) indicated his perception that sexual harassment has been prevented in the campus where he works:

> As a middle aged male, I have steered clear of discussions of sexual matters with students and stayed in the realm of professional relationships, so my knowledge of their attitudes and consent is limited. However we have always been very clear on providing a safe and respectful learning environment for both staff and students which has provided a good foundation for preventing sexual harassment.

This male member of staff (3507) indicates he had no awareness of sexual violence or harassment taking place, but that his gender and sexual identity might have limited his exposure or awareness to this. He indicates that his lack of awareness "doesn't mean they're not happening":

> Occasionally, I feel the need to qualify some of my answers with "but that's my experience as a middle-class white straight man, who might be oblivious to these things". I'm not aware of any specific instances of sexual harassment or violence at my HEI, either among students or staff, but that doesn't mean they're not happening.

Several staff members indicated that harassment was not an issue for them, but they pointed to other aspects of inequality that needed to be addressed. For example, this survey respondent (1132) describes never hearing of a sexual harassment incident among staff. For them, the important issue in this area is to address harassment experienced by students:

> In relation to staff, I have never heard of any sexual harassment incident … For me the important issue is how to respond to students who report sexual assault by another student. This has happened in the past and we have no training on how to respond. The student dropped out as the perpetrator was still in class. We need a clear protocol on how to support students in this instance.

In a second example, this staff member (2172) feels safe from sexual violence and harassment, while qualifying their statement ("I am lucky in this, and perhaps it is unusual"), but does identify the gender pay gap as a clear issue of inequality:

> At my institution I do not perceive any threat of sexual violence or any discrimination because of my gender whatsoever, except that there is definitely not equal pay. But I perceive access to promotion, the big jobs are all equally available to me and have never once felt uncomfortable or under threat for any sexual or gender reason. I believe I am lucky in this, and perhaps it is unusual.

This female staff member (2724) considers her HEI as "much safer" than a role in private industry, she has not "experienced anything serious" while working in the college environment. Nevertheless, she is supportive of greater awareness being achieved on sexual violence and harassment:

> I hadn't really thought about this until now. Thankfully, I haven't experienced anything serious at work in [College]- all very tame. And definitely by comparison to previous roles in industry it has been a much safer place to work in this regard- largely due to the culture of the people working here ... it's a lovely environment with many kind and supportive people. However- where I really don't see any inherent problem (fortunately) ... awareness could definitely be improved, as this can only be of benefit.

Several staff members went beyond remarking that sexual violence and harassment was not part of their experience, actively rejecting the idea that these issues arise commonly in the Higher Education

sector. This point is made in two examples below, first by a female member of staff and then by a male:

- Many of these questions are leading questions... they seem to be making an assumption that this is a widespread and hidden issue in HE. I have spent 20 years in a male-dominated environment - not once have I experienced what I consider sexual harassment. I abandoned this survey half way through as I think the questions are biased and I would not be confident in the reliability of the results (1972).
- I have worked and/or studied at HEIs for 25 years, and I have never heard of any sexual harassment or violence. Surely most rapes and sexual violence happens at night, and off-campus? This means it is nothing to do with the HEI? This survey sort of suggests that sexual violence is common at HEIs, whereas of course the truth is that it is not (1847).

Rejecting the idea that sexual violence and harassment are relevant to HEIs

The active rejection of the idea that sexual violence and harassment are problems for Higher Education was not commonly evidenced in the written comments from staff members. However, some comments of this nature were made. In this instance from a staff member (2078), the term "myth" is used twice, implying that these issues do not exist, while prejudice toward men was felt to be common: "Rape culture is a myth and toxic masculinity is also a myth - misandry is rampant in HEIs".

Here this female staff member (1154) does not consider that SVH is absent in Higher Education, but asserts that there is "overthinking" of the issue. It may be happening on campus but this is a reflection of the rest of society, she says. The reaction is not to change the culture but to take personal responsibility for actions:

Are we not overthinking this? Campus life is a microcosm of real life. Shit happens in real life, shit will happen on campus. At the end of the day we all need to take individual responsibility. We're at risk of getting litigious about everything, like in the US of A where people are afraid to move in case they might be doing something wrong. Asking permission before kissing? C'mon!

This male participant (0616) also felt that culture change on sexual violence and harassment in Higher Education would be undesirable. He considers this as putting people in "bubble wrap", and making people less prepared for a "harsh … unforgiving" society that they will be living in:

Unfortunately, the real world can be a harsh and unforgiving place at times, and wrapping people/students in bubble wrap and encouraging them to find offence in everything is setting them up to fail, or worse still, creating a far less caring or responsible society.

This participant (1880) also recognises that sexual violence takes place, that it infringes on the right to freedom from harm, but that it is not feasible to overcome an external "reality" of violence ("As a female, I feel that girls should be able to walk anywhere in whatever clothing they deem appropriate, without the fear of attack, however, this is not reality"). Speaking in reference to the student experience, she indicates that individuals should take action to protect themselves. For her, the goal of changing the culture seems out of reach where attacks on females would no longer be made for reasons such as what they wear:

Students should be advised that, as with anything, certain behaviours/clothing/going to a location with a stranger/drinking too much alcohol etc. can increase risks of attack. To ignore this is to ignore reality. We all wish that this was not the case, however, advising girls against this, is to increase the level of danger for them. We should be reminding all students to value themselves and not let themselves be casually used or to casually use others.

The final two comments from staff members presented below illustrate the divergence of views on sexual violence and harassment. For most staff members who responded in open-ended comments, the situation was threatening and negative. For a minority of the staff members, things were improving or had not been seen or experienced as a problem.

The first participant (0272) uses qualifying terms ("less", "a reduction") to indicate an improving situation: "As the years pass, male chauvinism is less prevalent in HEIs and, with that, a reduction in smutty talk - all to be lauded". For the next staff member (0783), the situation has not changed over time, either with respect to the experience of staff and students or to the response of the university:

> I have worked in the higher education sector for [several decades] and I have lost count of the number of distressing disclosures from students and other staff members in that time. I hope I have always done my best to help, but it is depressing that these incidents have not declined over that time period and the university is still much more likely to take the side of a sexual aggressor.

The Impact of Societal Norms on Sexual Violence and Harassment in HEIs

The comments on HEIs that staff members made in response to the open-ended survey item included consideration of consent, sexual violence and harassment within the larger context of Irish society in which the sector operates. This is an important issue to attend to, given the use of a socio-ecological model that includes the 'macrosystem' comprising societal norms, practices, and attitudes. It raises the critical question of whether HEIs are an expression of these wider systemic influences, if the sector is a source of change that challenges societal SVH, or indeed if Higher Education in Ireland poses particularly high risks of victimisation and silencing of investigations.

In this example, the staff member (0295) offers her perspective that there is a deep seated, ongoing problem in Irish society of male violence, lack of response within the community, and a sense of shame among survivors:

> A lot of the actions that need to be taken to address this very serious issue needs to be around re-educating males. Even the 'innocent by-standers' are guilty. For too long Irish women have been feeling like we are guilty for something that was not our fault. We kept things hidden because we (women) felt it was our fault we were drunk etc.

This staff member (3442) identified her HEI as being less problematic than the wider society she experienced – she associated it with being "safe" and "protected":

> Have always felt safe, protected and supported in my current job but in the outside world it can be exhausting to be a woman, always aware of your surroundings and dealing with that subtle constant threat to your personal safety. I want better for the students I support and for my children.

Progressing the image of Higher Education institutions being less dangerous than their surrounding environment, this staff member (3178) saw the university not just as a relief from the risk and danger encountered in society, but as a positive force creating change: "Sexual violence is a societal evil - universities have contributed enormously to awareness of Consent issues and creating a safe environment for students and staff". The example of training and education being led out through universities shows the sector being a positive role model to other parts of society.

At the same time, other participants quoted in this report did describe having to remain critically aware of their surroundings, recalling the comment from the staff member quoted above when describing ongoing vigilance in her off-campus life. Here, a staff member (1807) describes the

chronic, ongoing monitoring of risk that she needs to do on campus in order to feel safe: "In relation to opportunistic sexual assault (vs relational or interpersonal contexts) I feel really strongly that environment is really important - campus layout, building layout, lighting, safe routes, security personnel, how many people in building / on the floor etc etc etc How can we ensure staff and student personal safety on [my university's] campuses?"

Many of the comments cited in this report have highlighted power differentials, gendered stereotypes, ignoring and discouraging complaints, and a range of other problematic issues within the culture of universities. These portray HEIs as reflecting the problems of the society around them. Indeed, as somewhat closed institutions, where internal processes and advancement opportunities have important career consequences, institutional culture was described in staff comments as a source of secondary trauma and silencing regarding sexual violence and harassment. Here a staff member (1260) describes the situation as they see it, in which the key problem is gender-based violence, which finds expression in various ways through sexual assault and social judgement: "Sexual violence, particularly against women, continues to increase exponentially and slut shaming is still very much at the fore".

The staff member goes on to say that, for female students, the university experience is one associated with risk and danger:

> Female students are subjected to sexual violence and assault more than is reported. Having worked with numerous students that this has happened to - it happens all the time. This should just not be the case.

The staff member acknowledges the reality of sexual violence as affecting men as well as women, but correlates gender-based violence with the problems that female students experience, echoing the view that this violence is an abuse of power ("the last thing left to threaten women"):

> I realise that men are also victims of sexual violence and assault, but if men just stopped raping women it would be a fantastic start; sexual assaults on women are far higher than on men. It is as if sexual violence is the last thing left to threaten women and it continues to increase (1260).

Finally, this staff member (0863) draws attention to the role of alcohol and drugs as factors in sexual violence that have a societal origin. For many, the adoption of binge drinking habits and introduction to drug use takes place during the socialisation that occurs during adolescence. They describe the impact that drug or alcohol intoxication has on individuals, describing it as a risk factor:

> I am delighted to see surveys like this and to know of the actions being taken to raise awareness of and to prevent sexual violence. I am deeply concerned by the high levels of excessive drinking leading to the state of drunkenness and lack of executive capacity that this bring; I also have great concerns about the very high illicit drug use. Drink and Drugs MUST be brought into all of this.

The Impact of Societal Norms on Gender Relations in HEIs

In the last section, a range of views was offered as to whether wider societal norms toward sexual violence and harassment accounted for what participants wrote about happening in Higher Education. This section extends that question into the gender relations domain, to consider whether staff comments depicted the Higher Education sector as reflective of Irish society, a better role model for wider society, or a closed system where more egregious gender inequality may be found.

Overall, many respondents who offered comments at the end of the survey described how traditional gender roles and social stereotypes were evident in the Higher Education workplace. These comments typically included female staff members' reflections on how men explicitly or implicitly exercised a power dynamic in their gender relations with female staff. Those interactions appear to replicate conventional social stereotypes about male and female roles.

Gender relations intersected with job roles for female staff members who referred to precarious working conditions and short-term contracts. This intersectionality was pivotal to their experience of harassment and sexual assault, carried out by powerful male senior staff, especially in the research setting. They felt powerless to speak up or report sexual violence and harassment due to their position in the HEI.

This section concludes with commentary from male members of staff who dispute the narrative about a male-dominated institutional culture. They raised concerns about reverse discrimination which was limiting their chances of advancement. Male identity was said to be conflated with sexual assault and harassment perpetration. These comments extended to a critique of institutional initiatives set up to foster equality, but which are instead said to exclude men.

The focus in this section is on relations between men and women. This reflects the commentary provided by respondents to the open-ended survey question. A small number of references were made to being a non-binary or trans staff member. Here, a staff member says that they do not feel accepted in their HEI: "I'm not cis but feel like I can't be openly trans in my workplace" (1234). The following staff member (0432) advocates for gender neutral facilities to be made available in HEIs, but this is in the context of writing that they are not comfortable with "biological males, regardless of how they identify" sharing female bathrooms: "I feel it is very important to maintain single sex spaces, and gender neutral facilities should be introduced for trans or non binary individuals. Many women feel very uncomfortable sharing bathroom facilities with biological males, regardless of how they identify".

A culture of sexism that supports harassment and assault

Staff members saw sexism in the HEI work culture as helping to explain how harassment is enabled to occur and why it is challenging to report it to line managers or HR. The participants named the sexist attitudes that they encountered in various ways, such as "casual sexism", an "old boys club", or "older generation". Typically, this referred to male members of staff devaluing female colleagues and engaging in sexual comments that overlapped with harassment.

In a number of these examples, significant power differentials were apparent between male and female staff members. That is mentioned by this staff member (0880), who describes non-permanent work contracts as a factor ("there is a lot of work to be done in HEIs around casual sexism, especially experienced by younger female members of staff, many who are on temporary and precarious contracts"). In the next quote the power of older or high status male staff members is expressed in "microaggressions" that undermine the contribution of a female member of staff (1349): "An 'old boys club' mentality still exists in Medicine, particularly among older academics/consultants. Even microaggressions like [male colleagues] calling me a 'good girl' wear me down over time".

The "older generation" of male staff is referenced here as being at the heart of a sexist culture that veers into sexual harassment. It is seen by this staff member (0218) as unchecked (e.g., "constant leering"), with younger female staff and students particularly targeted:

I would like the "older generation" of male staff to stop with the comments, looks and general inappropriate behaviour, towards young female staff. … Their constant leering and

sexual remarks is uncalled for. I would also like to add in, as an extra, that I have observed many times, in the HEI I am currently working in and others I have worked in, that there is a high level of male lecturers that openly remark on female students' appearances in a very disgusting manner.

The survey participant (2446) did not view what was happening as consistent with their understanding of harassment ("less harmful behaviour"), although the behaviours they describe are referred to in the survey items on harassment:

While sexual harassment / violence absolutely need to be stopped, I also would like to see a change in 'less harmful' behaviour where the opposite sex is described in derogatory terms or considered as bait. Every single one of my female colleagues, myself included, have been unwillingly 'chatted up' by several male colleagues throughout their careers. One after the other despite (formal) complaints. This should NOT be the norm.

The same choice of language is reflected in the next quote from a staff member (2081), about "low-level" harassment associated with everyday sexism, which while unacceptable and disrespectful is contrasted with "more serious issues":

I'm not sure if you are only looking at more serious issues, but you have not really addressed the sort of low-level harassment that is much more common - Men looking at women's bodies inappropriately. Making it clear that they find a woman attractive. Treating her like some kind of eye candy or titivating distraction.

The distinction appears to be that these forms of behaviour are embedded in daily behaviour, making it more difficult for the victim to point toward a distinct episode, "low level creepy stuff" which resulted in the staff member minimising their visibility as a form of gaze avoidance:

If someone makes an outright proposition you can at least make it clear that you don't appreciate it - but the low level creepy stuff is much harder to deal with - I have had to make myself fade into the background in particular situations because of this type of attention.

Certain events were seen as more likely to prompt such behaviour on the part of men, particularly social events where alcohol is consumed. The use of alcohol is linked to a "free for all" of conversations between staff and students, as described here by this staff member (2147):

Many engagements in such behaviour happen off campus at work related events and some form of follow up or training in relation to this should take place between staff as its been assumed off campus events and in environments following work activities with alcohol is a free for all in relation to making gestures, engaging in sexualised or charged or leading conversations between staff and students due to the influence of external environments.

This female participant (3040) voices her frustration here about ongoing gender relations that have a negative impact on women. She does identify that, in her workplace, this situation is improving. However, this is due to the efforts of her strong female colleagues who have successfully led out on positive changes ("collectively we have changed the dynamic"):

There has always been subtle differences in the way women are treated in the work place but I find this is improving - not because of any major interventions but because the females I work with are strong and very talented and collectively we have changed the dynamic.

Nevertheless, she writes that there is still more progress required to achieve gender equality. Their male manager makes subtle gender-based distinctions in how he relates to staff members. Ongoing vigilance and responses by women appear to be required, which is not always acknowledged. However, at this point, the staff member feels "pity" toward the harassing manager, not resentment:

Any remaining gender differences are mainly around subtleties of how our male manager interacts with different genders. It's sometimes frustrating but my main way of dealing with it is by calling it out there and then. Sadly, it often goes unnoticed but I see that as a reflection of individuals lack of understanding and pity him more than resent him. It's getting better.

This staff member (0928) takes a different perspective, describing a greater level of resistance from males that was blocking change from occurring. While a policy could be more readily amended, culture change was harder to achieve. This reaction was described in terms of men being "very defensive" or being concerned to "dismiss / defend a situation", which was "disheartening":

I find a lot of male colleagues see gender equality as a men versus women issue and get very defensive about it. The 'not all men do this ....' line comes up a lot as well as comments like 'well men do that but women do this ....' is often used to dismiss/defend a situation. It gets very disheartening to listen to this misconception of what equality is about. Policies are easy to change but culture is a much bigger challenge.

Casual sexism and microaggressions

Here we see how a staff member (3234) describes the impact of "conditioning and role models" on how men communicate with women in the HE workplace – pointing to women being talked over and dismissed, while decision-making takes place with other males:

There is a lot of invisible issues particularly re how men (perhaps through conditioning and the role models they've had in their lives) talk over female colleagues, are dismissive, … prioritise engagement with male colleagues who are now deemed more useful to them.

A number of comments of this nature were provided in the open-ended comments. Some of the behaviours described overlap with experiences described in the section on harassment. However, in citing these examples, the respondents typically differentiated what they saw or experienced from 'harassment'. They saw it as sexist behaviour that was potentially a precursor to harassment or a support for it. It is notable that the detail of these examples could well be described within the rubric of sexist harassment but was not named as such by staff members.

Comments were made by staff members on the continuing nature of sexist attitudes and behaviours. This staff member (2534) describes these as being reflected in "everyday encounters" such as "chat, talks, communications" that limited women's voice and impeded their fair treatment: "From my perspective and experiences, I think we need to re-focus on the everyday encounters in the workplace - the everyday chat, talks, communications, etc. My Department still has a very strong 'boys club' culture, where women's voice are not equal, nor are they treated equally". Here this staff member (2838) describes aggressive behaviour from a male manager who "talks down to women". The staff member and her colleagues did not have options available to them to put a stop to this behaviour:

I haven't experienced sexual violence or sexual harassment but I have experienced gender bias by a strong male leader /manager who talks down to women on a regular basis. Most of the women in the group were admin so we were support staff but he crossed a line the way he spoke to us at times / dealt with things, we didn't have other line managers we could complain to at the time and HR were no use.

Next, several examples are provided of staff members' experience of sexualising language in their HEI workplace ("working here will be easier when they have something nice to look at"), demeaning, infantilising terminology ("I am referred to as 'girl' by male colleagues who are my peers"), sexist hostility ("a killjoy, a prude … a hag"), and social dominance ("being talked over … assumed that I will

take the minutes"). The staff members experienced discomfort, frustration, and inequality of conditions as a result of such treatment from male colleagues:

- I've experienced comments on my figure, that I'm 'pretty', that "working here will be easier when they have something nice to look at". Men can often think that they are doing you a favour when they give you a compliment in the workplace. In fact, these can make a person feel uncomfortable & professionally devalued (1480).
- In my own job, I am frequently treated as less capable, valued, and respected by male colleagues. I frequently receive emails where I am referred to as "girl" by male colleagues who are my peers. Across the board, women are paid less than men in the specific unit of professional services I work in, even though women are equally or more qualified in many cases and have the same or more responsibility - this pay gap I think is reflective of a wider culture where women are not taken seriously and treated as equals in my workplace (1376).
- If you respond you are seen as a killjoy, a prude, someone (a hag!) with no sense of humour. Recently a colleague went for promotion and got the job. Two of her male colleagues said 'of course you did with that pretty face'. She was furious but said nothing. They thought they were paying her a compliment! (0529).
- Sexual violence and harassment are one manifestation of a culture of misogyny and gender discrimination and I have certainly experienced the latter. Examples are: being talked over at meetings; it being assumed that I will take the minutes of a meeting because I am the only woman present; and hitting the glass ceiling at middle age after having children (1732).

Several of the staff members used the term "microaggression" to capture the subtle nature of the sexism that they experienced, for example: "I wish that the survey would have asked more questions about the gender microaggressions that take place in HE. The microaggressions are subtle acts of sexism that reinforce gender stereotypes and unjust social norms and are widespread in HE" (0102).

The next participant (0936) included incidents such as sexist humour and demeaning comments within this type of sexism, which contribute to a "culture of disrespect":

> We also need to call out all the micro incidents, the unfunny sexual and misogynistic jokes, the putting down and belittling of girls and women. This allows for a culture of disrespect.

She differentiated between the sexism she was subject to and harassment, referring to "subtle actions" as indicated above such as taking notes and making tea for male colleagues:

> I was happy to participate in this survey. I would have liked to have the option to add that I have been harassed, excluded and treated differently because I am a female. Not necessarily actual sexual violence or harassment, but subtle actions like being expected to be the note taker at meetings, being required to provide tea, coffee for male colleagues at meetings.

Adding to this list of examples of inequality, the staff member is spoken to disrespectfully, not permitted to be an equal team member, and experienced gender discrimination in tasks that were assigned by her line manager:

> Being demeaned in front of others by how I am addressed. Being held back from full participation in projects due to my gender. Preferential treatment of male colleagues by my male boss.

In this extended quote, the participant (3456) explores the relationship between sexism and harassment by describing them as a continuum:

> I appreciate that the focus of this study is on harassment and assault but there is a spectrum of inappropriate behaviour and this is at the extreme end of it.

The sexist behaviour described in the preceding examples was not seen by this staff member as having been covered in the survey questions. Yet it was an important issue that merited significant attention. It led to the person feeling that they are only seen from a gendered lens with credence not given to their suitability for a role:

> Being "complimented" and having a male colleague leer at you is uncomfortable and unsettling but doesn't register in these questions. It makes one feel that it is of no consequence what their qualifications are, they will never be seen as anything other than an object by these male colleagues.

Another consequence of being identified as a "younger female academic" was not being given access to informal networks of older male colleagues, with important career benefits being restricted as a result:

> On the flipside, I think some older males are so uncomfortable with me as a younger female academic that I am not invited out to dinner and drinks where informal mentoring happens, career coaching, insider knowledge, lots of small but significant things that help male colleagues succeed.

This female staff member (2316) wrote about actively managing the risk of sexual harassment:

> I have not seen or experienced sexual assault while working at my institution. However, I have no doubt that it exists and is prominent. I, like many other women, have taken steps to reduce the possibility of sexual harassment occurring.

The associated level of vigilance was continually on her mind, feeding into her decisions and actions at all times ("you can never switch off"):

> However, this is exhausting. You can never switch off, you are careful to ensure that what you say can't be confused for something else, you don't "put yourself into" dangerous/awkward situations.

She saw this requirement as extremely unfair, as male colleagues should be able to behave respectfully and responsibly in an accountable manner:

> All the responsibility falls to women to protect themselves rather than the responsibility falling to men to be basic, decent human beings. It would be nice if men held themselves, and others, accountable for their behaviour.

She ties this sexism back to the society surrounding her HEI. For her, it arises because of the way men behave across different contexts, not just in the Higher Education workplace: "This is a societal issue and must be addressed on a much wider stage".

Unequal gender relations in a precarious work environment

In describing exposure to sexism and inequitable conditions in the HE sector, particular attention was drawn to female staff members on short-term, precarious contracts, especially in the research setting. This group was highlighted in the quantitative survey analysis as being exposed to relatively high risk of harassment and lower levels of knowledge of policy and procedures on SVH. Not alone were these workers on the margins of the institution compared with permanent staff, they were seen as having a particularly unfavourable power differential with Principal Investigators in the research environment and senior academics.

A range of examples of these issues were provided by survey participants. Here this participant (3469) compares employment in the Higher Education sector to a "pyramid scheme", with senior academics and PIs at the pinnacle of power. Staff members on short term contracts were described

as having relatively low status, subject to an "inequitable power dynamic" that heightened the existing issues with exposure to risk of harassment and non-reporting:

> The pyramid scheme like employment structure in universities, with many employees on fixed term contracts (particularly in research), results in such an inequitable power dynamic that only serves to exacerbate chronic problems with harassment and low reporting of such issues.

The difficulty of the position of a staff member (2446) on a precarious contract is clear here – their minimal power compared with "the big mouth" of a powerful academic on a permanent contract:

> How can you speak up when you are employed on a precarious contract and the big mouth is a permanent fixture? I believe that the fact that anyone thinks it is ok to make such statements shows how much more the culture needs to be changed.

The exposure of the staff member on a precarious contract was exploited by some academics, as demonstrated in examples of harassment and described here by one of the participants (1551). They indicate that no accountability was exhibited by some powerful men, the system did not pull them up ("untouchable"), nor was there recourse to a meaningful complaints system for the young female staff members. Being off campus at a conference is recognised here as a particularly high risk setting:

> There needs to be better accountability for senior academics. In my time in academia I have seen many young female PhD students and postdocs leave research because of harassment by senior male colleagues … There doesn't seem to be any recourse for victims. This often also happens at conferences, where there is even less accountability. There is a belief that senior professors are untouchable and can get away with anything.

For this staff member (1143), "it is tough to be female and an academic". Academic work conditions were destabilising, referred to by the staff member as "incredibly toxic places". The vulnerability of staff members is referred to, as it was by several other staff members who wrote on this topic. These women were dependent on producing research outputs, often in a precarious environment, with family life outside academia seen within this culture as a distraction: "Universities are incredibly toxic places where condescension and gender discrimination are commonplace. The metrics by which we as academics are measured and the precarity of so many jobs means people are very vulnerable and can feel isolated. Maternity leave is commonly referred to as holidays".

The senior academics were felt by this staff member (0172) to be well connected or having greater power than line managers such as unit heads, leaving them with "limited oversight" over their actions:

> Across Schools/Faculties, managers/heads are often of lower grade/same grade as senior professor colleagues in their School and often have personal friendships formed with each other. It is clear there is limited oversight in place for the most senior members of staff.

This participant (0630) provided an extended description of the experience of a female research staff member where the unfavourable factors described above are put into context. Despite the length of time spent in training to get to a specialised research post, we can see the role depicted here as one of "vulnerability" for a woman in the face of powerful male individuals who lead research groups:

> As a woman employed on a fixed-term research contract in a university, I think the precariousness and insecurity of the contract, and the power that the PI or head of department or senior permanent staff member has over the contract researcher contributes to vulnerability to bullying, harassment and sexual harassment and sexual violence.

Speaking in general terms, the participant describes research staff as having limited options available to them if targeted by a senior staff member:

> If you're the target of unwanted attention or behaviour, you know you're just a contract staffer.

This gives rise to the staff member considering the least worst option to select from if harassment were to occur. The first option presented is to leave, which would avoid the concerns associated with making a complaint concurrently with the stress of enduring harassment or assault from a powerful staff member: "(i) You just look to leave because it's going to be too much additional mental effort to address the problem institutionally on top of what trying to manage a difficult situation anyway".

Another option was for the researcher to make a complaint, only to suffer the consequences of not having their contract renewed – recalling the possibility of being seen as a 'troublemaker': "(ii) It will cost you your reputation as an employee going for your next job, and you'll never have your contract renewed at that institution if you do complain".

A commitment by the employer to the welfare of the research employee is described as being purely transactional. While the institution may have committed to EDI principles, the determinant of the organisation's interest in the research staff member was their outputs and income generation:

> (iii) Employers give lip service in written documents that they value employees that clearly demonstrate equality, diversity and inclusion, but when it comes to a research job, they just look at your publications and research grants success.

The staff member's analysis of the culture of the HE research setting identifies the conditions in this environment that are associated with the abuse of power. They describe how an abuser in the research environment can modulate their harassment. Their behaviour can range from microaggressions to a level of overt harassment that does not result in a permanent colleague having to act in response:

> If the institutional culture is uncaring; highly competitive; high on leadership and decision-making by individual fiat and low on everyday institutional culture that demonstrates a value of caring for staff, then people that seek to abuse their power will know they can do the micro-behaviours and then scale up to the level just below where someone that's permanent has to deal with it.

Ultimately, the abusers associated with this setting collect and exert power, facilitated by an institution that judges performance based on results, not on adherence to transparent processes:

> Abusers are very clever. They thrive in institutions that have a highly individualistic, personality-led, deferent culture, with top-down, hierarchical decision-making processes where there is little transparency, and where there are different values given to different categories of staff and students.

Other staff members described a similar situation. This staff member (0172) refers on several occasions to the unequal distribution of power, with researchers excessively dependent on the PI who occupies a privileged, permanent position:

> Contract research staff are very vulnerable to all forms of harassment and bullying and are not adequately protected. As these staff members usually work for one PI, their reputation/future contract opportunities are dependant on this senior permanent member of staff.

Again, we see reference to moving away in the case of harassment – being unlikely to report and "will usually just leave":

> Thus, if any form of bullying or harassment occurs it is very unlikely that the staff member will report this behaviour and will usually just leave. This leaves new recruits vulnerable to similar experiences and provides an opportunity for someone to continue harassing / bullying others.

In the final two examples, one staff member (3467) wrote about having been propositioned for sex by research supervisors while studying for her PhD: "I was approached by … supervisors for sex in relation to passing my PhD … and that I would get there quicker if I did this". One of the supervisors was responsible for verbal sexual harassment: "Even in a lecture said my name and said 'did anyone check out X's baps today'".

They felt helpless to seek redress for what had happened, they had seen victims "kicked out" in the past. She decided to ignore what had happened as a coping mechanism to manage what had happened to her: "Due to knowing the past incidences of how the victim has been kicked out I said nothing and got on with it and got my PhD". This sustained pattern of unacceptable behaviour is regarded as being widely known as an open secret in the university. The PhD students had a 'choice' of putting up with this behaviour: "The continuous advances and inappropriate conduct … became usual and seen as a given by all in the university. Invites to the private staff bar meant that person would be finishing their thesis before the rest of us".

In the final example, the staff member (1127) had found that sexual harassment was widespread in the research setting: "Every woman I have talked to in my current research Institute has had some form of highly sexualised comments made to her". The silence of the researchers on this issue arises from their sense of helplessness to react or act assertively. They are on a knife edge as to continuing in their position or having the PI "destroy" them: "None of the PhD students or postdocs feel they can say anything as they are all on fixed term contracts and only have one boss who on average pays for their salary and also can destroy their research career".

The coping reaction of the staff member is one of avoidance, otherwise she would be unable to avoid harassment in a male-dominated research environment: "I have been lucky as a research fellow … where I can be by myself to avoid most of the sexual harassment that is sadly very normal for women especially in male dominated fields such as physics and engineering".

Men are under siege, reverse discrimination

Some participants commented that the culture in Higher Education has shifted. No longer dominated by males, it now presents a dynamic of 'reverse discrimination' in which men are disadvantaged. These survey respondents, typically males themselves, wished to distance "men" as a gender category label from the incidence of sexual violence and harassment. It was a personal choice to assault or to harass, they suggested, not a property of being male, and women can be harassers too. Nevertheless, in these comments "men" were often described collectively, as having lost power, being subject to discrimination and exclusion, and being subject to sexual harassment. Frustration and alienation are communicated in these comments, expressed through dissatisfaction with institutional efforts toward equality and training.

In this example, traditionally male characteristics are cited as a protection against harassment. This male participant (1978) suggests that physical strength brings him the confidence he needs to avoid assault and harassment. People who possess less strength are therefore more exposed to harm, which for him helps to explain why some men are harassed:

I am a physically strong male so my answers are informed by that reality. The survey does not take that into account. I think that my physique gives me confidence to protect myself, defend myself if necessary and definitely deter an assault from taking place. I am aware of 'weaker' men who have been harassed more than me.

In the remainder of the comments in this section, males are seen as lacking self-determination. Their analysis is that being a man is associated with being disenfranchised and negatively labelled. For instance, this male participant (2080) said that there is a "massive anti-male bias" in relation to consent, sexual violence and harassment. For him, this stems from the macrosystem of mass media and the more immediate HE ecology. He references "equality" in quote marks as if to suggest that these initiatives are themselves biased, from his perspective by a "feminist view":

There is a massive anti-male bias in these matters. Things have gotten to the stage where some men are afraid to work with too many females. This issue is enabled by unbalanced attitudes in most media outlets and within "equality" groups in third level institutions. There is a need for other views to be aired other than narrow minded feminist view.

In his comments, this male participant (2366) challenges the idea that many men carry out sexual assault or harassment and that SVH is used as a means to assert power. In his view, rather than exercising power, men are "under siege":

Unfortunately men are under siege at the moment. There is a narrative out there that many (or even all) men are sexual predators, that this is used to suppress women and that this is why universities do not promote women. This is simply not true.

He goes on to suggest that it is women who are advantaged in the HE sector. Women use their gender and sexuality to achieve career advancement, and "reverse discrimination" now makes it impossible for males to progress:

I have been a witness to women using their gender and their sexuality to get ahead in the university. … There is actually reverse discrimination against men at the moment. The only way to get promoted in [Subject Area] now is to either get a male to female sex change, declare yourself non-binary or start wearing women's clothes.

The next participant (2084) also distances male gender identity from the choice to perpetrate sexual violence and harassment. It is individuals who decide to behave in this way, not "men". In doing so, he challenges the idea that SVH can represent an extension of the power dynamic and social stereotype seen in male / female interactions:

First off "men" don't perpetrate sexual violence and / or harassment because they are men, they do it because they are scumbags who think they can get away with it. This is not a "men" problem, and these people should be charged accordingly.

In the next comment from this participant, he does suggest that there is a gendered basis to negative interactions in the HE workplace. As such, women's treatment of men should be considered as well as how men treat women. He draws attention to the male experience of misconduct, which the quantitative survey results did indicate was relatively common. While sexual violence is "relatively one-sided", interpreted here as meaning mostly perpetrated by males, harassment is said to be perpetrated by women or men ("in no way one-sided"):

Secondly, there is very little attention throughout your survey as to how men are treated by women in the workplace or HEI. Whilst I'm aware that sexual violence may be relatively one-sided, harassment of any kind is in no way one-sided and should be viewed as such!

In his comments, the next male participant (1942) indicates that, while confident, he is nevertheless "intimidated" by the emergence of "'equality' measures" in his HEI. He experiences these initiatives as "'WOMEN' focused … passive-aggressive and challenging":

> It might be a minor issue for some, but as a confident heterosexual male, I'm somewhat intimidated by the 'equality' measures which have been initiated in recent years in my institution. I feel that these 'WOMEN' focused meetings, workshops and get-togethers are quite passive-aggressive and challenging.

He suggests that fairness can be achieved by individual action, citing efforts he makes to be inclusive of all groups in his work. In a similar way to the participant who referred to "reverse discrimination" above, he has a difficulty with "initiatives that positively discriminate", and suggests that female peers are also unhappy with them:

> As a male who works to make my teaching, research and daily life as supportive as possible of all genders, ethnicities, social classes etc, I find it quite difficult to accept initiatives that positively discriminate - and I know that many of my female colleagues are equally frustrated.

He concludes by saying that this issue is compounded by suppression of debate over these initiatives ("we cannot criticise … or we're being sexist"). For him, those involved in gender equality need to develop a critical awareness that they are creating a new form of exclusion that affects men:

> BUT, we cannot criticise the energy and enthusiasm being put into these initiatives, or we're being sexist etc. … I think those involved in ATHENA SWAN initiatives etc need to be a little more aware that their positive measures can be just as exclusionary as the male domination that they are seeking to challenge.

Challenges to Culture Change: Leadership and Policy Implementation

References to the leadership of HEIs were made in the context of their openness, support or otherwise of leading culture change and support for a culture of open reporting and investigation of sexual violence and harassment. The majority of comments made on this topic were critical of the senior management of the institutions, with different facets of this criticism explored below.

In the first example, a staff member (0743) wrote that senior management lack interest or engagement in advancing a progressive agenda of culture change. The staff member describes in stark terms where that leaves them ("never trust", "demoralising", "can't see how it will ever improve"):

> I would never trust my institution to make progressive changes to support its staff. The message it sends, especially from the senior managerial offices, is that they could care less. It's demoralising working at this institution, and I can't see how it will ever improve.

While the previous example positioned senior management as not caring about introducing change, this staff member (1889) asserts that the leadership actually place greater value on institutional reputation. This motivates them to actively "make problems … go away" or "at best" does not help either students or staff:

> My experience working in [College] is that the senior management's general approach is to try and make problems or issues go away, their main concern is consistently in relation to reputation of the college and therefore in the majority of cases I have witnessed first hand the struggles and pain this has caused a significant number of students and staff. The college's structure is at best not helpful or supportive of students or staff in relation this important issue or other issues generally.

By comparison, for this participant (0565) the issue of SVH was not just ignored or suppressed. They wrote about male harassers attaining promotions and positions of leadership:

> I have no trust in my institutional leaders. … Many women at my university have talked to me about their experiences of harassment and bullying; several have left. Men who are harassers or who ignore it are promoted, given awards, and allowed to be in positions of authority.

This staff member went on to say that the voice of women is silenced ("we are told to be quiet" and subject to "disdain"): "It's top down. We are told to be quiet and not speak up, and thus we don't. The leaders at my institution have made their disdain for women appallingly clear".

Varied perspectives were offered on whether senior institutional management are working to lead out on culture change, or are part of a problematic status quo. In this example, a staff member (2985) indicates that senior managers do not wish to see student sexual misconduct being investigated: "HEI more likely to deal with sexual violence or harassment when it involves a staff member. They have absolutely no interest in doing anything when it involves students. Students are regarded as untouchable". They go on to state that middle management in their institution have attempted to address this issue but "get overruled": "Even middle management attempts to deal with inappropriate behaviour get overruled by senior management".

The staff member goes on to say that management in the institution do not display a trauma-informed understanding of harassment: "One senior manager once suggested to me that the victim of harassment should have said 'I feel uncomfortable with your behaviour' as if that would stop a threatening predator". The staff member concludes with a statement of the high priority of addressing this issue, that "all senior managers need to be forced onto training so that they understand the seriousness of harassment, sexual or otherwise, and that they do not make glib comments about what a victim of harassment should do or not do when they weren't there".

For the next staff member (2577), both the departmental and senior management levels in the institution do not address incidents that they are aware of taking place. Firstly, the management "try to cover up", with the university reputation taking precedence over individual needs:

> [College name] has a problem with sexual harassment and violence. In my …. years [there], I have repeatedly observed the management system try to cover up or minimise the public impact of these incidents to protect the university and not support students and staff.

Secondly, there has been "very little" done at departmental level: "I would identify this is something of a crisis in my own department and despite directly addressing senior school management numerous times, very little has been done in response". The staff asks for action to be taken, again pointing to the relevance of putting better training in place: "Please act on this survey and improve the environment for everyone. … Staff are not given sufficient training in this field and many of them have taken advantage of their position in the past".

In this example from the open-ended survey comments, the staff member (1589) describes disturbing student sexual misconduct:

> I reported a serious sexual harassment issue when a student masturbated beside me, I repeatedly reported this incident to my manager … other students did not want to be in the same lecture as him, my manager and my colleague did not support me at all. They did not want to hear about it and refused to deal with the issue.

They suggest that the senior leadership do want to create a positive change, but in their institution the source of resistance to dealing with situations like this comes from the middle management:

Middle management do not want to do anything. Senior management is trying to change this culture, but it is the middle management that need to respond effectively.

In the final illustration of staff commentary on senior management, this staff member (2142) makes the point that different levels of leadership on SVH can be shown across the institution: "It is very hard to answer questions about the "institution" or 'leadership' as if it is a coherent whole". They identify that the pressure for change is coming from certain individuals and particular HEI offices:

- In most cases, there will be influential individuals in all HEIs who are very supportive of cultural change and others who resist attempts to advance change in this area.
- In my own institution, HR … are among the strongest opponents of revising and update our policies and procedures in any meaningful way, however some other managers are hugely supportive of change, e.g. EDI.

Policies not supported by effective procedures

Some of the comments made about the HE institution's policy environment identified a mismatch between there (a) being a policy in place on SVH and (b) achieving the capacity or procedural framework to implement it consistently and fully. This view is illustrated by this staff member (2112): "Having official practices / policies in place is quite different to feeling that there is actually a culture within the organisation which will actually support the victim of such experiences - the notion of legally complying vs a culture of support".

Within this set of comments, there were different perspectives on whether gaps between policy and practice arose from a cynical motivation or because of lacking appropriate capacity. Firstly, this staff member (3369) suggests that their HEI endorses a positive ethos but is "not good" at responding to SVH when it does occur: "I feel my institution works hard to create a respectful culture and environment, but is not good at dealing with incidences of sexual violence/ harassment when they occur (the principle is great, but implementation in practice is not)". They go to say that this is due to lack of capacity: "I don't believe this is a lack of will, but rather an uncertainty as to how to deal with such instances".

In the next example, the staff member (2767) agrees with the previous respondent that there is a dissonance between policy and practice, but in their analysis this arises due to a sinister compliance culture, where practices work in the opposite way to published policies:

> My HEI plays lip service to these issues. Has all the documents that tick all the boxes. Bullying and disrespect is widespread and commonplace and comes from the top down.

The staff member goes to relay their observation, with an emphasis on "nowhere" and "nothing" regarding implementation: "There is nowhere to report issues. HR stand by and do nothing. I witnessed this first hand with a colleague". They refer to a proactive stance, but this is in relation to disrespect: "It's a culture of disrespect that is not only tolerated but actively promoted", with examples provided of undermining actions by managers and collusion from female colleagues:

- Management inflicting reputational damage via spreading rumours about staff members is commonplace. I know of many traumatised and deeply unhappy staff (male and female) at my HEI.
- And it's not a neat gender divide. There are and have been women propping up and benefitting from the bad behaviour of men in my HEI for years. It's a culture of disrespect that is not only tolerated but actively promoted.

This staff member (2211) also describes the concerted activity taking place in HEIs as misplaced, concealing sexual violence and harassment while signalling perpetrators that they can "carry on":

Harassment, gender and sexual violence is swept under the carpet, viewed as a potentially legal liability and reputational damage issue for the HEI and perpetrators are given the message that there will be no negative consequences for them and they have the green light to carry on.

In this context, not putting concerted effort into implementing policy or holding perpetrators to account was seen as perpetuating the situation:

A HEI can have the perfect policy but if it is not implemented effectively and perpetrators not held to account and disciplined/prosecuted, then it is useless; worse than useless, it is simply a fig leaf, giving the appearance that something is being done when, in fact, nothing has changed.

For this staff member (3234), the existence of a policy is no reassurance to the individual who wants to report SVH: "Note that no matter what the HEI's including my own have policies etc but disclosure of any kind in a workplace whether it is bullying, sexual harassment, fraud, governance etc is fraught with danger for the individual".

Having assumed that the existence of a policy meant they would be protected, they made a report ("I took the view that the policy was there and of course everything would be ok if I reported it"). Their experience was that this was not the case. There were significant gaps between policy and practice ("there is a long way to go on making the policies, procedure and practices sing together"). Their conclusion was that a passive or avoidant response is preference ("park", "pretend", "leave"):

My experience has taught me of reporting an issue in the past is that it is best for your mental and emotional health to park up your concerns, pretend you didn't see it or that it didn't happen to you and if you can't stomach continuing to work is to leave and get a different job.

For some staff members, making a complaint was costly and counterproductive ("the person putting in a complaint gets more into trouble than the person causing the issue", 0061). In this example, a professional support staff member (0774) describes their experience of making a report as troublesome and frustrating at different points. The staff member had initially conveyed a student issue on to an academic. The academic then asserted that the staff member was making a false allegation. Concerned by this, the staff member responded by reporting this to their manager and to HR:

I reported a male member of faculty to my line manager and HR for sending lengthy abusive emails … in response to an issue raised by a student which I had contacted the faculty member about. The faculty member said that I made false allegations about him (I had only outlined what a student had reported).

Neither the manager nor HR made consistent or realistic suggestions:

The [manager] at first admitted that the faculty member could be problematic but later defended him. HR suggested that I enter a mediation process with the faculty member - this was a person I had never met and had only contacted to alert them to an issue raised by a student.

The staff member indicates that their experience was one of becoming unjustly embroiled in a process that had no useful outcome, leading them to state that in similar circumstances they would not report the behaviour again:

Throughout the process I was made to feel that I was equally at fault when I had engaged in none of this other than to carry out my job by making initial contact to raise the issue. In the

end nothing happened and the matter was dropped by HR. I probably would not report similar behaviour if it was to happen again because of this experience.

Silencing of the less powerful: Secondary victimisation of staff members

Some staff members described not having an option in dealing with their experience of harassment by a senior staff member. This survey respondent (2000) felt unsupported and unable to take action, so they moved jobs to a different department:

I think it is great that this conversation is starting to happen. I was sexually harassed by a senior staff member and felt there was no one I could go to with my issue. So I just ended up moving department even though I liked my job to avoid him.

For this staff member (2256), making a report about a senior colleague led to a referral for medical assessment themselves, while the report itself did not progress: "I reported inappropriate behaviour … to a … senior management person in my unit. Because I have a mental health problem, I was referred to occupational health and safety for assessment. The report I made was never followed up".

In these examples of comments made by survey respondents about their HEI environment, the complaints system is described as disempowering and unwelcoming of complaints made about senior or powerful members of staff. In the first example, the staff member (1718) describes female academics as dependent on men for promotion, with a clear incentive not to "speak up" ("Shut up and put up is the norm"):

Harassment in HEIs is rampant. Female academics would ruin their career path and promotion chance (lower than men's in the first instance) if they complained. Men still rule the promotion schemes. In STEM, it is particularly difficult to speak up about harassment as the ramifications of making a complaint are detrimental to one's career. Shut up and put up is the norm.

For the next staff member (3424), policies amount to "boxticking" when victims of revenue-generating male staff seem to have no choice except to "move on", representing "implicit approval" on the part of the institution:

It is one thing to have policies (boxticking) but there are cases where there are KNOWN serial harassers that are protected to the point where they don't even have to address complaints against them because they generate revenue for the HEI. In such cases, I am aware of several subordinates having to move on as a result. However nothing more is done even though HR are aware this is happening serially. That amounts to implicit approval.

In this final example, a staff member (3333) refers to a longstanding abuse of power that had come to light after some time, calling for action to prevent this culture of silence from persisting: "I am now aware of a female colleague who suffered years of intimidation from a senior male professor. This was not apparent to colleagues. We have to build the environment to prevent this happening again".

Informal disclosures: A valuable but unsupported resource

Comments from staff members described a preparedness to provide informal support for students or staff members who chose to disclose sexual violence or harassment to them. A willingness to receive disclosures was apparent, alongside a desire for HE institutions to provide better resourced specialised resources and validated training for informal supporters.

These staff members wanted to offer support. However, they were concerned that they had not been trained to do so ("I have an additional pastoral care role that can mean that students disclose incidences of rape/sexual assault/harassment to me, yet we have no formal training or procedure for acting on those complaints", 0113). They were unsure that what they were doing was in the person's best interests – and at the same time these efforts at offering support were not acknowledged in workload assessment exercises. Nor did they want support offered informally to be relied on in the face of restricted institutional resourcing for specialised, professional interpersonal support.

Here this staff member (0783) identifies an informal network of support: "Older female staff members are very often the first port of call for staff and students who have experienced sexual harassment, assault, and gender based bullying", before going on to say that this role should be supported: "There is a real need for training for us to deal with these situations".

She has a clear sense that this support, although well intentioned, should not be relied on by the institution, writing that "we should not be cast in the role of amateur counsellors". Staff should be in a signposting role referring people on to specialised professionals: "There is an urgent need for a system of confidential, external, professional support which is victim centred to which we can refer those reporting such incidents in the confidence that they will be treated with respect and compassion".

This staff member (3256) concurred, describing how teaching staff can find themselves involved in offering support due to limited resourcing in student support services: "I have found the available student support services to be overwhelmed and unable to meet demand. As a result, they appear at times to put responsibility for liaising with students disclosing traumatic experiences of sexual and intimate partner violence onto teaching staff who are untrained to perform this task".

The staff member says that this situation is unacceptable, because of a resulting exposure to risk: "[This presents] a real risk of doing further (unintentional) harm through an ill-informed intervention". Moreover, the staff member indicates that the associated responsibility and workload is not distributed equitably:

> I am also concerned that the distribution of this responsibility among teaching staff is highly gendered and age-variable. In my experience, and supported by discussions with colleagues, younger, female staff are far more likely to be approached by students (both female and male) for general welfare issues, and concerns over sexual violence or harassment, in particular.

The staff member continued in commenting that the contribution is made informally, and lacks visibility in the formal organisation of work: "This pastoral care role is not factored into workload allocation or consideration of staff contributions to the school, faculty or wider service functions".

This staff member (0529) describes the impact of a sexual assault on a female student, who left college as a result. They felt powerless to help, while the student is said to have felt unable to approach her department: "The worst case in the past 4 years was of a female student who was sexually assaulted by a group of male students. She left college. I felt powerless as her [academic advisor], she didn't feel able to approach me or anyone else on the staff. [Her] friends told me about it in confidence when I asked why she wasn't attending".

This situation is presented as an example of what can happen when staff members, peers, and individuals impacted by SVH are not in a position to address what has happened ("I tried to contact

her but she didn't respond. I wasn't told who assaulted her. I would like to think such events are rare but I can't imagine they are").

The staff member identified stigma as hampering help seeking, while calling for greater openness supported by improved training:

> There is a huge stigma associated with sexual assault and it is one of the reasons why victims do not tell their stories. I would welcome training to allow me better support victims like this student. In Irish HE we need to be more open about sexual violence and harassment.

Institutional Investigation Processes

Lack of awareness of policies and services

Where policies and procedures on reporting or investigating sexual violence and harassment were referred to, it was typically in the context of not being informed or familiar with them. This is demonstrated in the following illustrative comments:

- I don't feel like I would know what to do if I needed to ask for help or report someone to the university (3514).
- It's a nice place to work, but I would have no idea what to do if there was a problem between staff, students or staff-students or what might happen to the various people involved (0404).

This staff member (1299) tied that lack of familiarity to the responsibility of the institution to drive awareness raising on policy and procedures:

> I don't think that I am as familiar with our sexual misconduct policies as I should be. They are available on our staff intranet to read, but I haven't read them in a long time. While I think there is some responsibility to the staff member to read and be familiar with these policies, perhaps it would be good for our HEI management to periodically send reminders to read the policy and/or send around the procedures for reporting sexual misconduct in the body of an email to remind us.

No response to complaints made

A number of staff members described having received no response to a report of sexual violence or harassment made to institutional offices, such as HR. This was often followed by a comment indicating that the lack of response had a negative impact on the staff member, including causing them dismay, reducing their confidence in the institutional process or their likelihood of making a report in the future, as described here:

- When I reported to HR … an incident of sexist material being disseminated to a WhatsApp group … I never got a response. Since then I have no confidence in the reporting structure and if an incident will be taken seriously (2390).
- I have attempted to report instances of on campus harassment to HR, healthy campus initiatives, Athena Swan etc. The University offered no response to the problem (1167).
- I have reported Sexual and gender harassment and behaviour ... I have reported it to the [relevant staff member]. I believe my report went uninvestigated and I feel very let down by management of my [institution] (1422).

This survey respondent (3118) wrote about the experience a female colleague had of the HR process of investigation in their institution. There is a sense of her abandonment in the face of a traumatising incident: "A staff member made a very serious complaint about … sexual harassment. Initially … HR refused to meet her. She was left to suffer … waiting for help that would never come. … HR never

investigated her complaints … It was an appalling, dishonest and disgusting act". The staff member offered support to her colleague in the face of the HR response ("I witnessed this. I saw it"). She was left with the conclusion that the HR office took the side of a perpetrator and was willing to defend an unreasonable position: "HR actively defended the right of the male staff member to make comments of a sexual nature, even going so far as to describe comments about women's genitalia as 'not sexual'".

In this instance from a staff member (1127), there was no response back from HR following a formal complaint, while the response of the local unit management was to "make excuses" for the staff member who circulated explicit imagery:

> More recently a highly sexual photo of [multiple] women was sent around to the entire [unit] and there was no repercussions for that staff member. HR never even bothered to email us back when we forwarded on the photo and formal complaint.

The next staff member (3305) had a very negative experience ("awful", "ignored") at two levels of the institution – the local unit and the HR department when seeking redress for harassment that they experienced: "I have had the awful personal experience of [a more senior female colleague] … ignoring my concerns about sexual harassment … When I reported this to HR Manager [and others] … my emails were ignored".

The staff member makes the point that an active response is the minimum level that is needed to cause change to occur. They referred to the ongoing consequence of having been ignored: "With respect, it is not possible to deal with these issues when the College leaders ignore abuse. I feel very uncomfortable working with my [senior colleague]. Please do something about this awful behaviour".

An extended example was provided by another staff member (3192), who described making a report to multiple senior post holders and offices in their university. The language they use conveys frustration at having no acknowledgement ("refused", "dismissed", "no record"). Their complaint seemed to lack any visibility in the system:

> I was verbally sexually harassed by my manager. I reported it informally and formally to managers, HR, senior management. I followed all policy, was refused all support from [the equality office] and HR. I was dismissed and no record of my complaint or any investigation into my complaint was undertaken despite my formal written complaints to management and HR.

The staff member wrote about the devastating impact that this experience had, a secondary trauma on top of the original harassment that took place. We see the frustrated language used ("denies my right") and the imagery of a senior staff member who apparently chooses not to act:

> I was professionally and personally destroyed by my employer because I had the temerity to report verbal sexual harassment. I have irrefutable evidence to prove my legitimate complaint and yet my employer denies my right to fair and transparent procedures as outlined in their policy which sits comfortably on the bookstand of director of HR.

Onerous nature of making a complaint

Several staff members described the complaints system as being complex and not user friendly. While not actively discouraging of complainants, from a design perspective, the complaints process seemed off putting to the staff members who were thinking about making a complaint.

Here a staff member (0719) makes an observation consistent with this analysis. He came from a background that other staff members identified as privileged ("I haven't seen / experienced

harassment, but perhaps I'm not in the right demographic to do so as a straight, heteronormative, cisgender person with a senior job"). From this perspective there would be several pragmatic reasons mitigating against complaints – from lack of orientation to the system, to the onerous complaints process, and the degree of personal disclosure that might be involved:

> I think with a large HEI bureaucracy, it's often hard for victims to know where to go with issues, and there can be a lot of paperwork involved that would put off reporting. Also, gender expression and sexuality can be very personal, and staff may not want to discuss this with their employer.

An additional opinion on the process was offered by another staff member (2462) with an insider perspective on the system ("because of a certain role I occupy in my institution, I have had contact with the policy formation around this area"). Their analysis was that complainants had no option other than to engage with an onerous and personally costly process: "People have no middle ground other than triggering a policy that is onerous, long and re-victimizes them". While it might be possible to put in place some options other than this, they were not currently available in the staff member's institution ("other institutional supports include the staff [advice and advocacy] framework which is inadequate and the EDI unit cannot advise or provide support to individuals"). The only support that the staff member considered well developed was access to counselling ("there is free counselling for staff - and that is welcome and perhaps a help to people in this situation").

The next staff member's (1470) comment returns to an analysis offered earlier by survey respondents, that the HEI's current structure has the effect that it does not welcome complaints ("feeling unsafe in HEI's is commonplace, as they are structured with so many layers of management above you. Each with its own culture and style. The norm is to stay quiet, as the fear of been treated as an outsider").

They suggest that most policies give the appearance of offering a meaningful channel for staff, but serve a different purpose in reality ("box ticking", "damage control"): "Most policies can be box ticking exercises (with first step as damage control for the HEI … With so many policies not understood policies have become protection for the provider and not necessarily the community)".

When the system is engaged, the comment went on to state that there is a significant question mark over whether the staff responsible for putting the procedure into practice actually possess the skill to do so: "When complaints occur, such as a student disciplinary, are the personnel trained enough to do the work fairly and without bias and with an understanding of the actual policy".

For this participant (3333), complaints could proceed on an informal basis, but grind to a halt when the process came to the point of supporting a formal complaint to be made:

> I have witnessed some complaints of male on female staff sexual inappropriate behaviour where the University tried to support the female victim but where the step to formalisation of a complaint saw the process terminate. The need to name a perpetrator often required by HR to move beyond 'hearsay' seems to be a stumbling block.

The complaints system: Stacked against complainants

With some exceptions, active engagement on the part of staff members with the system for making a complaint of sexual violence or harassment was portrayed in negative terms. The institution was described as having an interest in protecting persons in powerful positions. Complaints were typically described as being made against an individual who had more power, due to their post or standing in the institution. The person making a complaint was seen to come out worse off than before.

There was no sense that a conclusion to the process would result in a tangible sanction being applied. The institution may have a policy or procedure in place, and promote an ethos of reporting and culture change, but the staff members who wrote in their comments said they saw little evidence of this in practice. For example:

> College is great at talking about support and lack of tolerance to harassment of any kind but when the push comes to enforce it, it is always the victim/accuser that comes out worse. This harassment is always from a position of power (0198).

Referring to those cases where a staff member reports a colleague, rather than a student, this staff member (1102) asserts that a culture of protection of powerful members of the HE is in place: "Institutions protect those in power. Where an individual seeks to report a colleague in authority for inappropriate behaviour, the institution will always protect the person in authority - usually a white cis straight man".

The staff member went on to say that they had received advice from a HR staff member that, not alone would the institution protect a respondent in a powerful position, but the action could come back to impact the complainant at a later date when seeking progression:

> I have been advised by a HR partner not to report senior colleagues as the institution will always protect the person in power. If you do report, the person in power will sometimes be the person who decides if you progress in your job. You choose between protecting yourself or protecting your career.

That sentiment is further elaborated here by another staff member (1744). They refer to a high level of proof being required from the complainant, which combines with institutional concerns about reputational damage and managing the reaction of the perpetrator: "I think there is very high burden of proof on the complainant, the institution wants to protect its reputation and also avoid backlash from the alleged perpetrator". This sets the context for the staff member's comments about how complainants approach the complaints process. The concerns of the complainant for negative consequences typically dissuade them from proceeding: "In most cases I've come across the complainant is frightened about how the perpetrator could influence their career in as they often are more senior, I have never been able to persuade a victim that this barrier to reporting can be overcome".

The staff member indicates the care they need to take when offering support or guidance to a staff member, for fear of exposure to a complaint being taken against them by the perpetrator: "I am also very aware (and have been warned by administration) that I cannot encourage a victim to report as then a case could be taken against me by the perpetrator".

Finally, the staff member describes the roll out of the complaints process as a risk averse system that, ultimately, has had no practical effect that they have seen: "The whole process takes a very long time as everyone is so careful to protect themselves (and protect the perpetrator against accusations) that it seems impossible. I have never seen a disclosure result in a sanction (though I imagine this has happened, I just don't know about it)".

Continuing the theme of some staff members lacking power and the level of evidence considered necessary in a complaint, this staff (1181) wrote about their own experience of making a complaint. As with the earlier comments, they frame the journey through the complaints process as different for staff members lacking in power, who have a vested interest in being well regarded in the institution: "Early career academics/researchers are vulnerable because they can feel trapped if such offence is by a more senior member of staff that could have an impact on their career".

She was informed that the varied forms of information that she had to support her complaint were not enough: "In my circumstance, I was told that I didn't have enough material evidence despite emails, texts, calls, witnesses etc … anything explicit was said/done in person". This staff member had a negative experience from reporting and this colours her perspective on engaging the complaints system on a second occasion: "It's disappointing and would not encourage me to report events in the future".

This staff member (1139) has provided support to students and researchers who were victimised through sexual violence and harassment. Drawing on this experience, they comment on the institutional environment and climate concerning complaints: "Over my time I have supported two students who were raped … and have supported researchers who had issues with supervisor advances … You would never believe in this day and age that it would happen in Irish universities but it does".

Based on what they had seen, the staff member also concluded that the HR department has institutional self-interest as its primary interest, not the wellbeing of staff members or redress following abuse. Against this animating motivation, the explicit policy is usurped by informal considerations and the possible future ramifications associated with being involved in making a complaint: "HR are characterised by wilful blindness, their imprimatur is to protect the university at all costs. Policy, while a lovely artefact, is mostly useless, as colleagues are talked out of making a complaint and this is well known on the ground, so people avoid HR and policy".

The HR department will support an investigation of the complaint if it is made, but the process is described as being almost impossible to navigate to a successful conclusion from the perspective of the complainant: "If one does pursue a complaint, HR are ineffective in addressing it as they fear being sued by the person they challenge, so they do nothing except stick to the policy. One needs a watertight complaint or there is no help".

Although some of the other staff members who wrote about training with a sense of hope for change, this member of staff said it was necessary to address the underlying issues that give rise to institutional self-protection: "Another policy with yet more training will not change the culture. Tackle the systemic and cultural issues and then deal with policy".

While the current complaints system appeared to make overly exacting demands on the complainant, the staff member asked for a more human, person-centred approach: "Please just listen to and believe people, that is what those of us who care and try to help do, and it means the world to people". They conclude that, as it stands, the current culture has taken its toll on those who have had to work within its values and norms: "Writing this comment and reflecting on my own journey as a successful academic I am filled with sadness for what I and my peers have had to put up with".

This staff member (0832) describes being exposed to the inappropriate behaviour of a co-worker ("… who I had to share an office with who regularly viewed images of a sexual nature during office hours … I never said anything to him as it completely freaked me out"). The staff member received support from their line manager and made a complaint to HR. The response they received was not couched in terms of discouragement as referred to above. However, the HR response was that the complaint was unlikely to be successful: "The information that came back was that it was unlikely to be a successful case if they took it".

The staff member's reflection on this was that the response from the university was inadequate, raising a question about the degree of support they received ("in my heart / gut I still can't believe

there was nothing the university could do or were prepared to do"). They will not acquiesce to a similar response from the system in the future, if it were to happen again then it would be time to make a stand on their right to a harassment-free workplace: "I vowed to myself that if it ever happened again I would not hold back and would insist on something being done. … it is time for a major shift in attitude, culture and procedures".

For these participants, it was important to have a formal level of support and process in place for investigating and responding to a complaint. In the first instance, the staff member (1855) described being told by their HEI to deal with the problem themselves: "I was advised to deal with it myself and indicate to the relevant person that I was definitely not interested in their advances. The HEI did not advise me regarding assistance with dealing with this, etc.". In a second example, a staff member (1376) expresses concern that some procedures to address a complaint can involve the complainant being advised to re-engage with the respondent: "A lot of the policies in my institution … seem focussed on 'conflict resolution' or 'mediation' - this is not appropriate or helpful as it can retraumatize victims by forcing them to engage with their attackers".

Damaging impact of ineffective reporting processes

Staff members wrote about the negative impact that arises when the policies and procedures associated with investigating sexual violence and harassment are poorly administered or underdeveloped in the first place. The issue of being silenced, which was described earlier, arises again here, along with the sense of powerful staff members being protected as a deliberate or implicit action on the part of the institution.

The additional trauma arising from a poorly designed or implemented complaints system is described by this staff member (1075), who refers to experiences of women in her network of contacts in the institution. They see additional training as offering some hope of change, but there is a long way to go to progress from the exclusion she describes some women as having experienced, which led them to move on from the HE sector:

> We need widespread training in what to do when someone reports, so they are not retraumatised by the reporting. I have seen HEIs handle reporting very badly, which creates a wide circle of damage, pushing women out of the sector - and not just the women who reported. Women see how others are treated and learn not to speak up but to quietly move jobs. … We have lost untold numbers of women in our sector. Brilliant minds and important voices were withheld from us because of persistent sexism.

In her comments, she relays what other women have told her, that they have regretted making a report because of the consequences that followed, while perpetrators are not held to account. She contrasts the discouragement of reporting against the protection of perpetrators. Besides increased training, she advises HEIs to involve the Gardaí in the process of investigation, which may introduce greater objectivity:

> I've had women tell me they regretted reporting, reporting made the situation much worse for them. Perpetrators are protected by the system, … they are not held to account. HEIs should be encouraged to include the Gardai in cases of sexual harassment and violence, instead of discouraging formal reporting, which is what they actively do right now.

This academic staff member (2474) draws on her personal experience of supporting students who have been victims of sexual violence to comment on the state of the reporting and investigation system in her institution:

> As an academic member of staff, and because of [context] I have been contacted [multiple] times in the past year, regarding female students who have been raped or sexually assaulted, in each case by other students. On two of these occasions it was the person

assaulted who contacted me. I completely trust them. Two of these began formal procedures.

She has been in the position of seeking advice and support for the students. She recognises the importance of this role as a vital support to students who are in a very vulnerable position, yet she was not given the help and advice that she needed to meet the needs of the students: "I sought help and advice from my college - I found it very difficult to find. And the advice that was given didn't really help me to provide the kind of support that I think any person who has been damaged in this way needs".

Next, we see the personal impact of her disappointment about not being able to fulfil her role to the students. She felt "completely helpless" while understanding that the inability of the institution to manage the issue of reasonable accommodations was far more significant for the student involved ("life-changing"):

> One of these students may have to re-enter classes with the person who assaulted her. I honestly felt completely helpless myself, each has been a really upsetting thing for me, but probably a life-changing one for those students.

As with the staff member quoted previously, this person puts their hope in the capacity of the system to improve through training: "I would hope that Consent training will soon be mandatory for all students, and also for staff. Also that Bystander training be pushed out by all senior management in our organisation".

Her reading of the institutional process that she found ineffective is that there is excessive caution and a reluctance to act, a risk aversion in the face of complaints that should be outweighed by the need to avoid members of the HEI being "damaged, destroyed":

> Means of reporting have to be created that WORK, and staff and students made aware of same as priority. I am told that there are good models [internationally] … And implement at least provisional processes immediately - there seems to be a reluctance to put something in place unless it is 'perfect'; while we wait for 'perfection' people are being damaged, destroyed.

Support for survivors

The importance of the institution providing support for survivors of sexual violence and harassment was remarked on by some of the staff members ("it is critical to make sure that all victims feel comfortable and supported in their HEI (regardless of where or when their harassment/assault/rape takes place) and that they know that a student/staff network exists to protect their interests", 3506).

The comments made on the need to provide this support typically remarked that this aspiration was not upheld. For instance, a gay male participant (0350) said that he felt his support needs were not met: "I am very supportive of the EDI agenda but feel, as a gay man, that the supports available to other colleagues who may regrettable have experience sexual harassments etc. are not made available or I am not encouraged to avail of same or supported thus".

This participant (3142) felt that, compared with students, staff members had relatively little support available to them:

> I would note that at my institution, there are strong and visible supports for students who suffer from sexual harassment/assault, but there is nothing nearly as strong or visible for staff. Indeed, it may only be because my role has a dual responsibility for staff and students that I am aware of these procedures at all.

Here we see that an experienced staff member (1386) found little support either for themselves or for a student who they supported over a prolonged period. Their conclusion was that the "clumsy complaints process … hardly fit for purpose" extended to minimal support being offered to the student:

> At my HEI, I personally had to report on a colleague who had both solicited a sexual relationship with and then physically abused one of their students. This student came to me personally and I had to intervene with the relevant college authorities on the student's behalf, who did not feel enabled to take action and did not know how to do so. The HEI did not handle the situation well at all, to say the least; the only way that it could be handled was through the HEI's clumsy complaints process, which is hardly fit for purpose.

The overall tone is one of challenge and barriers. The complaints process was opaque ("the process by which one would report this was anything but clear to me (no training was ever available, and this remains the case)"). Further to this, the HEI staff involved in the investigation had little preparation ("the persons with whom I dealt seemed inexperienced in such matters"). In the end, the staff respondent to the complaint moved institutions. After two years had elapsed, there was no clear resolution or findings to the complaints process.

The staff member remarked on the lack of clarity throughout the process, which had a significant impact on the student ("there was very little information forthcoming from the HEI about the developments, requirements, and implications of the process, so vital for the mental well-being of the affected student"). There was little sense of support being offered to the student, because to support them might mean that the institution was siding with them ("during that time, for apparent fear of litigational concerns, and at the cost of their duties of care, the HEI offered almost no support to the student, let alone to me as person intervening on the student's behalf"). The staff member saw their situation and that of the student as one of isolation rather than support: "It was as if the student and I were in a desert, while in the meantime the staff member involved continued to be employed at the HEI".

Investigation of SVH should be left to the Gardaí

A particular critique made of institutional complaints processes was that they do not have legal standing, and that accusations of sexual violence and harassment should be made directly to the Gardaí. This participant (0782) suggests that the appropriate role of the HE is to enable complaints to reach the police ("I feel strongly that the only role of my HEI in these matters should be to have appropriately trained personnel to facilitate reporting to and liaising with the police"). The underlying assumption of the staff member is that the HEI is engaged in "box ticking" supported by "do gooders": "The perpetrators and victims need to be dealt with by appropriately trained professionals, not by (however well-intentioned) amateur/partly trained do-gooders just so that the HEI can tick some government boxes".

Described in terms of "do-it-yourself policing", the idea of "internal committees" making decisions on behaviour that had legal connotations was unacceptable to these participants:

- Firstly I am always nervous around institutional procedures and policies that impinge on legal, especially criminal behaviour; all procedures should begin with absolute clarity that reports of alleged criminal behaviour are dealt with as such, and that the Gardai are responsible for investigating crimes, not any internal committee (1512).
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment are crimes. The police investigate criminal behaviour; this is not an appropriate activity for HEIs. Look at the SV/SH picture at campuses in Western countries and ask yourselves if all this do-it-yourself policing is achieving anything that is useful (0365).

Successful resolution using institutional policy

In this comment from a staff member (0421), the policy and procedures were accessible and effective. They had been victimised by a student. Despite not having knowledge of the policy, they made a report ("in relation to my situation from unwelcomed advances from a student, although I didn't know the policy I knew to report it when in my opinion it got out of hand (after ignoring it wasn't working)"). While charges were not made, the staff member felt supported within their institution: "My mangers and supporting staff acting promptly and I felt supported within my [College]. Likewise the Gardaí were very assisting also, no charges or anything was made and thankfully the situation resolved itself".

Another staff member (2369) wrote about the strong HR grievance procedures that they had found to be in place. The harassment investigation was responsive and founded on a strong level of coherent organisation. The reporting process was impressive:

> The safest most open place I have worked in is [College]; in my experience grievances including those of harassment where reported have been acted upon in a timely, fair and indeed robust manner.

The staff member felt that the process was comprehensive, and that information on the process was disseminated regularly:

> There are very comprehensive processes and procedures in place which are brought to people's attention throughout the academic year and are accessible on staff and student portals.

For this participant, the HR department had strong instruments to draw on, including employment contracts. The complainant could access external grievance procedures if university processes did not address the issue:

> The college has a significant HR function along with legally binding protocols which the Industrial Relations institutions of the state oversee. All contracts of employment include clauses with respect to conduct including gross negligence and misconduct; these can and are used to deal with all nature of grievances including those with respect to harassment.

Beliefs about false reporting

A limited number of comments about false reporting were made by staff members who were concerned about this issue (e.g., "I am concerned that insufficient attention is paid to the victims of those who make false claims", 3228). This participant (2292) felt that insufficient attention had been applied to false reports in the survey ("there is a whole area which is not dealt much with here, which is to do with false accusations"). They were concerned by the impact that this had on their colleague after another lecturer made comments about them on social media after they had left their position. The issue was that there was no mechanism to address the accusations that were made:

> In this case spurious accusations were made against a lecturer … [the complainant] lecturer only made accusations after they left … vague and non-specific but damaging … It was very difficult to find out what actions to take, or how the university could deal with this unwanted attention. Any additional supports should also take these sort of cases into account (even if they might be rare).

The possibility of an allegation being made was seen by these two participants as creating an atmosphere that impacted on staff members, particularly men ("suffering", "reputational damage", "working under a shadow"):

- It is very tough for young men in a university environment. they are all perceived as being a potential perpetrator. Very difficult as an allegation can easily be made and taken seriously without any grounds whatsoever. Something has to be done to support young men. It is very difficult for their mental health. They are suffering (0532).
- These in-house policies do nothing to protect those against whom malicious accusations are made as the accused are generally assumed to be guilty until proven innocent and, in the absence of a legal admission of innocence may suffer reputational damage and end up working under a shadow even thereafter because of the perception that there can be no smoke without fire (0782).

Responses at Department or Unit Level

Academic departments and support units are an integral level of organisation in the university. These comprise the daily work environment for the majority of staff members. As such, they are a critical part of the social ecology in Higher Education. Having considered comments from survey respondents on senior managers and institutional policy, it is important to review how staff members described SVH reporting and investigation processes at unit level. With the exception of a relatively small number of comments that described effective and accessible processes, the staff members who commented on the local level of organisation described gaps and problematic issues.

This is illustrated by responses that described local managers seeing reporting as "a hassle", being "ignored and victim blamed", being "essentially advised to sweep this under the carpet":
- Reporting of a minor incident is treated as a hassle by management. They don't know the procedures themselves (2879).
- I was ignored and victim blamed when I attempted to report sexual harassment to my line manager (2190).
- I reported two cases of harassment (one of a sexual nature) to my line manager and I was essentially advised to sweep this under the carpet and not inform Human Resources (1758).

In this longer example, the participant (1376) first sets the scene by describing a culture of harassment in their unit, which managers of the unit witness and yet do nothing in response:
> Frequently my colleagues will make sexist, racist, and other offensive jokes in my presence and in the presence of management. In particular, I have been especially offended by how frequently transphobic jokes are made in my workplace.

This is pointed out as laying down a marker within the unit that this behaviour is not unacceptable harassment but can be excused as "banter": "This is in the presence of the director of unit and line managers without any repercussion which implies that this is acceptable workplace 'banter'".

The staff member complained to their manager and unit head yet this had no effect: "I have complained about this to my line manager and to my head of unit but nothing has been done about it".

The manager is portrayed as keeping a lid on complaints by providing a "sympathetic ear". As noted above by other participants, there was a significant divide between what the institution "espouses" and the "reality at a local level":
> There is a general hesitancy to take any complaints about harassment, bullying and other abusive behaviour any further than providing a sympathetic ear in my experience. My impression is that while my institution espouses all the right values, this does not translate into concrete and consistent actions and there is a big gap between the high-level values and the reality at a local level.

Risks to students in the absence of clear procedures at local level

Several staff members referred to the impact on students that arises from having a gap between policy at institutional level and practical procedures in academic departments. This staff member (0679) refers to a "major issue" arising from not having procedures in place to manage problems that arise in external placements:

> My concern is the gap between policy and procedure/implementation. You can have all the policies you want but if you don't have explicit guidance on how to implement them they don't work effectively. One major issue I have faced is how the Universities policies can be implemented in external placement environments. We have limited capacity to protect our students on placements.

Another staff member (1285) refers to not having explicit procedures to draw on when responding to supporting victims on campus during the period of an investigation:

> Additionally the student was upset as the alleged perpetrator was also a student on campus. She did not feel safe initially and experienced flashbacks etc. I believe the processes around student support needs to be made explicit while criminal investigations are on going.

Minimisation of staff experiences at department level

Concerning levels of informality and ad hoc arrangements were apparent in comments from staff about how unacceptable student behaviour is managed in academic units. The line managers are seen in these examples as favouring the students to the detriment of staff wellbeing and safety.

Here the staff member (1858) describes how the experience they had of being stalked by a student was construed by the department head. They were told to make an allowance for the student, despite being fearful for their own safety:

> When I reported unwanted advances and stalking by a student to my Head of Department, I was advised that I should be mindful of the fact that the student was [from a different culture] I found this comment infuriating - nobody regardless of their [culture] etc should be allowed to make another person feel afraid.

The situation was not managed proactively by the department. Despite several worrying reports being made to the Head, the staff member comments that there was no response made at local level:

> [A family member] wanted me to refuse to go to work until the problem was resolved, but my duty towards my students stopped me from doing so, I also did not want to be intimidated out of a job I love, but I was in fear during that time. [Others] reported inappropriate sexual advances from this student also, and documented it to the HOD, but no action was taken. I find that appalling.

In another example of harassment of a staff member by a student, the survey respondent (2491) conveys the concerning nature of their experience ("dangerous", "volatile"), yet says the risk posed was minimised by their senior male colleague, who called her a "drama queen":

> I was subjected to unwanted attention by a male student … I was put in a very awkward and subsequently dangerous situation with this volatile student. … I was not supported and told by my line manager and management … that I was at fault, one male senior staff called me a 'drama queen'.

The staff member identifies a number of problems with how this situation was processed by the institution – there were no consequence for the student, the staff member did not feel safe, and no changes were implemented:

> The incident was not dealt with properly, the student was not reprimanded, I did not feel safe at work for a long period of time. The person in question … continued to make contact with me, … I asked for safety measures to be brought in for years following this.

Staff disempowerment: Limited knowledge of options

The disempowerment of staff with regard to the HEI complaints system is explained in the preceding examples cited of managers withholding supports at local level. A tendency not to access or employ the institutional policies and procedures was also explained through a lack of knowledge of these system among staff members. This can be seen as compounding the manner in which managers were said to stifle reports. Improved knowledge and capacity to navigate institutional policies and procedures were seen as an obvious step forward to take.

While the examples presented above depict local and institutional environments that were not receptive to complaints, staff members made references to the value to be gained from improved knowledge and training. This respondent (1263) highlights the importance of everyone knowing about the reporting process:

> All staff should be made aware of a clear reporting structure, including an alternative person to report too if a line manager's objectivity in relation to the matter has been compromised.

Here a staff member (2568) makes several relevant points about education. They indicated that they did not identify as having had personal exposure to SVH ("luckily I have had no experience of sexual harassment or violence in the work place"). This is interesting to reflect on, because the staff member does not identify that the sexism that they have experienced could potentially comprise harassment ("sexism for sure but not to the level of harassment"). The staff member suggested that greater knowledge about policies is inevitably helpful ("any move to make policies more accessible and known has to be a good thing"). This could better enable staff to engage with HR, whereas, at present, reaching out to HR would be daunting ("for us it's HR we have to go to about any problems we have and it's just not an approachable or easily understood area in our HEI").

Lacking knowledge has had a practical impact for this staff member, so addressing that gap could have a positive effect. For instance, not knowing about policies and procedures has been a deterrent to reporting ("we would let a lot go"). Yet the staff member also acknowledges that the institution lacks a culture of proactive engagement ("[we] would not be encouraged"), which is a further level of development that is needed:

> We would let a lot go simply because we wouldn't know how, and would not be encouraged, to contact the right person.

This staff member (0673) wrote that they were aware of the institutional policy framework only because of their role as a unit head, implying that, from their perspective at least, this level of preparedness is exceptional. They also note that, when performing their leadership role locally, they had no access to training or support that would enable them to fulfil their responsibilities in this area:

> I should say that the only reason that I have knowledge of procedures and policies on sexual violence/harassment is because I was a head of department - in that role zero training was given on how to handle these situations, and when they arose, there was no support available to me.

The next example stands out as running counter to the accounts given by staff of what happened when they engaged with local managers. The staff member (1285) had been supporting a student who had been victimised. They described a well-integrated process, which seems to have worked well and has been informed by the expertise of external agencies:

> I reported the incident to my Head of Dept, wrote a written statement, spoke to a key individual tasked with dealing with such reports. I think I felt well equipped to support our student and we have met many times and she has engaged with excellent supports from RCC and Gardai.

Continuing in a positive vein, although this staff member (2794) was not currently aware of policies at their HEI, they were confident that they could find them. There is also a belief expressed that their line manager and institutional offices would offer appropriate, effective support when called on:

> While I do not know the institutional policies relating to how to intervene and or report such issues, I do know that they exist and I would be confident in reporting a staff or student issue to my line manager on a case by case basis or anonymously seeking advice from services within the college should I not find the information in the appropriate policy documents.

This staff member (1696) is also confident that they could find policies if they were a victim of sexual violence or harassment: "As an employee I am sure that if I went looking I would find the relevant policies if I was subject to sexual harassment or violence (though I would have to go looking, they aren't already clear)".

However their sense of confidence is checked when they frame the issue in terms of accessing practical procedures that will support a student looking for reasonable accommodations to be made following a case of assault or harassment: "But as a lecturer there are no policies that I have been able to find (I've looked) on how to support a student when they have advised me that they have been attacked by another student and in particular, what to do when those students are in the same class".

Preferences and Suggestions for Action: Education and Programming

A wide range of suggestions was made to provide awareness raising and training to Higher Education communities. These ranged from mandatory training for all, including students and staff, to initiatives that target staff members. At a minimum, it was felt that awareness raising was needed to ensure that staff were aware of policies and procedures on sexual violence and harassment. The scope for training incorporated sexual consent awareness and bystander intervention skills. The references made suggested that it was important for training to take place as a critical step forward in achieving culture change throughout the institution ("ALLLLLLLLL staff need complete training" 2293). The descriptions and suggestions provided were well developed and indicate that this was an area in which staff members invested considerable hope as a practical strategy for achieving positive change.

This participant (2735) cited a reflection on their own personal experience as having been instructive in highlighting the need for greater awareness on the nature of harassment: "Training for all is needed. Some cases of harassment in my past, were not clear to me at the time. Now I see through that previously clouded glass, completely clearly".

Here a staff member (3028) advocates for consent training for both students and staff, making a direct link between this work and the cultivation of a "culture of care", in which attitudes are changed not just in their institutions but throughout the Higher Education sector:

> It is vital to create a culture of care within all institutions so that sexual violence and all of its permutations are erased. Consent training for students and staff is imperative and actions to promote a culture of care and consent are essential to changing attitudes towards sexual violence and gender inequality.

Comprehensive scope for engagement and training

Staff wrote about the ambitious and significant goals that they had for educational programming. In a number of cases, these proposed a comprehensive scope for engagement and training. For instance, these staff members described a multi-pronged approach that would cover a spectrum from prevention to training relevant to reporting / investigations, continuing into the realm of support for people who are affected by sexual violence and harassment:

- I would like to see more training for all staff on this issue, on how to deal with issues or incidents as they arise, on how to help any individual affected, and how to prevent it from arising in the first place (0957).
- Clear, accessible policies and practices. Opportunities for consent, bystander and disclosure training for both staff and students, including senior management. Periodic awareness raising/information campaigns and initiatives (1082).
- I am aware that my HEI are actively promoting this within the student population and a lot of the work so far has been focused on students rather than staff. Staff awareness and engagement needs to be prioritised as well, including with senior management (1786).

For this staff member, the vision for comprehensive programming that meets the needs of community members across the institution was important. Yet they expressed frustration with the visibility and level of backing for this programming:

> Feel there is a lack of conversation on this topic in our institute. The anti-bullying training is all about colleagues and peers, but what about bullying students? coercion of students? I do not feel that the training is sufficient, just a tick-box exercise and done as a once-off. Communication from the management is minimal. Should also be covered in the [academic] programmes I would think (1764).

Mandatory training for all staff

The term 'mandatory' came up repeatedly in connection with comments on training. Participants who used this term sought a standard whereby all individuals would be engaged in learning about consent, sexual violence and harassment. In this example, a staff member (2193) seeks mandatory training for both students and staff: "Mandatory training should be introduced for staff of all levels of HEIs. There should also be mandatory training, workshops and educating on same for students from the start of their third level journey".

For this staff member (0649), staff training would build on consent training for all incoming students:

> Consent training is provided to all first-year students but should also be mandatory for staff and included in training resources for every new staff member.

it was important that staff in HEIs attend training so that students could be confident that they could easily reach out to someone in a position of knowledge:

> If only a selected few staff is trained in consent and deliver consent talks, a student may not feel comfortable reporting breach of consent, sexual harassment, or unwanted sexual

attention to the staff member. … If all staff had to mandatory attend consent workshops, a student could approach their trusted staff member to report.

In turn, the training for staff would build up their confidence in reporting concerns about behaviour they experienced from students or from another staff member:

Staff should also be comfortable reporting unconsented sexual attention from a colleague or student and I believe the consent workshop would encourage the same.

Composition of training

In describing the content and approach of educational programming, staff members described a range of initiatives that should be rolled out by institutions. This included awareness raising, so that everyone is aware of policies and supports, onto workshops and more intensive training.

Awareness raising: Policies and supports

In raising awareness about the policies and related procedures of the institution, staff commented on the need to address a knowledge gap. As recounted in earlier sections, not feeling informed about policy could act as a barrier to engaging with reports and complaints. Some staff commented that gaps had become apparent to them in responding to the survey itself (e.g., "the survey has highlighted to me how little I know about this issue in my HEI - work to be done on making relevant policies / information / supports much more visible", 2596). Staff wrote about the urgency of achieving greater visibility, transparency, and accessibility across the institution, so that individuals could make informed decisions about what to do if they were affected personally or were to assist another person:

- I think there is a need to raise more awareness about the policies associated with sexual harassment and violence and what steps to take if you find yourself or a colleague in this situation (3486).
- I think educational sessions for staff and students are needed. Policies and procedures for reporting and addressing incidents of sexual violence and/or harassment need to be made more straightforward, transparent, and readily accessible (1293).
- An enhanced practical guide on what to do if a staff member experiences stalking by a student would be very useful (2108).
- Everyone should be aware of the institutional (HEI) policies and Irish laws that prohibit sexual misconduct and protect victims. Again, there should be no ambiguity here (3506).

This staff member (1024) calls for the institution to work "proactively rather than reactively", building up awareness as a form of capacity within the HEI: "It should more promoted - policy documents should be circulated proactively rather than reactively, especially as people complaining are going to be vulnerable". The staff member notes that a barrier may be perceived in reporting a more senior staff member – as was remarked on extensively in earlier sections – and that feeling competent in what supports are available would be one source of assistance to address this issue:

I hope all would get the necessary supports but I do feel it would be very hard to report as there is a general concern in my HEI in reporting staff more 'senior' than their own grade (although I know it may not always involve 'senior' members of staff). … Training on how to support anyone in this situation (should it arise) would be very beneficial for everyone.

Workshops and education on consent and bystander intervention

Staff members who commented on educational programming were able to cite specific examples of initiatives that they had seen occurring in their institution. These were a tangible example of progress that staff members could point to, and were generally regarded in positive terms.

This participant (1285) identified sexual consent workshops and the Athena SWAN developmental programme on gender equality by name, and identified them as creating a positive impact:

> Consent workshops have occurred at my HEI for students and should continue . They are very informative and raise awareness amongst staff and students which is very important considering the prevalence of sexual abuse and violence in Irish society. … Athena SWAN is also an important initiative at third level and has helped raised awareness of respect, equality, diversity etc.

This staff member (1830) saw consent training as something had become well established, and which needs to remain a priority. Their comments suggest that they felt a culture change had occurred:

> [I] feel staff are very aware and supportive of any issues and many supports are in place. There has been a lot of training on consent rolled out and it needs to remain a hot topic and priority for us all. I don't think anyone staff or students would tolerate any bad behaviour and know it's totally unacceptable.

In the next example, a staff member (3257) highlights progress made on engaging students through consent training. Coming from a societal background in which it was not clear that incoming college students had received sex education, it was seen as important to ensure that it was provided at third level. They felt that the content associated with consent programming to be useful in promoting the right to say "no", and in addressing sexual violence and harassment against both women and men. They describe having "voluntary workshops" in their institution that should be extended in order to reach all students:

> I'm unaware of what education students receive at second level around sexual consent, I know we have voluntary workshops around active consent in my university but I would like to ensure all students are educated on what consent is. Young people need to feel comfortable with saying no and everyone needs to understand that just because someone didn't say no, they're not necessarily saying yes. Educating on gender inequalities around sexual activity etc. would also help to empower women and educate men. This isn't to forget about the fact that sexual harassment and violence against men also occur.

Consent programming was particularly associated with outreach to students, with a gap existing in applying this topic to staff training: "I am aware of the Active Consent programme at my HEI, and have actively facilitated it being offered to students. I sense there is greater emphasis on consent among students than in relation to staff at my HEI" (0046).

For this staff member (2341), consent training should be extended to staff members too, and should be provided alongside training for managers on how to response to cases of sexual violence and harassment that may be reported to them:

> I feel it would be beneficial to offer consent awareness training to staff so we understand the issues at play for both ourselves and the students. Additionally, as a manager, I would appreciate training explicitly in how to handle a sexual harassment/violence claim if a member of my team came to me with it.

In the next example, the staff member (0014) refers to relevant workshops for staff members having been rolled out, which has complemented consent training for students in bringing the topic into the open:

> I believe that my institution is tackling sexual violence very well and has provided workshops for staff in these areas, this is everybody's business and not either staff or student issues. The Active* Consent training for students also helps to start this very important

conversation. By having staff trained in these issues removes the previous taboos about talking about this in a public forum.

For this staff member (3513), it would be important to extend on the roll out of consent workshops to engage staff on similar topics. This would provide staff members with a useful insight on how to respond to students, especially male students who may exhibit unacceptable behaviour:

> It was difficult to get across in the answers I gave but there is a very good information campaign about active consent in place for students because of the national roll out. This information or training is not provided to staff in the context of active sexual consent in their interactions with others though. Also, I've noticed a 'laddish' culture among some male students in the last 4 to 5 years in how they interact with peers that wasn't as obvious before that. It's important that staff feel they have been given training to address this treatment of peers when it occurs.

In addition to consent training, staff members referenced active bystander training as a form of programming that they wanted to see mainstreamed to both students and staff: "I have completed a Bystander Intervention programme in our college. I think it should be compulsory for all staff & students. Also I would welcome the availability of a Consent programme being rolled out for all students & staff" (2485).

This staff member (2108) wanted a mandatory approach to be adopted to training, which would be implemented at local level to ensure that it reaches all staff members. They considered the need to construct the programming appropriately to avoid the sense of having a superficial "tick box" level of engagement. In particular, they discussed the need for basing the training around a diverse range of groups and situations ("there is no catch all approach, it should be more inclusive"):

> I think workshops need to happen almost on an office basis and be mandatory, but calling them sexual harassment training etc. makes it sound like a tick box to people. I think they should be 'sexual awareness' training, and they should be more inclusive of differing situations, for example for the LGBT community, the black community etc. as all these play into it, it shouldn't just be about the standard, if a guy comes on to a girl inappropriately what should she do.

Similarly, this staff member (3506) highlighted the need for training to go beyond provision of information. Active engagement using examples was seen as important to achieving the learning outcomes: "I think mandatory workshops (that use situational examples) are key in disseminating facts, removing shame from the equation and also creating a cultural shift that does not tolerate sexual misconduct at any level".

Specialised training: For managers, 'first responders', and casual staff

Some of the staff members who commented on education and training focused on the need for specialised training to be provided to particular groups. These comments referred to the importance of having managers and leaders engage in forms of training that are relevant to their role and functions. The comments also reference outreach to members of the community who have been underserved to date.

This staff member with a background in management roles found that programming has been limited to work with students. This has left a gap in training on managers being informed and skills with respect to responding to reports of sexual violence and harassment:

> Sexual violence and harassment relating to staff has not discussed or examined by the university leadership. As a manager I have not been provided with guidelines on how to respond to issues that may arise. The only intervention has been on the consent workshops

for students. Staff including myself have not been provided with information or training on how to address reports of sexual violence or harassment among students (1870).

This staff member wrote about training for managers becoming mandatory and relatively substantial. The comment purposefully identifies that the scope for participation in this training should range across any staff member with management responsibilities:

Senior and middle managers at HEIs should be required to go on formal training courses in this area and also should go on training courses on adhering to confidentiality, when dealing with staff issues. This should include all HR staff. No person in a management position, even up to the Executive level (inclusive of Provosts/Presidents etc.) irrespective of rank should be excluded from this training (2941).

In the next example, there is a call for more specialised training to be offered to members of staff who support disclosures and initial responses to sexual violence and harassment. This may include management but also other members of staff; as noted above, a range of staff identified with an informal "first responder" role. This comment draws attention to access to tiered levels of training that includes more specialised preparation such as disclosure management: "Access to education/training for sexual assault incidents in the 'first responder' mode, ie the basics of how to respond to a disclosure of an incident and elevate the issue to the correct and trained personnel would be of great benefit for HEI staff" (1544).

In the following examples, we hear from staff members who are not in a permanent or full-time position. These could include part-time lecturers and tutors, graduate teaching assistants, and casual or temporary staff. These examples are instructive in highlighting the importance of reaching all members of the staff community when rolling out programming.

This graduate student who is involved in teaching draws attention to the frontline role of these students as a category of staff, yet "often we are forgotten about or not thought of as staff". This staff member (3364) expresses a similar view to other staff in expecting to be included in "information and training" initiatives:

I feel like some of the experiences myself and others I know have gone through in terms of harassment is due to the lax nature of graduate students and their roles in university. Often we are forgotten about or not thought of as staff. However we often have far more engagement with other staff and students alike. It would be helpful to provide more support to these roles in terms of information and training when it comes to reporting instances of harassment or seeking help (3364).

The next comment indicates that staff members on casual contracts are in a difficult position. They may receive less information or training, yet are exposed to the same issues as discussed earlier with regard to precarious and junior members of staff:

There are many who work in HEIs in a casual/informal capacity and are therefore more vulnerable to exploitation (keeping source of work 'happy') and also less likely to be aware of policies and protections and training as they are not full members of staff. This rarely seems to be addressed in surveys like this one, or on committees / working groups (356).

Integrate training with the wider support system

As identified above, a number of comments from staff member set out comprehensive goals for the education and training that would be made available to all members of the institution. Having described the more detailed proposals and reflections of staff members on awareness, education and more specialised training, we can outline how staff members wanted these initiatives to be integrated at a practical level in the life of the institution.

This staff member (1017) raises the important question of standardisation of responses and supports, so that all staff and students can expect a consistent and high quality response across any department in the HEI. This would address the lack of certainty that they currently note ("cannot locate a policy", "unsure of what is available"):

> I cannot locate a policy at my HEI on sexual harassment and this needs to be addressed. I welcome the introduction of training for staff. I am aware that a workshop on consent is now offered as part of induction for students, however, I am unsure of what is available to existing students. I have a sense that there is a need for greater standardisation of response and support for students or staff reporting sexual violence across the different departments in my HEI.

In the next example from a staff member (3469), the training for staff that was described above should be tied to workflow and institutional requirements, ensuring that they are integrated with organisational processes. Concurrently, there should be accessible routes for reporting and access to specialised, trained staff when they are needed:

> At a minimum, there should be mandatory sexual (and non sexual) harassment training for every new employee, and refreshers for long term staff members. Those who are in supervisory/managerial positions should not be allowed to employ staff or recruit students without proper training in these issues. There should be very clear, easy and supportive routes for reporting sexual harassment, and there should be specially trained HR personnel to deal with such issues.

The next comment on this issue from a staff member (0739) reiterates the call for mandatory staff training, but sets it in an applied functional context where each HEI unit has an identified contact person:

> I would like to see some mandatory training for staff being rolled out. I would like to see an identifiable person / dept. where someone can go if they have experienced any harassment issues in the workplace or even outside of the workplace if they have been the subject of any abuse they should feel supported while at work.

Here this staff member (2330) provides a useful map for how different education and training initiatives can be linked and applied in a meaningful way. First, consent education should be integrated within academic programmes: "I feel that teaching consent and sexual health and wellbeing should be taught and credits given for every single college course in our HEIs. It is not okay to assume students leave secondary school have gained that knowledge, we have proof they haven't". Next, training should be packaged to support particular roles such for mentors and peer educators: "Train staff and older students to be mentors to younger students, give them the skills in bystander training, consent, sexual health, mental health etc.". The staff member advocates for ensuring that the benefits of investing time into training are maximised by acknowledging and supporting leadership roles in this area ("ambassadors"): "They become well-being ambassadors, people who staff and students recognise and know they are people they can trust".

Challenges and problems with implementing education and training

The discussion of education and training prompted comparatively positive and hopeful commentary from staff members. However, there were also challenges identified with respect to roll out of initiatives such as these, along with critiques of training implementation. These comments ranged from concern about adding to existing excessive workload, to creating resentment about being made to engage in training, to the need to be sensitive to the needs of survivors.

This staff member (2810) describes their struggle with workload ("barely surviving"), which would point toward a brief awareness raising method ("reading posters … newsletters"):

> It appears that training courses are the answer looking through this questionnaire, I don't have time to attend any more training as I am barely surviving teaching and research, so another way needs to be found, I am still capable of reading posters being of drip-fed by newsletters, but in the list of courses I am being required to attend at present any of the above will be down my list as cyber security, finance, exams, etc all results me in being locked out of some function that I need to do my job and I am just about getting to these.

The relevance of brief awareness raising was highlighted by this staff member too (2366):

> As regards incidents of sexual violence and harassment, a publicity campaign - physical posters in the college for students and staff and a social media campaign on the university website - with a simple message and which outlines a simple way of reporting. If the reporting mechanisms for the various categories of sexual harassment and sexual assault are well known, this is the most important thing.

They suggested that going further to introduce mandatory training will be counterproductive, reiterating the belief that having a "clear simple and accessible message" is the best approach:

> Having mandatory training courses will just engender resentment in staff and students alike and is likely to be counterproductive. A clear simple and accessible message about reporting sexual assault and reporting sexual harassment will be most effective in tackling this problem.

For this staff member (2870), increasing the visibility of issues concerning sexual violence and harassment is not desirable. They doubt the need for this increased visibility, given their belief that "most people would know" already who to consult to make a complaint:

> I really would not relish signs or emails all over campus reminding me to be vigilant for sexual harassment / violence and what I should do if I encounter it. (And in short order I believe that most people would know to either go to their line manager (or the person above their line manager if the line manager is the issue), or to the Gardaí, should an issue arise).

Finally, the need to approach programming on consent, sexual violence and harassment with sensitivity is reinforced by this comment from a staff member (0625) who experienced victimisation: "I was a victim of sexual abuse and harassment in my personal life, and that is why I am hesitant to attend a mandatory consent workshop. I would find it very upsetting".

Secondary Analysis of Quantitative Data Sets

Introduction

A secondary analysis of the HEA National Surveys of Staff and Student Experiences of Sexual Violence and Harassment in Irish Higher Education institutions was undertaken to address research questions that had been identified as key priorities. Individual quantitative analyses were carried out to address the following topics requested by the HEA:

- In-depth exploration of the responses from the following high-risk categories:
  - Bisexual staff and students.
  - Students who experienced sexual violence while incapacitated.
- Analysis of the responses of the following specific cohorts of students:

- o Students engaged in a post-graduate taught programme.
- o Students engaged in a PhD or Masters by research.
- o International students.
- Analysis of the relationship between staff salaries and contract types and experiences and attitudes towards SVH.
- Exploration of responses from staff and students with high levels of agreement and belief in 'rape myths'.
- Exploration of intersectionality: To analyse how relationships between sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity and disability interact with experiences and attitudes related to SVH.

Overview of findings

The initial analysis of the HEA staff and student surveys published in 2022 reported on responses in an item-by-item format for each group of respondents to the online surveys that had been disseminated nationally. The secondary analysis of the quantitative survey data compiled the individual survey items into a set of key indicators from the data sets comprising responses from 7,901 students and 3,516 staff members. This was achieved by creating new participant categories and summing responses to the items across the survey scales and sections. Thus, survey items were aggregated into sets of related variables – for instance, compiling overall scores for responses to rape myth belief items, campus environment perceptions, and so on. A set of key indicators was created in this manner to assess similarities and differences in survey responses associated with the particular groups of student and staff respondents referred to above.

HEA Staff Survey key indicators:

Sexual harassment
- Sexist harassment (4 items)
- Sexual harassment (4 items)
- Unwanted attention (3 items)
- Sexualised comments (5 items)
- Sexual coercion (4 items)

Sexual violence
- Experience of sexual violence (5 items)

Campus environment
- Effective policies, visibility, commitment (5 items)
- Clarity of response and knowledge of procedures (8 items)
- Awareness of training and messaging (3 items)
- Willingness to engage in training (5 items)
- Institutional support and validation (5 items)
- Institutional resistance and devaluing (Reversed) (3 items)

Attitudes, perceptions, self-appraisal of capacity to respond
- Rape myth beliefs (22 items)
- Consent attitudes and intentions (8 items)
- Campus safety: Personal safety (3 items)
- Campus safety: Perception of SVH as a problem (3 items)
- Capacity to respond to a disclosure of SVH (1 item)
- Ability to make an effective intervention as a bystander (1 item)

- Awareness of sexual consent issues being discussed among students (1 item)
- Awareness of sexual consent issues being discussed among staff (1 item)
- Feeling of responsibility to make a bystander intervention (1 item)

HEA Student Survey key indicators:

Sexual harassment
- Sexist hostility (3 items)
- Sexual hostility (4 items)
- Unwanted sexual attention (2 items)
- Sexualised comments (5 items)
- Sexual coercion (2 items)
- Electronic communication (4 items)

Sexual violence
- Non-consensual sexual touching (5 items)
- Non-consensual oral sex (5 items)
- Non-consensual vaginal penetration (female students) (5 items)
- Made to perform anal or vaginal sex (male students) (5 items)
- Non-consensual anal penetration (5 items)
- Attempted anal, oral or vaginal sex (5 items)

Campus environment
- Knowledge of supports available and reporting process (3 items)
- HEI taking the report seriously and providing support (11 items)
- Perception of SVH as a significant issue (3 items)
- Personal safety (5 items)

HEI information, consent promotion and support activities
- Information received from the HEI (5 items)
- Promotion and support activities (9 items)

Attitudes, behavioural intentions, and preparedness to respond to SVH
- Perceptions of negative peer reactions to someone who reports SVH (3 items)
- Rape myth beliefs scale (22 items)
- Positive consent attitudes and intentions (9 items)
- Bystander intervention attitudes (9 items)
- Attitude toward supporting someone who makes a disclosure (2 items)
- Passive consent behavioural intentions (2 items)
- Nonverbal consent behavioural intentions (3 items)
- Verbal consent behavioural intentions (4 items)
- Consent literacy referring to self-appraisal of skills and being well-informed (2 items)
- Capacity to engage in bystander intervention (1 item)
- Capacity to support someone with a disclosure (1 item)

Detail on the development and content of the key indicators is provided at beginning of each section of the quantitative secondary analysis presented below. The secondary analysis questions were addressed using descriptive and inferential non-parametric statistical analysis. The Mann-Whitney U test was used to assess for differences between groups on continuous variables (e.g., bisexual staff and heterosexual staff groups compared on rape myth beliefs). The Chi Square test was used to

assess group differences on categorical variables (e.g., the proportion of male and female staff who heard students talk about consent). The results of the analyses are presented in sequence below, comprising illustrative tables of summed mean scores, representation of statistical significance, and discussion of the statistical analysis of each topic.

Exploration of the responses from the following high-risk categories: Bisexual staff and students
  a. Staff and students who identify as bisexual
  b. Students who experienced sexual violence while incapacitated

Purpose: To draw out specific insights or lessons to inform practice.

Staff and students who identify as bisexual

Staff and students who identified as bisexual had distinctive responses on many of the HEA survey key indicators. In reviewing these responses, it should be noted that the gender profile for bisexual respondents was weighted toward females (73% of bisexual staff were female, while 68% of the overall sample was female; 82% of bisexual students were female, while 76% of the overall sample was female). In addition, while the focus is on bisexual students here, the insights concerning this sexual orientation grouping could also apply to other sexual orientations minority groups given that the survey responses of several of these minority groups, notably the gay, lesbian, and queer student and staff groups shared some of the patterns of responses of bisexual students and staff members.

A full breakdown of the items associated with each indicator and further details on the analysis is presented in this first quantitative analysis for illustrative purposes. These details apply to the subsequent analyses presented later in the report.

Staff who identify as bisexual
Of the 3,516 staff respondents, 126 (3.6%) described themselves as bisexual, 149 (4.2%) as LGBTQ+, 48 (1.4%) as asexual, 111 (3.2%) had another orientation or preferred not to say, while 3,082 (87.7%) staff described themselves as heterosexual.

Sexual violence and harassment. Participants were asked about whether they experienced harassment in the past four years due to someone related to their Higher Education institution. Details of the harassment measure are provided in the original HEA staff survey report, along with the full text of the staff and student surveys(MacNeela et al., 2022a, b). The responses made to the survey items on harassment were compiled into total scores for each form of harassment – namely sexist harassment (four items, maximum score 4), sexual harassment (four items, maximum score 4), unwanted attention (two items, maximum score 2), sexualised comments (five items, maximum score 5), and sexual coercion (four items, maximum score 4). Summed scores on each indicator of harassment were calculated by simplifying the responses to each item (0=no experience, 1=some experience) and creating a total score for each type of harassment.

The total number of staff with total scores on these scales varied from 2,115 to 2,840, reflecting the number of staff who chose to respond to these items and taking account of any missing items in responses from individuals. In order to assess the distinctive features of harassment among bisexual staff members, the Mann Whitney non-parametric test of differences between independent samples was used to compare heterosexual and bisexual staff members. Statistical differences among other sexual orientations were not calculated.

The total score on the sexist harassment items could range from 0 to 4. The mean score on this type of harassment for the sample was 1.5. The mean total score for bisexual staff members on sexist harassment was 2.2 compared with 1.4 for heterosexual staff members. When analysed on the non-parametric Mann Whitney U statistical test, which assesses rank order rather than mean scores, this difference was significant at the $p<.001$ level. This demonstrates their status as a high risk group compared with heterosexual staff members. Bisexual staff reported significantly higher levels of sexual harassment on most of the multi-item measures used (sexist harassment, sexual harassment, sexualised comments).

Table 1. Mean scores on measures of sexual harassment, for staff members, with statistical comparisons made between heterosexual and bisexual staff groups.

	All	Asexual	LGBTQ+	Heterosexual	Bisexual
Sexist harassment	1.5	0.8	1.6	1.4***	2.2***
Sexual harassment	0.7	0.5	1.0	0.6***	1.0***
Unwanted attention	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2
Sexualised comments	0.5	0.2	0.9	0.4**	0.7**
Sexual coercion	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

The HEA survey items on sexual violence asked respondents to reflect on whether they had experienced sexual violence related to their Higher Education institution in the past four years. Participants could opt out of responding to these items, which referred to touching, stroking, kissing, rubbing against private parts of the body, or having vaginal or anal sex without consent. A total of 2,446 staff members chose to respond. Their responses were compiled into a measure of sexual violence experience by totalling the responses across the five items. There were four levels for each item (from 0-3, reflecting that it had not happened, to '1 time', '2 times', or '3 times+').

When the compiled sexual violence experience scores were compared, there was not a significant difference with respect to bisexual staff and heterosexual staff members. A total of 14% of bisexual staff members indicated that they had an experience of sexual violence related to their Higher Education institution in the past four years, compared with 12% of heterosexual staff.

Table 2. Mean scores on the measure of sexual violence, for staff members, with statistical comparison made of heterosexual and bisexual staff groups.

	All	Asexual	LGBTQ+	Heterosexual	Bisexual
Experience of sexual violence	0.3	0.1	0.4	0.3	0.3

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Campus environment. The next set of survey measures explored the views of bisexual staff members through their perceptions and self-described knowledge held about the campus environment. These survey questions were responded to by the full sample of 3,516 staff members. There were six sets of items that addressed these topics, with each compiled into a separate total score. When compiling these scores, the responses were simplified into a three-point scale from 1-3 (strongly disagree / disagree; neutral / I don't know; and agree / strongly agree). The 'neutral' and 'I don't know' responses were combined to ensure that all staff responses were included in the analysis.

Significant differences were identified between bisexual and heterosexual staff members in responses on these items. Overall, bisexual staff members had significantly less positive perspectives and knowledge concerning institutional engagement and policy, perceptions of institutional reporting and investigations, and institutional barriers and resistance. They were also significantly

more willing to engage in training and education. There was no significant difference between bisexual and heterosexual staff on awareness of training and messaging.

Thus, there was a significant difference in responses of bisexual and heterosexual staff members on the campus environment items that referred to effective institutional policies, visibility and commitment (five items, maximum score 15). Bisexual staff members were less likely to agree that their Higher Education institution proactively addressed sexual violence and harassment, that senior management were visible on this issue, that they had personal awareness of policies to tackle and eliminate SVH, that the policies and procedures were clear, explicit, and effective.

This trend continued in a significant difference in responses to the next set of environment items, which referred to whether the HEI had clear systems and the staff members' personal knowledge of procedures related to SVH. Eight items had been rated on a three-point scale from 1-3 (maximum score 24). Compared with heterosexual staff, bisexual staff members had significantly less positive perceptions of these items. The text of the items asked about whether the HEI had an easy-to-use system for reporting SVH, clear lines of responsibility, whether the reporting person would be seen as a troublemaker (reversed), if it would be hard for staff to support someone who reports SVH (reversed), if the person reporting would experience retaliation (reversed), whether the person knew how to report SVH, or knew what supports are available if they wanted to report SVH or were accused of perpetrating SVH.

There was no significant difference in responses by bisexual and heterosexual staff to the three items on awareness of training and messaging (maximum score of 9). These items referred to perceptions of whether training was available on disclosure management, ongoing messaging about reporting and responding to SVH, and ongoing messaging on culture change and awareness.

Bisexual staff members had significantly higher scores than heterosexual staff on the survey items concerning willingness to engage in training. Five items were used to assess willingness to engage in training (maximum score of 15). These referred to willingness to complete training on bystander intervention, consent awareness, disclosure management, and implementation of initiatives related to these areas. While there was a significant difference, there was a high degree of willingness to engage overall across all groups of staff.

Bisexual staff members had significantly lower scores on the items related to institutional support and validation (five items, maximum score of 15). This set of items referred to perceptions of how the HEI would support the person making a report of SVH (e.g., by providing counselling, meetings, allowing an active role in how the report is handled), whether the person's needs would be accommodated, whether staff felt safe to discuss SVH, and beliefs about recognition of it as a problem.

Bisexual staff members had significantly more negative scores on the survey items related to institutional resistance and devaluing. There were three items on this topic included in the survey (maximum score of 9). Higher scores reflected greater agreement that the institution would suggest that the reporting person's experiences would affect institutional reputation, that the institution would create an environment where the person did not feel valued, and that it would be difficult for the person reporting to stay at the HEI (scores are reversed in the table below). Bisexual staff were more likely to indicate that the institution would display resistance and devalue individuals who report SVH.

Table 3. Mean scores for campus environment items, for staff members, with statistical comparison made between heterosexual and bisexual staff groups.

	All	Asexual	LGBTQ+	Heterosexual	Bisexual
Effective policies, visibility, commitment	10.5	11.3	9.7	10.6***	9.7***
Clarity of response and knowledge of procedures	18.2	19.3	17.3	18.4***	16.5***
Awareness of training and messaging	5.7	6.1	5.5	5.7	5.4
Willingness to engage in training	13.2	12.8	13.1	13.2**	13.7**
Institutional support and validation	11.5	12.5	10.8	11.6***	10.5***
Institutional resistance and devaluing (Reversed)	6.6	6.7	6.4	6.6***	6.0***

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Attitudes, perceptions, self-appraisal of capacity to respond. The next set of indicators summarised staff member responses to the survey sections that referred to attitudes and beliefs concerning rape myths, consent attitudes, campus safety, self-appraisal of the capacity to respond to a disclosure or make a bystander intervention, and whether consent issues were discussed by students and staff. Scoring of these indicators is described here:

- Rape myth beliefs (22 items, scored on a 1-3 scale, maximum score 66, n = 2,832)
- Consent attitudes and intentions (8 items, scored on a 1-3 scale, maximum score of 24, n = 2,428)
- Personal safety (3 items, scored on a 1-3 scale, maximum score of 9, n = 3,516)
- Campus safety (3 items, scored on a 1-3 scale, maximum score of 9, n = 3,516)
- Capacity to respond to a disclosure of SVH (1 item, scored on a 1-5 scale, maximum score of 5, n = 3,516)
- Ability to make an effective intervention as a bystander (1 item, scored on a 1-5 scale, maximum score of 5, n = 3,516)
- Awareness of sexual consent issues being discussed among students (1 item, scored as Yes or No, percentage of staff members who indicated 'Yes', n = 3,516)
- Awareness of sexual consent issues being discussed among staff (1 item, scored as Yes or No, percentage of staff members who indicated 'Yes', n = 3,516)
- Feeling of responsibility to make a bystander intervention (1 item, scored as Yes or No, percentage of staff members who indicated 'Yes', n = 3,516)

There was limited endorsement of rape myth beliefs among those participants who decided to respond to this set of items (n = 2,832). For instance, 40% of the staff members strongly disagreed with all 22 rape myth items included in the survey (represented by a score of 22). There was no significant difference between bisexual and heterosexual staff members on this set of items.

There was no significant difference on the measure of consent attitudes included in the staff survey among those who chose to respond to them (n = 2,428). The average total score of 19.3 for heterosexual staff and 19.4 for bisexual staff members was similar, and indicated a generally positive consent attitude on the whole (maximum score of 24).

Significant differences were noted on the ratings made of campus safety. Two sets of campus safety items were included in the survey. The first set of three items (maximum score of 9) described personal safety from SVH (feeling safe from sexual harassment, from sexual violence, and feeling safe speaking up or voicing concerns in relation to SVH). Bisexual staff members' scores on this set of items were significantly lower than those of heterosexual staff.

The second set of three campus safety items (maximum score of 9) referred to perceptions of whether SVH was a problem in the staff members' HEI. Higher scores reflect greater concern. These items asked about the staff members' sense of responsibility to engage with SVH in their HEI, whether SVH among students was a problem, and if SVH among staff members was a problem at their HEI. Again, bisexual staff members had significantly different scores on this set of items, indicating a stronger belief that SVH was a problem.

There was no significant difference in ratings made by bisexual and heterosexual staff members on whether they felt they could respond effectively to a disclosure of SVH or in their self-rated ability to make an effective intervention as a bystander. In both cases, the mean score was below the mid-point, indicating a general lack of confidence in disclosure and intervention capacity.

The Chi Square statistic was used to compare the proportion of staff members who selected 'Yes' in response to their personal awareness of students and staff discussing consent in the past four years, and whether they felt responsible to make a bystander intervention.

Bisexual staff members were more likely than heterosexual staff to indicate that they had heard students talking about consent over the past four years (52% compared with 34%), but the proportion of bisexual staff who had heard other staff members discussing consent (42%) was not statistically different to the percentage of heterosexual staff who did (36%). Nor was there a significant difference in the proportion of bisexual staff (55%) who felt a responsibility to make a bystander intervention, compared with heterosexual staff members (57%).

Table 4. Mean scores for measures of attitudes, beliefs and peer perceptions, for staff members, with statistical comparisons made of heterosexual and bisexual staff groups.

	All	Asexual	LGBTQ+	Heterosexual	Bisexual
Rape myth	24.8	27.2	24.4	24.8	24.4
Consent attitudes and intentions	19.3	18.9	19.4	19.3	19.4
Campus safety – Personal safety concerning SVH	7.6	7.6	7.2	7.7**	7.2**
Campus safety - Perception of the problem of SVH	6.3	6.3	6.7	6.2***	6.7***
Respond effectively to a disclosure of an incident of sexual harassment and / or violence	2.3	2.0	2.5	2.3	2.3
Can make effective intervention as a bystander	2.2	2.0	2.5	2.2	2.4
Heard sexual consent issues discussed by students in last four years (% Yes)	35%	29%	46%	34%***	52%***
Heard sexual consent issues discussed by staff in last four years (% Yes)	36%	35%	38%	36%	42%
Feeling responsible to intervene as a bystander (% Yes)	55%	60%	64%	55%	57%

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Students who identify as bisexual

Among the 7,901 HEA Student Survey responses, there were a total of 1,359 students (17.2%) who identified as bisexual, 5,562 (70.4%) heterosexual students, 590 (7.5%) LGBTQ+ students, and 145 (1.8%) asexual students. Statistical comparisons were made between the responses provided by heterosexual and bisexual students. Compared with heterosexuals, bisexual students had a distinct pattern of responses on nearly all survey indicators. For example, they reported higher levels of sexual harassment, sexual violence, less positive views on campus environment (e.g., institutional engagement and policy, knowledge of supports and policy), and campus safety. Compared with heterosexuals, bisexual students had more engagement with education resources and information on SVH provided by their HEI, more positive consent attitudes, higher levels of bystander intention, and lower scores on the rape myth beliefs scale.

Sexual violence and harassment. There were 20 items on sexual harassment included in the HEA Student Survey, split across six separate sets of items, with a reference period of the last four years. The student respondents to the survey had the choice of whether or not to respond to these items. The responses on each of these items was recoded to a 0-1 scale. For the statistical analysis, the items were compiled into a total score for sexist hostility (n = 7,055, 3 items, maximum score 3), sexual hostility (n = 7,065, 4 items, maximum score 4), unwanted sexual attention (n = 7,090, 2 items, maximum score 2), sexualised comments (n = 3,703, 5 items, maximum score 5), sexual coercion (n = 7,036, 2 items, maximum score 2), and electronic communication (n = 6,643, 4 items, maximum score 4).

The number of bisexual students who responded to these sections ranged from 603-1,286 while the number of heterosexual students ranged from 2,636-5,133. The number of asexual students with scores on each of these measures of sexual harassment ranged from 72 to 131, while the number of LGBT+ students was between 320 and 623. Mean scores for all sexual orientations is included for reference in the table below.

Statistical comparisons were made between bisexual and heterosexual students using the Mann-Whitney statistical test of differences in scores. Significant differences between bisexual and heterosexual students were identified on each type of sexual harassment.

Table 5. Total scores for measures of sexual harassment, for students, with statistical comparisons made of heterosexual and bisexual student groups.

	All	Asexual	LGBTQ+	Bisexual	Heterosexual
Sexist hostility	2.0	1.9	2.0	2.3***	2.0***
Sexual hostility	2.2	2.1	2.2	2.6***	2.1***
Unwanted sexual attention	1.0	1.0	0.9	1.2***	1.0***
Sexualised comments	1.1	1.1	1.5	1.5***	1.0***
Sexual coercion	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.7***	0.5***
Electronic communication	1.3	1.2	1.5	1.7***	1.2***

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Student experiences of sexual violence were assessed using six sets of survey items, each of which referred to a distinct form of violence (such as non-consensual sexual touching), with reference to five different forms of perpetrator tactic throughout. The temporal reference point provided to students in the survey was the period since coming to college. The perpetrator tactics referred to were coercion (e.g., telling lies, showing displeasure), incapacitation (carrying out an action when the person was too drunk to stop what was happening), force and the threat of force (e.g.,

threatening to harm the person, holding the person down with their body weight). A further form of perpetrator tactic added to the original survey from the validated items by Koss et al. (2007) was not included here.

The students who chose to respond to SV items were asked to indicate how often they had these experiences during their time in college (0, 1, 2, or 3+ times). The total score for the following non-consensual experiences were calculated: Sexual touching (n = 5,962, 5 items, scored 0-3, maximum score 15), oral sex (n = 5,962, 5 items, scored 0-3, maximum score 15), vaginal penetration (female students only, n = 3,398, 5 items, scored 0-3, maximum score 15), made to perform anal or vaginal sex (male students only, n = 820, 5 items, scored 0-3, maximum score 15), anal penetration (n = 5,962, 5 items, scored 0-3, maximum score 15), and attempted anal, oral or vaginal sex (n = 5,962, 5 items, scored 0-3, maximum score 15).

There were significant differences between bisexual and heterosexual students on the experience of sexual touching, oral sex, vaginal penetration (female students only), anal penetration, and attempted anal, oral or vaginal sex. For instance, 51% of bisexual students had some experience of non-consensual sexual touching, compared with 40% of heterosexual students. Similar comparisons can be made for non-consensual experiences of oral sex (24% of bisexual students, 18% of heterosexual students), vaginal penetration (43% of bisexual female students, 33% of heterosexual female students), being made to perform anal or vaginal sex (9% of male bisexual and heterosexual students), anal penetration (10% of bisexual students, 7% of heterosexual students), and attempted anal, oral or vaginal sex (33% of bisexual students, 24% of heterosexual students).

Table 6. Mean scores for measures of sexual assault and violence, for students, with statistical comparisons made of heterosexual and bisexual student groups.

	All	Asexual	LGBTQ+	Bisexual	Heterosexual
Non-consensual sexual touching	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.9***	1.3***
Non-consensual oral sex	0.6	0.4	0.7	0.9***	0.6***
Non-consensual vaginal penetration (female students)	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.6***	1.0**
Made to perform anal or vaginal sex (male students)	0.3	0.7	0.4	0.4	0.3
Non-consensual anal penetration	0.3	0.1	0.4	0.4***	0.2***
Attempted anal, oral or vaginal sex	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.5***	0.9***

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Campus environment. The student survey included several indicators that referred to the campus and off-campus environment. The item responses related to these indicators were compiled into four overall scores. There were significant differences between bisexual and heterosexual students on the knowledge of supports and the reporting process, whether the HEI would take the report of SVH seriously and provide support, and perceptions of personal safety across different settings on and off campus. There was not a significant difference between bisexual and heterosexual students in the perception of SVH as a significant issue in their HEI.

Three items concerned knowledge of supports available and the reporting process. Bisexual students' responses were significantly different to the responses of heterosexual students, indicating that they were less likely to agree that they knew where to seek help. These were scored on a 1-5 scale (maximum score 15), from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. The items referred to whether the person knew where to get help on campus if they (or a friend) experienced SVH,

understanding what happens when a student reports a claim of SVH, and where to go to make a report of SVH.

A set of 11 items asked students to provide their views on whether their HEI take SVH reports seriously and provide support. Bisexual students' responses to this set of items were significantly different to those of heterosexual students. They were significantly less likely to believe that the HEI would take reports seriously and provide support. These items were scored on a 1-5 scale from 'very unlikely' to 'very likely' (maximum score of 55). The items referred to whether the HEI would take the report seriously, maintain the privacy of the person making the report, do its best to honour the person's request about how to go forward with the case, take steps to protect the safety of the person, support the person making the report, make accommodations to support the person, take action to address factors that may have led to SVH, handle the report fairly, label the person making the report a troublemaker (reverse scored), have a hard time supporting the person who made the report (reverse scored), and punish the person who made the report (reverse scored).

A set of three items on the survey asked students for their perception of SVH as a significant issue (scored on a 1-5 scale from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree', maximum score 15). There was no significant difference between bisexual and heterosexual students on this group of items, which asked about whether the students thought that sexual violence and harassment was a problem at their higher education institution, whether there was much they could do about SVH on the campus, and their belief about whether there was much need to think about SVH while at their HEI.

Five items focused on perceptions of personal safety in different environments. These settings consisted of safety on or around the campus, at their accommodation, when socialising at night on or around the campus, when socialising at night in the college town, when socialising at night in their home town (if different to the college town). Bisexual students had significantly lower scores on the measure of personal safety compared with heterosexual students. Items were scored on a 1-5 scale of agreement (maximum score 25), from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'.

Table 7. Mean scores for measures of perceptions of the campus environment, for students, with statistical comparisons made of heterosexual and bisexual student groups.

	All	Asexual	LGBTQ+	Bisexual	Heterosexual
Knowledge of supports available and reporting process	6.9	7.4	6.8	6.6***	7.0***
HEI taking the report seriously and providing support	40.2	40.0	37.7	38.3***	41.1***
Perception of SVH as a significant issue	10.1	10.3	10.2	10.2	10.1
Personal safety	15.4	15.5	14.9	14.1***	15.8***

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

HEI information, consent promotion and support activities. Students were asked about their engagement with information and programming relevant to consent, sexual violence and harassment. One set of items referred to whether the student had received written (e.g., leaflets, emails) or verbal information (e.g., presentations, training, online seminar) from anyone at their Higher Education institution about five types of information. These referred to the definitions of types of sexual violence and/or harassment, the definition of consent, how to report an incident of sexual violence and/or harassment, where to go to get help if someone you know experiences sexual violence and/or harassment, or the student code of conduct.

A significant difference was noted when responses to these items were compiled, with bisexual students having a significantly higher total score reflective of greater exposure to information by their HEI. One-fifth of students indicated that they had not received any form of verbal or written information, including a similar percentage of bisexual and heterosexual students.

The survey respondents were also asked to indicate whether they had engaged in 11 distinct forms of prevention and support since coming to the HEI. A total score was compiled by totalling the responses provided to these items. These forms of programming referred to consent workshops, attending an event or programme about what you can do as a bystander to stop SVH, specific training relating to tackling sexual violence and/or harassment (e.g., disclosure training offered by a rape crisis centre), viewing a drama on consent / SVH, a Students' Union campaign about SVH, hearing about SVH at orientation / induction, discussing the topic of sexual violence and/or harassment with friends, seeing posters about SVH, visiting the HEI website for information on SVH, seeing or hearing about SVH in a student publication or media outlet. Students were also asked to indicate if they had not taken part in any activities or events related to consent, bystander intervention, or sexual violence awareness raising.

Bisexual students had engaged in a significantly higher number of prevention and support activities compared with heterosexual students. One-quarter of students indicated in their response that they had not taken part in any of these prevention or support activities, with a higher percentage of heterosexual students (26%) indicating this compared with bisexual students (19%).

Table 8. Mean scores for exposure to HEI information, consent promotion and support activities, for students, with statistical comparisons made of heterosexual and bisexual student groups.

	All	Asexual	LGBTQ+	Bisexual	Heterosexual
Information received from the HEI	1.4	1.3	1.5	1.5*	1.4*
Promotion and support activities	3.5	3.2	3.9	3.9***	3.3***

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Attitudes, behavioural intentions, and preparedness to respond to SVH. The HEA Student Survey included a number of measures of attitudes and self-appraisal of capacity to respond to SVH. These included:
- Perceptions of negative peer reactions to someone who reports SVH (3 items, 1-5 scale, maximum score 15)
- Rape myth beliefs scale (22 items, 1-5 scale, maximum score 110)
- Positive consent attitudes and intentions (9 items, 1-5 scale, maximum score 45)
- Bystander intervention attitudes (9 items, 1-5 scale, maximum score 45)
- Attitude toward supporting someone who makes a disclosure (2 items, 1-5 scale, maximum score 10)
- Passive consent behavioural intentions (2 items, 1-5 scale, maximum score 10)
- Nonverbal consent behavioural intentions (3 items, 1-5 scale, maximum score 15)
- Verbal consent behavioural intentions (4 items, 1-5 scale, maximum score 20)
- Consent literacy referring to self-appraisal of skills and being well-informed (2 items, 1-5 scale, maximum score 10)
- One-item measure of personal capacity to engage in bystander intervention (1-5 scale) and the ability to support someone with a disclosure (1-5 scale)

Compared with heterosexual students, bisexual students had a number of significant differences on these measures of attitudes and self-appraisal of capacity. They had significantly higher scores on perceptions of negative peer reactions to SVH, positive consent attitudes, bystander intervention

attitudes, verbal consent behavioural intentions, consent literacy, bystander preparedness and disclosure preparedness. Bisexual students had significantly lower scores on rape myth beliefs compared with heterosexual students. There was no significant difference on attitudes to disclosure and passive consent behavioural intentions.

Table 9. Mean scores for measures of attitudes, behavioural intentions, and preparedness to respond to SVH, for students, with statistical comparisons made of heterosexual and bisexual student groups.

	All	Asexual	LGBTQ+	Bisexual	Heteros exual
Perception of peer reactions	7.9	7.8	8.2	8.4***	7.8***
Rape myth beliefs	33.0	33.6	30.7	30.2***	34.0***
Positive consent attitudes and intentions	35.6	36.0	37.0	37.2***	35.0***
Bystander intervention attitudes	38.9	38.8	40.2	40.5***	38.3***
Disclosure support	9.7	9.6	9.7	9.7	9.6
Passive consent behavioural intentions	4.9	3.9	4.8	5.0	4.9
Nonverbal consent behavioural intentions	9.0	6.9	8.8	9.2*	9.0*
Verbal consent behavioural intentions	15.8	12.8	16.4	16.6***	15.6***
Consent literacy	7.6	7.7	7.8	7.8***	7.6***
Self-appraisal of bystander preparedness (1 item)	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.2***	3.0***
Self-appraisal of disclosure preparedness (1 item)	3.2	3.2	3.5	3.5***	3.2***

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * at p.05

Students who experienced sexual violence while incapacitated

Those students who responded to the survey items on sexual violence were asked to indicate the mode or tactic of violence used by the perpetrator. A similar set of tactics were presented for each of the six types of sexual violence specified on the survey. In this analysis, an exploration is made of the survey responses made by students who had indicated that the perpetrator used incapacitation as a tactic to carry out sexual violence. The survey wording used with regard to the incapacitation tactic was that a type of sexual violence had occurred with the perpetrator 'Taking advantage of me when I was too drunk or out of it to stop what was happening'.

Two new variables were created to group students who had experienced sexual violence while incapacitated. One variable totalled the responses made to the incapacitation item across all types of sexual violence, including gender-related types (vaginal penetration, being made to penetrate someone). In order to retain a greater number of survey respondents, the second variable excluded the two gender-related variables. The same statistical analyses were run using both incapacitation categories. There was relatively little difference in the results of these analyses, so the incapacitation variable retained was the one with the greater number of participants.

Respondents were thus grouped into:
  (a) Students who had experienced sexual violence while incapacitated (using sexual touching, oral sex, and anal sex as reference categories) (n = 914-2,075)

(b) Students who responded to sexual violence items but did not describe being the victim of violence while incapacitated (n = 2,019-3,887)

(c) Students who did not respond to the sexual violence items in the survey (n = 770-1,939)

To provide an additional point of reference with respect to incapacitation, a new category was made comprising students who experienced a distinct perpetrator tactic (coercion) in relation to sexual touching, oral sex, and anal sex. Summary statistics on key indicators were calculated for participants who had experienced coercion (n = 763-1,846), those who responded to survey items on sexual violence questions but had not experienced coercion (n = 2,170-4,116), and participants who had not responded to the sexual violence items on the survey (n = 770-1,939). Statistical analysis is not presented for comparisons of key survey indicators using these variables.

Statistical comparisons were made across the student survey key indicators that compared the responses of students who had experienced sexual violence while incapacitated with students who had completed sexual violence items on the survey but did not indicate that they had been assaulted while incapacitated. It should be noted that many students who responded to the sexual violence items did not report experiencing sexual violence at all.

When the key indicators from the survey responses were compared using the Mann-Whitney non-parametric test, significant differences emerged between students who had experienced sexual violence while incapacitated and other students. Significant differences included higher rates of sexual harassment and sexual violence among students who had been subjected to sexual violence while incapacitated. In addition, this group had significantly lower scores on knowledge of supports and reporting, on beliefs that the HEI would take the report seriously and provide support, and the perception that SVH is a significant issue. Students who had experienced incapacitation reported significantly lower exposure to information on SVH provided by their HEI but higher engagement with promotion and support activities.

Students who experienced sexual violence while incapacitated had significantly higher levels of agreement that peer reactions to sexual violence would be negative, as well as on positive consent attitudes, bystander intervention attitudes, and passive, nonverbal and verbal consent behavioural intentions. However they had significantly lower scores on rape myth beliefs, intention to respond positively to a disclosure of sexual violence, and consent literacy.

Sexual violence and harassment. Examining these results in more detail, the table below displays mean scores on the types of sexual harassment presented in the survey. There was a significant difference between students who had experienced sexual violence while incapacitated and those students who had not had this experience. This finding demonstrates a relatively strong association between the experience of sexual violence and sexual harassment.

Table 10. Mean scores for measures of sexual harassment, for students, with statistical comparisons made of students who experienced assault while incapacitated or while not incapacitated.

	All	No incapacitation	Incapacitation	N/A	No Coercion	Coercion	N/A
Sexist hostility	2.0	1.7***	2.5***	2.0	1.8	2.6	2.0
Sexual hostility	2.2	1.8***	3.1***	2.1	1.8	3.2	2.1
Unwanted sexual attention	1.0	0.8***	1.5***	0.9	0.8	1.6	0.9
Sexualised comments	1.1	0.9***	1.6***	1.1	0.9	1.7	1.2

Sexual coercion	0.6	0.3***	1.0***	0.5	0.3	1.1	0.5
Electronic communication	1.3	1.0***	2.1***	1.2	0.9	2.2	1.2

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Across all forms of sexual violence, students who had some experience of violence while incapacitated reported significantly higher levels of violence on the survey compared with students who did not experience violence while incapacitated. For instance, between 3-14% of students who responded to the questions on sexual violence but did not experience violence while incapacitated reported an experience of violence on the six types of violence described below. By comparison, the prevalence of sexual violence ranged between 18-93% of those students who had some experience of sexual violence while incapacitated.

Table 11. Mean scores for measures of sexual assault and violence, for students, with statistical comparisons made of students who experienced assault while incapacitated or while not incapacitated.

	All	No incapacitation	Incapacitation	N/A	No Coercion	Coercion	N/A
Non-consensual sexual touching	1.5	0.4***	3.5***	n/a	0.3	4.1	n/a
Non-consensual oral sex	0.6	0.1***	1.6***	n/a	0.1	1.9	n/a
Non-consensual vaginal penetration (female students)	1.2	0.2***	2.3***	n/a	0.2	2.5	n/a
Made to perform anal or vaginal sex (male students)	0.3	0.1***	1.6***	n/a	0.1	1.7	n/a
Non-consensual anal penetration	0.3	0.1***	0.7***	n/a	0.0	0.8	n/a
Attempted anal, oral or vaginal sex	1.0	0.2***	2.6***	n/a	0..3	2.7	n/a

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Campus environment. Students who had experienced sexual violence while incapacitated had significantly lower scores on indicators related to the Higher Education institution than students who did not have this experience. They indicated having lower knowledge of supports and reporting, less strong likelihood that the HEI would take the report seriously and provide support, and a less strong belief that SVH is a significant issue. These students also had significantly lower perceptions of personal safety.

Table 12. Mean scores for measures of perceptions of the campus environment, for students, with statistical comparisons made of students who experienced assault while incapacitated or while not incapacitated.

	All	No incapacitation	Incapacitation	N/A	No Coercion	Coercion	N/A
Knowledge of supports available and reporting process	6.9	7.2***	6.2***	7.2	7.1	6.3	7.2

HEI taking the report seriously and providing support	40.2	41.2***	37.8***	41.0	41.2	37.4	41.0
Perception of SVH as a significant issue	10.1	10.2***	9.9***	10.2	10.2	9.9	10.2
Personal safety	15.4	16.4***	13.3***	15.7	16.3	13.1	15.7

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

HEI information, consent promotion and support activities. As illustrated in the table below, students who had experienced sexual violence while incapacitated reported significantly lower exposure to information on SVH provided by their HEI. At the same time, they had significantly greater engagement with promotion and support activities.

Table 13. Mean scores for exposure to HEI information, consent promotion and support activities, for students, with statistical comparisons made of students who experienced assault while incapacitated or while not incapacitated.

	All	No incapacitation	Incapacitation	N/A	No Coercion	Coercion	N/A
Information received from the HEI	1.4	1.5**	1.3**	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.4
Promotion and support activities	3.5	3.4***	3.8***	3.2	3.4	3.9	3.2

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Attitudes, behavioural intentions, and preparedness to respond to SVH. The students who had experienced sexual violence while incapacitated tended to have significantly different responses to indicators of attitudes and intentions related to consent, bystander intervention, rape myths, and response to disclosures. They had significantly higher levels of agreement that peers would react negatively to sexual violence. With respect to consent, they had significantly higher positive consent attitudes along with passive, nonverbal and verbal consent behavioural intentions. This group of students also had significantly higher bystander intervention intentions, lower scores on rape myth beliefs, intentions to respond proactively to a disclosure of sexual violence, and on consent literacy.

Table 14. Mean scores for measures of attitudes, behavioural intentions, and preparedness to respond to SVH, for students, with statistical comparisons made of students who experienced assault while incapacitated or while not incapacitated.

	All	No incapacitation	Incapacitation	N/A	No Coercion	Coercion	N/A
Perception of negative peer reactions	7.9	7.6***	8.6***	7.8	7.6	8.8	7.8
Rape myth beliefs	33.0	33.4***	32.1***	33.1	33.4	32.1	33.1
Positive consent attitudes and intentions	35.6	35.5***	36.0***	35.1	35.4	36.4	35.1
Bystander intervention attitudes	38.9	38.5***	39.6***	38.6	38.6	39.8	38.6
Disclosure support	9.7	9.7**	9.6**	9.6	9.7	9.7	9.6
Passive consent behavioural intentions	4.9	4.9*	5.0*	4.6	4.9	5.0	4.6

Nonverbal consent behavioural intentions	9.0	9.0*	9.2*	8.6	9.1	9.1	8.7
Verbal consent behavioural intentions	15.8	15.8*	16.9*	15.4	15.8	16.0	15.4
Consent literacy	7.6	7.8***	7.5***	7.6	7.7	7.5	7.6
Self-appraisal of bystander preparedness (1 item)	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.0
Self-appraisal of disclosure preparedness (1 item)	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.2

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Exposure to incapacitation and coercion perpetrator tactics. A total of 5,962 students responded to the survey items on sexual violence. A cross-tabulation with respect to sexual violence tactics demonstrated that most students did not experience either perpetrator tactic of coercion or incapacitation (n = 3,297, 55% of the total number). When they did occur, there was extensive co-occurrence of these tactics, with a total of 1,256 students (21% of the total) experiencing both coercion and incapacitation tactics. Apart from this, 819 students experienced sexual violence through incapacitation but not through coercion (14% of the total), and 590 students experienced sexual violence through coercion but not incapacitation (10% of the total).

Table 15. Cross-tabulation of experience of incapacitation and coercion as sexual violence perpetrator tactics.

	Sexual violence and coercion - No	Sexual violence and coercion - Yes	Total
Sexual violence and incapacitation - No	55% (n = 3,297)	10% (n = 590)	3,887
Sexual violence and incapacitation - Yes	14% (n = 819)	21% (n = 1,256)	2,075
Total	4,116	1,846	5,962

Comparing the survey responses of these groups allows examination of whether incapacitation and coercion were associated with distinctive patterns of experiences, attitudes, knowledge, and intentions. Overall, there was a similarity in the responses of students who experienced sexual violence through incapacitation and coercion, compared with those who did not experience these tactics.

While many students experienced one perpetrator tactic but not the other, comparisons can be made between the students who experienced sexual violence through either tactic. These students were more likely to experience sexual harassment and had a less positive perception of the campus environment, including personal safety and beliefs about peers reacting negatively following the disclosure of sexual violence.

Students who experienced either perpetrator tactic had less exposure to HEI information on SVH but had greater exposure to prevention and support programming. This might be interpretable reflective of greater interest and engagement in programming as a result of their experiences. These students also had more positive and prosocial attitudes – illustrated through higher scores on the need to establish consent, stronger bystander intervention intentions and intentions to engage in consent behaviours. Compared with students who did not experience either perpetrator tactic, these

students also displayed lower rape myth beliefs and lower confidence in consent literacy including personal consent skills and knowledge.

An analysis of the responses of specific student cohorts

　　a. Students engaged in a post-graduate taught programme
　　b. Students engaged in a PhD or Masters by research
　　c. International students

Purpose: To ascertain any significant differences between these groups and the wider student population, or any specific lessons emerging that relate to these cohorts specifically.

Students engaged in a post-graduate taught programme and students engaged in a PhD or Masters by research

Of the 7,901 students who responded to the HEA Student Survey, 6,592 were undergraduate students (83.4% of the total number of survey respondents), while 769 indicated that they were postgraduate students on taught courses (PGT, 9.7% of the total) and 471 were postgraduate research students (PGR, 6% of the total). A total of 736 students indicated that they were international students studying in an Irish Higher Education Institution (9.3% of the total).

An analysis was made of the experience of each of these groups using the key survey indicators introduced above. The experiences of undergraduate, PGT and PGR students are examined first, followed by a separate analysis of domestic and international students.

The tables below report significance levels derived from Mann-Whitney and Chi Square statistical tests on comparisons of (a) PGT students and undergraduates, and (b) PGR students and undergraduates.

Students engaged in a postgraduate taught programme
When compared with undergraduate students, PGT students described significantly lower prevalence of all types of sexual harassment, with the exception of sexualised comments. PGT students also described significantly lower engagement with HEI information and programming on SVH. They reported significantly lower levels of knowledge of policies and supports regarding SVH, exposure to educational resources, and HEI information about SVH. Compared with undergraduate students, PGT students described significantly higher perceptions of campus safety, lower rape myth beliefs, and stronger intentions to assist peers who disclosed SVH to them.

There was no significant difference in the prevalence of sexual violence described by undergraduate and PGT students. Nor was there a significant difference between the two groups on perceptions of the campus environment (i.e., perceptions of institutional engagement and policy, the belief that SVH is a problem on campus), in verbal and passive consent behavioural intentions, or on bystander intervention intentions.

Students engaged in a PhD or Masters by research
Compared with undergraduate students, PGR students had significantly lower prevalence of sexual harassment and sexual violence. There was no difference between PGR students and undergraduates on indicators of consent behavioural intentions (verbal and passive consent), knowledge of supports and reporting mechanisms, perceptions of SVH as a problem on campus, bystander intentions, and beliefs about peer disclosure.

Sexual violence and harassment. Undergraduate students (n = 3,076-5,936) described higher levels of sexual harassment on each type of harassment listed in the survey than PGT students (n = 375-666) or PGR students (n = 222-433). For instance, 75% of undergraduate students who responded to the sexual harassment questions on the survey indicated that they had some experience of this form of harassment, compared with 68% of PGT students and 58% of PGR students. The largest difference was between undergraduate students and PGR students – with the percentage of undergraduate students who experienced harassment between 12-23% higher than for PGR students, depending on the type of harassment.

Table 16. Mean scores for measures of sexual harassment, for students, with separate statistical comparisons made of PGT and PGR student groups using undergraduate students as a reference group.

	All	Undergraduate	PGT	PGR
Sexist hostility	2.0	2.0	1.9*	1.7***
Sexual hostility	2.2	2.3	2.0***	1.5***
Unwanted sexual attention	1.0	1.0	0.9***	0.6***
Sexualised comments	1.1	1.2	1.1	0.7***
Sexual coercion	0.6	0.6	0.5***	0.2***
Electronic communication	1.3	1.4	1.1***	0.7***

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Undergraduate students (n = 667-4,953) described higher rates of having experienced sexual violence than PGT students (n = 78-566) and PGR students (n = 66-391). There was one significant difference between undergraduates and PGT students, on attempted anal, oral or vaginal sex. There were significant differences on nearly all forms of violence between undergraduate and PGR students, with the exception of male students being made to perform anal or vaginal sex. For example, 43% of undergraduates described at least some incidence of non-consensual sexual touching, compared with 40% of PGT students and 28% of PGR students.

Table 17. Mean scores for measures of sexual assault and violence, for students, with separate statistical comparisons made of PGT and PGR student groups using undergraduate students as a reference group.

	All	Undergraduate	PGT	PGR
Non-consensual sexual touching	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.0***
Non-consensual oral sex	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.4***
Non-consensual vaginal penetration (female students)	1.2	1.2	1.1	0.7***
Made to perform anal or vaginal sex (male students)	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.5
Non-consensual anal penetration	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2**
Attempted anal, oral or vaginal sex	1.0	1.1	0.9*	0.6***

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Campus environment. Reviewing the responses of the student groups to the compiled scores on indicators of campus environment knowledge and perceptions, PGT students had a significantly more positive self-appraisal than undergraduates of knowledge of supports for SVH and the reporting process than undergraduate students. Compared with undergraduates, PGR students had significantly lower agreement on the items related to the HEI taking the report seriously and

providing support to people affected by SVH. There was no significant difference by student group on the perception of SVH as a significant issue. There were significant differences on perceptions of personal safety, with both PGT and PGR students having significantly higher scores than undergraduate students on perceptions of safety on and off campus.

Table 18. Mean scores for measures of perceptions of the campus environment, for students, with separate statistical comparisons made of PGT and PGR student groups using undergraduate students as a reference group.

	All	**Undergraduate**	**PGT**	**PGR**
Knowledge of supports available and reporting process	6.9	6.8	7.3***	7.1
HEI taking the report seriously and providing support	40.2	40.4	39.8	39.5*
Perception of SVH as a significant issue	10.1	10.1	10.1	10.1
Personal safety	15.4	15.3	15.8***	16.7***

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

HEI information, consent promotion and support activities. Both PGT and PGR student groups had significantly lower exposure to information on sexual violence and harassment provided by their Higher Education institution. A total of 31% of the undergraduate students did not receive any of the forms of information included on the survey, while 43% of PGT students and 47% of PGR students did not receive any of them. There was also a significant difference in engagement with promotion and support activities linked to consent, sexual violence and harassment. Thus, while 8% of undergraduate students did not list any of the promotion and support activities listed on the survey, the comparable figure was 24% for PGT students and 18% for PGR students.

Table 19. Mean scores for exposure to HEI information, consent promotion and support activities, for students, with separate statistical comparisons made of PGT and PGR student groups with undergraduate students as a reference group.

	All	**Undergraduate**	**PGT**	**PGR**
Information received from the HEI	1.4	1.5	1.1***	1.1***
Promotion and support activities	3.5	3.6	2.6***	2.8***

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Attitudes, behavioural intentions, and preparedness to respond to SVH. The largest differences in attitudes and beliefs between postgraduate and undergraduate students were on rape myth beliefs, positive consent attitudes, and nonverbal consent behavioural intentions. Postgraduate students had lower scores on agreement with rape myth beliefs but also scored lower on positive consent attitudes. Postgraduates had higher scores than undergraduates on nonverbal consent behavioural intentions. It should be noted that the number of students who chose to respond to the rape myth beliefs scale was lower than for the other scales (undergraduate students: n = 5,675; PGT students: n = 631; PGR students: n = 410).

Apart from those differences, there were small but significant differences between PGT and undergraduate students in preparedness to support peers with disclosure and in self-appraisal of consent literacy. PGT students displayed a stronger agreement that they had the capacity to support peers but less agreement in the knowledge and skills associated with consent literacy. Finally, there was a small but significant difference in bystander preparedness between PGR and undergraduate

students, with PGR students demonstrating less confidence in their capacity to engage in bystander intervention.

Table 20. Mean scores for measures of attitudes, behavioural intentions, and preparedness to respond to SVH, for students, with separate statistical comparisons made of PGT and PGR student groups using undergraduate students as a reference group.

	All	Undergraduate	PGT	PGR
Perception of negative peer reactions	7.9	7.9	8.0	7.8
Rape myth beliefs	33.0	33.1	32.5***	32.0**
Positive consent attitudes	35.6	35.7	35.0**	34.9***
Bystander intervention attitudes	38.9	38.9	38.6	38.8
Disclosure support	9.7	9.7	9.7*	9.7
Passive consent behavioural intentions	4.9	4.9	4.8	4.8
Nonverbal consent behavioural intentions	9.0	9.0	9.3***	9.3***
Verbal consent behavioural intentions	15.8	15.8	15.7	15.8
Consent literacy	7.6	7.7	7.5*	7.5
Self-appraisal of bystander preparedness (1 item)	3.0	3.1	3.0	2.9*
Self-appraisal of disclosure preparedness (1 item)	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.2

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

International and non-international students

A total of 736 students indicated that they were international students studying at an Irish Higher Education Institution, representing 9.3% of the total sample, with 7,134 indicating that they were non-international students. It should be noted that there was some crossover of international student status and level of study (undergraduate, PGT, PGR). As indicated in the table below, a greater percentage of international students were at the PGT and PGR levels of study in their Higher Education institution (six international students and 56 non-international students did not indicate their level of study).

Table 21. Cross-tabulation of international and non-international students with level of academic study.

	Undergraduate	PGT	PGR	Total
International	65% (n = 477)	18% (n = 133)	16% (n = 120)	730
Non-international	86% (n = 6,096)	9% (n = 635)	5% (n = 347)	7,078
Total	6,573	768	467	7,808

The tables below display mean scores for the international students and all other students (i.e., not international students). International students had a distinctive pattern of survey responses compared with non-international students. Overall, international students described significantly lower prevalence of all forms of sexual harassment, with the exception of sexualised comments. The international students also reported significantly lower prevalence of most forms of sexual violence included in the survey.

In addition, international students displayed significantly lower passive consent behavioural intentions and confidence in their ability to support peers with disclosure, greater agreement that

SVH is a serious issue on campus, more positive perceptions of their safety, greater knowledge of supports and reporting related to SVH, and less engagement with educational resources on SVH.

Sexual violence and harassment. Compared with non-international students (n = 3,345-6,440), international students described significantly lower levels of sexist hostility, sexual hostility, unwanted sexual attention, sexual coercion, and harassment via electronic communication (n = 343-629). For example, while 75% of non-international students had experienced sexual harassment in the past four years, 66% of international students said they had such an experience.

Table 22. Mean scores for measures of sexual harassment, for students, with statistical comparisons made of international and non-international student groups.

	All	International	Not international
Sexist hostility	2.0	1.8***	2.0***
Sexual hostility	2.2	1.9***	2.2***
Unwanted sexual attention	1.0	0.9***	1.0***
Sexualised comments	1.1	1.3	1.1
Sexual coercion	0.6	0.5***	0.6***
Electronic communication	1.3	1.0***	1.3***

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Significant differences were noted between international (n = 69- 513) and non-international students (n = 750-5,429) on measures of the experience of sexual violence since starting college. International students had significantly lower levels of being subjected to non-consensual sexual touching, oral sex, attempted anal, oral or vaginal sex, and for female students, in non-consensual vaginal penetration. Thus, 43% of non-international students had experienced non-consensual sexual touching, compared with 29% of international students.

Table 23. Mean scores for measures of sexual assault and violence, for students, with statistical comparisons made of international and non-international student groups.

	All	International	Not international
Non-consensual sexual touching	1.5	1.0***	1.5***
Non-consensual oral sex	0.6	0.5***	0.7***
Non-consensual vaginal penetration (female students)	1.2	0.8***	1.2***
Made to perform anal or vaginal sex (male students)	0.3	0.3	0.3
Non-consensual anal penetration	0.3	0.2	0.3
Attempted anal, oral or vaginal sex	1.0	0.8***	1.0***

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Campus environment. The international students who responded to the survey had significantly higher scores on the items concerning knowledge of HEI supports and the reporting process. For example, 35% of international students agreed that they knew where to get help on campus if they experienced SVH, compared with 25% of non-international students. They also had a significantly higher level of agreement that SVH is a significant issue for students on campus, and significantly higher levels of agreement on items concerning personal safety.

Table 24. Mean scores for measures of perceptions of the campus environment, for students, with statistical comparisons made of international and non-international student groups.

	All	International	Not international
Knowledge of supports available and reporting process	6.9	7.9***	6.8***
HEI taking the report seriously and providing support	40.2	40.6	40.2
Perception of SVH as a significant issue	10.1	10.4***	10.1***
Personal safety	15.4	16.5***	15.3***

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

HEI information, consent promotion and support activities. Compared with non-international students, the international students who responded to the survey described engaging with a significantly lower number of promotion and support resources concerning consent, sexual violence and harassment. For instance, 45% of international students had engaged with two or fewer of these resources (workshops, posters, etc.) compared with 33% of non-international students.

Table 25. Mean scores for exposure to HEI information, consent promotion and support activities, for students, with statistical comparisons made of international and non-international student groups.

	All	International	Not international
Information received from the HEI	1.4	1.4	1.4
Promotion and support activities	3.5	3.0***	3.5***

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Attitudes, behavioural intentions, and preparedness to respond to SVH. There were two significant differences between international and non-international students on indicators of attitudes and intentions. International students had significantly lower levels of agreement that they were comfortable in their capacity to support peers with a disclosure and in their intention to engage in passive consent behaviours.

Table 26. Mean scores for measures of attitudes, behavioural intentions, and preparedness to respond to SVH, for students, with statistical comparisons made of international and non-international student groups.

	All	International	Not international
Perception of negative peer reactions	7.9	8.0	7.9
Rape myth beliefs	33.0	33.9	32.9
Positive consent attitudes and intentions	35.6	35.1	35.6
Bystander intervention attitudes	38.9	38.4	38.9
Disclosure support	9.7	9.5***	9.7***
Passive consent behavioural intentions	4.9	4.6***	4.9***
Nonverbal consent behavioural intentions	9.0	8.9	9.0
Verbal consent behavioural intentions	15.8	15.5	15.8
Consent literacy	7.6	7.6	7.6
Self-appraisal of bystander preparedness (1 item)	3.0	3.1	3.0
Self-appraisal of disclosure preparedness (1 item)	3.2	3.3	3.3

An analysis of the relationship between staff salaries and contract types, and SVH experiences and attitudes

Purpose: To assess differential attitudes and experiences between staff groups and the implications for practice.

Staff contract type
The staff member responses to the survey item on contractual status were reviewed in order to organise the responses into a grouping format. There five contract options presented on the survey:
- Permanent full-time / part-time staff (n = 2,631, 75% of the total)
- Fixed term full-time / part-time staff (n = 697, 20%)
- Hourly payment (n = 69, 2%)
- Prefer not to say (n = 44, 1%)
- 'Other', or more than one of the categories (n = 77, 2%)

There were sufficient numbers to make statistical comparisons between staff on permanent (full-time / part-time) and fixed term (full-time / part-time) contracts. Thus, the survey responses of these two staff groups were compared on the key survey indicators.

Salary categories
With respect to staff salary, five pay grades were included as response options on the HEA Staff Survey:
- Up to €45,000 (n = 824, 23% of the total)
- €45,000-€60,000 (n = 763, 22%)
- €60,000-€75,000 (n = 492, 14%)
- €75,000-€99,000 (n = 933, 27%)
- €100,000 or more (n = 367, 10%)

Some staff members chose not to indicate their pay grade (4% of the respondents). For the purposes of analysis of key indicators by salary level, the staff were grouped into two salary groups: Up to €75,000 (n = 2,079, 59%) and over €75,000 per annum (n = 1,300, 37%).

For context, it should be noted that there was an association between staff role and salary level, as illustrated in the table below. While over half (54%) of staff members in an academic role had a salary above €75,000, fewer staff in other job roles were in this category (11% of research staff, 24% of professional support and technical staff). Thus, in comparing survey responses by salary level, there is implicitly a comparison made between groups more heavily weighted toward academic staff members and toward professional or research staff.

Table 27. Cross-tabulation of staff job role with income level.

	Under €75,000	**Above €75,000**	**Total**
Academic	46% (n = 789)	54% (n = 943)	1,732
Research	89% (n = 161)	11% (n = 20)	181
Professional support / technical staff	76% (n = 974)	24% (n = 310)	1,284
Total	1,924	1,273	3,197

Sexual violence and harassment. The tables below display mean scores for permanent and fixed term staff groups, and for staff members with an annual salary <€75,000 and >€75,000. Statistical comparisons were made using the Mann Whitney non-parametric test within these groups. The table below indicates that there were no significant differences between fixed term (n = 426-578) and permanent staff (n = 1,593-2,112) on the measures of sexual harassment. There was one significant difference between staff grouped by salary level, with those on pay under €75,000 (n = 1,270-1,684) describing significantly higher levels of sexual harassment compared with those who earned more than €75,000 (n = 777-1,048).

Table 28. Mean scores on measures of sexual harassment, for staff members, with statistical comparisons made between (a) permanent and fixed term staff groups, and (b) staff with salary <€75,000 and >€75,000.

	All	Permanent	Fixed term	Salary <€75,000	Salary >€75,000
Sexist harassment	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Sexual harassment	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.7*	0.6*
Unwanted attention	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Sexualised comments	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.5
Sexual coercion	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

There was no significant difference on the prevalence of sexual violence described by permanent staff members (n = 1,807) and fixed term staff members (n = 501). Nor was there a significant difference between staff on a salary less than €75,000 (n = 1,470) and those with a salary greater than €75,000 (n = 877).

Table 29. Mean scores on the measure of sexual violence, for staff members, with statistical comparisons made between (a) permanent and fixed term staff groups, and (b) staff with salary <€75,000 and >€75,000.

	All	Permanent	Fixed term	Pay under 75k	Pay 75k+
Experiences of sexual violence	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01

Campus environment. Two significant differences were noted in comparisons of responses by contract type on measures of institution and campus perceptions. Compared with permanent staff, fixed term staff agreed to a significantly lower extent that they understood institutional responses and procedures concerning SVH. However, fixed term staff were significantly more agreeable to taking part in training in areas concerning consent and SVH.

There was a wider range of significant differences on measures of the campus environment between staff groups based on salary level. Staff on a salary of >€75,000 had significantly higher scores on the survey sections concerning effective SVH policies, visibility of senior management, and institutional commitment. They also agreed to a significantly greater extent than staff on a salary <€75,000 that the institutional response to SVH was clear, that they were aware of training and messaging, and had less negative attitudes to institutional resistance and devaluing of SVH survivors. However, staff on a salary of >€75,000 were significantly less willing to take part in training compared with those on a salary of <€75,000.

Table 30. Mean scores for campus environment items, for staff members, with statistical comparisons made between (a) permanent and fixed term staff groups, and (b) staff with salary <€75,000 and >€75,000.

	All	Permanent	Fixed term	Pay under 75k	Pay 75k+
Effective policies, visibility, commitment	10.5	10.6	10.4	10.3***	10.8***
Clarity of response and knowledge of procedures	18.2	18.4**	17.8**	17.7***	19.0***
Awareness of training and messaging	5.7	5.7	5.8	5.6***	5.9***
Willingness to engage in training	13.2	13.1***	13.6***	13.4***	12.9***
Institutional support and validation	11.5	11.5	11.7	11.5	11.5
Institutional resistance and devaluing (Reversed)	6.6	6.6	6.5	6.5**	6.7**

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01

Attitudes, perceptions, self-appraisal of capacity to respond. Reviewing the survey responses by permanent and fixed-term staff groupings, there was just one significant difference in the indicators of attitudes and self-efficacy concerning disclosure and bystander intervention. The fixed term staff group (31%) were significantly less likely than the permanent staff group (38%) to indicate that they had heard sexual consent issues discussed by staff in the past four years.

There were a number of significant differences between staff grouped by salary level. Compared with staff on a salary less than €75,000, staff on higher salaries had a significantly higher agreement that they felt safe on campus, that they could respond effectively to a disclosure of an incident of SVH, and that they could make an effective intervention as a bystander. They were also significantly more likely to indicate that they had heard sexual consent issues discussed by both students and staff in the past four years, and that they felt responsible to intervene as a bystander.

Table 31. Mean scores for measures of attitudes, beliefs and peer perceptions, for staff members, with statistical comparisons made between (a) permanent and fixed term staff groups, and (b) staff with salary <€75,000 and >€75,000.

	All	Permanent	Fixed term	Pay under 75k	Pay 75k+
Rape myth	24.8	24.9	24.6	24.7	24.9
Consent attitudes and intentions	19.3	19.3	19.3	19.3	19.2
Campus safety – Personal safety concerning SVH	7.6	7.7	7.6	7.6***	7.8***
Campus safety – Perception of the problem of SVH	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.2*	6.4*
Respond effectively to a disclosure of an incident of sexual harassment and / or violence	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.2***	2.4***
Can make effective intervention as a bystander	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.1***	2.3***

Heard sexual consent issues discussed by students in last four years (% Yes)	35%	35%	35%	34%**	38%**
Heard sexual consent issues discussed by staff in last four years (% Yes)	36%	38%**	31%**	34%***	40%***
Feeling responsible to intervene as a bystander (% Yes)	55%	56%	55%	52%***	61%***

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

An exploration of responses from staff and students with high levels of agreement and belief in 'rape myths'

Purpose: To determine whether useful lessons can be drawn to enhance targeting and content of interventions.

The same items on rape myth beliefs were presented in both the HEA student and staff surveys. Twenty-two items addressed rape myth beliefs. Of these, 12 items concerned rape myth beliefs about females (three sub-scales were included: 'she asked for it', 'he didn't mean it', 'rape myth beliefs about males'). Ten items referred to rape myth beliefs about males. The survey items were rated by participants on a 5-point scale from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'.

Staff responses to rape myth beliefs items
The HEA Staff Survey respondents were provided with a trigger warning at the start of the survey section that included rape myth beliefs. A number of respondents chose not to respond to this section (n = 684), while 2,832 staff members did respond. Their responses across the 22 items were compiled into one overall score (minimum possible score of 22, maximum of 110). The staff members were then categorised into 'high' (n = 762) and 'low' (n = 2,070) rape myth belief categories on the basis of a quartile split (upper quartile / lower three quartiles). The 'low' rape myth group had a mean score of 22.87 (SD = 1.07) with a range of 22-25 on these items, while the 'high' rape myth group had a mean score of 30.05 (SD = 4.58) with a range of 26-54.

There was an overlap between gender and rape myth belief scores, which is illustrated in the table below. While 78% of female staff survey respondents were in the 'low' rape myth group, only 61% of male staff were in this group. There were 15 gender non-binary staff respondents and 23 respondents preferred not to indicate their gender.

Table 32. Cross-tabulation of male and female staff members with 'low' and 'high' rape myth belief groups.

	'Low' rape myth beliefs	'High' rape myth beliefs	Total
Female	78% (n = 1,539)	22% (n = 425)	1,964
Male	61% (n = 508)	39% (n = 322)	830
Total	2,047	747	2,794

A range of significant differences in survey responses were noted between staff members who had relatively high rape myth beliefs and those with relatively low rape myth beliefs. Staff in the 'high'

rape myth belief group described significantly lower levels of sexist and sexual harassment, had more positive beliefs about the institutional response to SVH, and significantly lower scores on the perception that SVH is a problem for the campus. Compared with staff members with relatively low rape myth belief scores, this group had less positive consent attitudes, were less likely to have heard sexual consent being discussed by students and staff in the previous four years, and were less willing to engage in training, but this group felt more safe on campus.

Sexual violence and harassment. There were significant differences among the 'low' rape myth belief staff group (n = 1,399-1,880) and 'high' rape myth belief group (n = 524- 693) on two forms of sexual harassment presented in the survey. Staff in the low rape myth belief group described significantly higher levels of sexist harassment and sexual harassment. There were no significant differences on the prevalence of sexual violence between the low and high rape myth belief staff groups.

Table 33. Mean scores on measures of sexual harassment, for staff members, with statistical comparisons made between staff with relatively 'low' and 'high' rape myth beliefs.

	All	Low rape myth	High rape myth
Sexist harassment	1.5	1.6***	1.2***
Sexual harassment	0.7	0.7**	0.5**
Unwanted attention	0.2	0.2	0.2
Sexualised comments	0.5	0.4	0.4
Sexual coercion	0.1	0.1	0.1

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Table 34. Mean scores for measures of sexual assault and violence, for staff members, with statistical comparisons made between staff with relatively 'low' and 'high' rape myth beliefs.

	All	Low rape myth	High rape myth
Experiences of sexual violence	0.3	0.3	0.3

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Campus environment. Staff in the highest quartile of rape myth belief scores had significantly higher scores on several of the indicators relevant to perceptions of the campus environment and related personal knowledge. Thus, they had significantly more positive beliefs about the institutional response to SVH and knowledge of procedures, institutional support and validation of SVH survivors, along with greater awareness of training and messaging. Staff in the lowest quartile of rape myth belief scores were significantly more willing to engage in training related to consent, sexual violence and harassment.

Table 35. Mean scores for campus environment items, for staff members, with statistical comparisons made between staff with relatively 'low' and 'high' rape myth beliefs.

	All	Low rape myth	High rape myth
Effective policies, visibility, commitment	10.5	10.4	10.7
Clarity of response and knowledge of procedures	18.2	17.9***	18.7***
Awareness of training and messaging	5.7	5.6**	5.8**
Willingness to engage in training	13.2	13.5***	12.6***
Institutional support and validation	11.5	11.3***	12.0***

Institutional resistance and devaluing (Reversed)	6.6	6.6	6.7

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Attitudes, perceptions, self-appraisal of capacity to respond. There were several significant differences between the 'high' and 'low' rape myth belief staff groups on attitudes and personal perception indicators relevant to consent, sexual violence and harassment. Staff with the highest levels of rape myth beliefs had, by definition, significantly higher scores on the rape myths scale. This group also had significantly higher scores on perceptions of personal safety and a less strong belief that SVH is a problem on campus. Low rape myth belief staff members had significantly higher positive consent attitudes and intentions, and were significantly more likely to indicate that they had heard sexual consent discussed by students and staff over the previous four years.

Table 36. Mean scores for measures of attitudes, beliefs and peer perceptions, for staff members, with statistical comparisons made between staff with relatively 'low' and 'high' rape myth beliefs.

	All	**Low rape myth**	**High rape myth**
Rape myth	24.8	22.9***	30.1***
Consent attitudes and intentions	19.3	19.6***	18.7***
Campus safety – Personal safety concerning SVH	7.6	7.6**	7.9**
Campus safety - Perception of the problem of SVH	6.3	6.5***	6.0***
Respond effectively to a disclosure of an incident of sexual harassment and / or violence	2.3	2.3	2.3
Can make effective intervention as a bystander	2.2	2.2	2.2
Heard sexual consent issues discussed by students in last four years (% Yes)	35%	39%***	29%***
Heard sexual consent issues discussed by staff in last four years (% Yes)	36%	40%***	30%***
Feeling responsible to intervene as a bystander (% Yes)	55%	59%*	54%*

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Student responses to rape myth beliefs items
A trigger warning was placed at the beginning of the rape myth beliefs section on the HEA Student Survey as well. A total of 6,770 students responded to the rape myth beliefs items while 1,131 students chose not to do so. Responses to the 22 rape myth beliefs items were compiled into a total score, and then categorised into 'high' (n = 1,770) and 'low' categories (n = 5,000) using a quartile split (upper quartile / lower three quartiles). The 'low' rape myth group had a mean score of 28.26 (SD = 4.45) with a range of 22-37, while the 'high' rape myth group had a mean score by item of 46.44 (SD = 8.27) with a range of 38-100.

As there were 150 students who indicated a gender non-binary identity, this group was included in further analyses on rape myth beliefs. There were 35 students who preferred not to indicate their gender identity, and this group was not included in further analyses. As with the staff group, there was an overlap of gender and rape myth beliefs. While 80% of female students were in the 'low'

rape myth beliefs group, only 50% of male students were in this group. Nearly all (91%) of the non-binary students were in the 'low' rape myth belief group.

Table 37. Cross-tabulation of male and female students with 'low' and 'high' rape myth belief groups.

	'Low' rape myth beliefs	'High' rape myth beliefs	Total
Female	80% (n = 4,141)	20% (n = 1,052)	5,193
Male	50% (n = 697)	50% (n = 695)	1,392
Non-binary	91% (n = 137)	9% (n = 13)	150
Total	4,975	1,760	6,735

There were consistent significant differences in responses of students in the top quartile of rape myth belief scores (n = 1,770) when compared with students from the bottom three quartiles on rape myth beliefs (n = 5,000). Significant differences were noted on all forms of sexual harassment, two forms of sexual violence, all indicators concerning the campus environment and safety, engagement with consent promotion and resources, and each of the indicators concerning attitudes and self-appraisal of capacity to respond to SVH.

Sexual violence and harassment. Students with relatively low rape myth beliefs (n = 2,317-4,710) described significantly higher levels of sexual harassment compared with students with relatively high rape myth beliefs (n = 916-1,626). These differences were most pronounced with respect to sexist and sexual harassment. For example, 17% of students in the low rape myth beliefs group did not describe experiencing any sexist harassment, while 58% of students recorded the maximum score of 3 in the recoded total sexist harassment score. This compared with 30% of students in the high rape myth beliefs group who did not experience any sexist harassment, and 40% of students in this group who recorded the maximum score of 3 on this indicator.

Table 38. Mean scores for measures of sexual harassment, for students, with statistical comparisons made of 'low' and 'high' rape myth belief student groups.

	All	Low rape myth	High rape myth
Sexist harassment	2.0	2.1***	1.7***
Sexual harassment	2.2	2.3***	1.9***
Unwanted attention	1.0	1.0***	0.9***
Sexualised comments	1.1	1.2**	1.1**
Sexual coercion	0.6	0.6***	0.5***
Electronic communication	1.3	1.4***	1.1***

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

There were two significant differences in sexual violence experiences between low rape myth belief students (n = 391-4,163) and high rape myth belief students (n = 398-1,442). Low rape myth belief students described significantly higher levels of non-consensual sexual touching and attempted anal, oral or vaginal sex. For instance, while 27% of low rape myth belief students had some experience of attempted sexual violence, 44% experienced non-consensual sexual touching. This compared with 22% of high rape myth belief students who had experienced attempted sexual violence and 37% of this group who experienced non-consensual sexual touching.

Table 39. Mean scores for measures of sexual assault and violence, for students, with statistical comparisons made of 'low' and 'high' rape myth belief student groups.

	All	Low rape myth	High rape myth
Non-consensual sexual touching	1.5	1.5***	1.2***
Non-consensual oral sex	0.6	0.7	0.6
Non-consensual vaginal penetration (female students)	1.2	1.2	1.0
Made to perform anal or vaginal sex (male students)	0.3	0.3	0.3
Non-consensual anal penetration	0.3	0.3	0.2
Attempted anal, oral or vaginal sex	1.0	1.1***	0.8***

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Campus environment. To a significant extent, low rape myth belief students indicated that they had less knowledge of institutional supports and reporting related to SVH and had lower scores concerning beliefs that the HEI would take a report of SVH seriously and provide support. This group also had significantly lower personal safety scores on the survey, and higher agreement scores that SVH was a significant issue for their campus community.

For example, only 13% of low rape myth belief students felt safe from SVH when socialising at night in the college town and 48% agreed that SVH is a problem at their HEI. This compared with 30% of high rape myth belief students who agreed that they felt safe when socialising and 30% who agreed that SVH was a problem at their HEI.

Table 40. Mean scores for measures of perceptions of the campus environment, for students, with statistical comparisons made of 'low' and 'high' rape myth belief student groups.

	All	Low rape myth	High rape myth
Knowledge of supports available and reporting process	6.9	6.6***	7.4***
HEI taking the report seriously and providing support	40.2	39.4***	42.0***
Perception of SVH as a significant issue	10.1	10.3***	9.8***
Personal safety	15.4	14.7***	17.1***

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

HEI information, consent promotion and support activities. There was no significant difference by rape myth belief level in the exposure of students to information from their HEI on SVH. There was a significant difference in exposure to promotion and support activities such as consent workshops, poster campaigns and so on, with students in the low rape myth belief group having taken part in a greater number of activities than students in the high rape myth belief group.

Table 41. Mean scores for exposure to HEI information, consent promotion and support activities, for students, with statistical comparisons made of 'low' and 'high' rape myth belief student groups.

	All	Low rape myth	High rape myth
Information received from the HEI	1.4	1.4	1.5
Promotion and support activities	3.5	3.7***	3.2***

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Attitudes, behavioural intentions, and preparedness to respond to SVH. In comparing students with relatively low and high rape myth beliefs, significant differences were noted in all key indicators of consent, bystander and SVH attitudes, beliefs and perceptions of preparedness to respond to SVH. Students in the 'low' rape myth belief quartile had significantly higher scores on negative peer reactions to SVH, along with attitudes to positive consent attitudes, bystander intervention, and disclosure support. This group had significantly higher scores on measures of consent literacy and verbal consent behavioural intentions, but significantly lower scores on passive consent and nonverbal behavioural intentions. Low rape myth belief students had significantly higher self-appraisal scores on preparedness to intervene as a bystander and to respond to a peer who makes a disclosure of SVH.

Table 42. Mean scores for measures of attitudes, behavioural intentions, and preparedness to respond to SVH, for students, with statistical comparisons made of 'low' and 'high' rape myth belief student groups.

	All	Low rape myth	High rape myth
Perception of negative peer reactions	7.9	8.0***	7.8***
Rape myth beliefs	33.0	28.3***	46.4***
Positive consent attitudes and intentions	35.6	36.6***	33.2***
Bystander intervention attitudes	38.9	40.3***	35.5***
Disclosure support	9.7	9.8***	9.4***
Passive consent behavioural intentions	4.9	4.7***	5.4***
Nonverbal consent behavioural intentions	9.0	9.0***	9.2***
Verbal consent behavioural intentions	15.8	16.1***	15.3***
Consent literacy	7.6	7.7***	7.5***
Self-appraisal of bystander preparedness (1 item)	3.0	3.1***	2.9***
Self-appraisal of disclosure preparedness (1 item)	3.2	3.3***	3.1***

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Intersectional analysis of staff and student survey responses

Purpose: To analyse how relationships between sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity and disability interact with experiences and attitudes related to SVH.

A quantitative analysis of intersectionality was made of the responses to staff and student surveys. This was achieved by combining particular demographic categories. Ethnicity was not considered with respect to staff members due to a relatively low number of non-white survey participants. An analysis of survey responses in terms of disability has previously been carried out in a separate secondary analysis published by the National Disability Authority.

Intersectional analysis of staff member survey responses
New sub-groups were created in the staff data set using gender, job role, and sexual orientation. Given the relatively low number of non-binary staff members who completed the survey, only male and female staff members were included in this analysis. Job role was examined by referring to whether staff members worked in an academic, research, or professional support / technical role. Sexual orientation was examined by creating a category based on staff members who are heterosexual and not heterosexual. The non-heterosexual sexual orientations were combined into one category to take account of relatively low numbers of asexual, bisexual, LGBT+ staff members.

The initial level of analysis was based on gender, using the HEA staff survey indicators to compare responses made by male and female staff members. This first round of analysis demonstrated consistent differences in responses to the key indicators in the survey by gender.

Subsequently, gender was combined with two intersecting categories: (a) Job role and (b) sexual orientation. Job role was used to compare survey responses by:
- Male academics
- Female academics
- Male professional support / technical staff
- Female professional support / technical staff

Sexual orientation was used as an intersecting variable with gender to direct a second round of intersectional analysis of staff members' survey responses. This took place by analysing the survey responses of the following groups:
- Male heterosexual staff members
- Male non-heterosexual staff members
- Female heterosexual staff members
- Female non-heterosexual staff members

Gender analysis of staff responses
A total of 2,399 females completed the HEA Staff Survey, along with 1,059 males, 18 non-binary staff members, and 40 staff members who preferred not to indicate their gender identity. A gender-based analysis of responses to the staff survey indicators was made by comparing male and female staff members' responses. Due to the low numbers of non-binary staff members and those who preferred not to indicate their gender identity, these groups were not included in this analysis.

Overall, there were significant gender differences in levels of sexual harassment experienced by female and male staff members and the prevalence of sexual violence. Further gender differences were identified between females and males in their perceptions and beliefs about Higher Education

institutions, along with their attitudes and preparedness regarding consent, bystander intervention, and disclosure.

Sexual violence and harassment. The responses of the female (n = 1,397-1,948) and male staff members (n = 686-851) who chose to respond to the survey items on sexual harassment were analysed for significant differences. In comparing the total scores on each of the types of sexual harassment, female staff members had significantly higher levels of sexist and sexual harassment, along with higher levels of unwanted sexual attention.

Table 43. Mean scores on measures of sexual harassment, for staff members, with statistical comparisons made between male and female staff groups.

	All	Male	Female
Sexist harassment	1.5	0.8***	1.8***
Sexual harassment	0.7	0.4***	0.7***
Unwanted attention	0.2	0.1***	0.2***
Sexualised comments	0.5	0.4	0.4
Sexual coercion	0.1	0.1	0.1

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

A total of 1,674 female staff members and 723 male staff members completed the items on sexual violence included in the survey. These responses were compiled into a total score and an analysis made to compare male and female staff members' responses. There was a significant difference by gender in the experience of sexual violence among staff members.

Table 44. Mean scores on the measure of sexual violence, for staff members, with statistical comparisons made between male and female staff groups.

	All	Male	Female
Experiences of sexual violence	0.3	0.2***	0.4***

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Campus environment. There were significant differences by gender across all survey indicators of perceptions of the HEI and campus environment. Male staff members had significantly higher agreement levels on ratings of HEI policies, senior management visibility, and institutional commitment to addressing SVH. Males also had significantly higher levels of agreement on the perception of HEI clarify in response to HEI and knowledge of procedures, greater awareness of training and messaging, perception of institutional support and validation, and a more positive perspective on institutional resistance and devaluing. Female staff members described a significantly higher willingness to engage in training related to consent, sexual violence and harassment.

Table 45. Mean scores for campus environment items, for staff members, with statistical comparisons made between male and female staff groups.

	All	Male	Female
Effective policies, visibility, commitment	10.5	11.4***	10.2***
Clarity of response and knowledge of procedures	18.2	19.8***	17.5***
Awareness of training and messaging	5.7	6.3***	5.4***

Willingness to engage in training	13.2	12.6***	13.5***
Institutional support and validation	11.5	12.2***	11.2***
Institutional resistance and devaluing (Reversed)	6.6	6.8***	6.5***

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Attitudes, perceptions, self-appraisal of capacity to respond. There were significant gender differences on nearly all of the survey indicators related to attitudes, behavioural intentions, and preparedness to respond to SVH. Male staff members (n = 830) had significantly higher rape myth belief scores compared with females (n = 1,964). There was no significant gender difference on positive consent attitudes between male staff (n = 725) and female staff (n = 1,665).

Male staff had significantly more positive perceptions of personal safety, greater confidence in their ability to receive a disclosure or intervene as a bystander, and were more likely to say they had a responsibility to intervention. By comparison, females had significantly greater agreement that SVH was a problem in their campus community and more likely to indicate that they had heard consent issues discussed in the past four years.

Table 46. Mean scores for measures of attitudes, beliefs and peer perceptions, for staff members, with statistical comparisons made between male and female staff groups.

	All	Male	Female
Rape myth	24.8	26.0***	24.3***
Consent attitudes and intentions	19.3	19.1	19.4
Campus safety – Personal safety concerning SVH	7.6	8.2***	7.4***
Campus safety - Perception of the problem of SVH	6.3	6.0***	6.4***
Respond effectively to a disclosure of an incident of sexual harassment and / or violence	2.3	2.5***	2.2***
Can make effective intervention as a bystander	2.2	2.4***	2.1***
Heard sexual consent issues discussed by students in last four years (% Yes)	35%	31%***	37%***
Heard sexual consent issues discussed by staff in last four years (% Yes)	36%	34%	37%
Feeling responsible to intervene as a bystander (% Yes)	55%	60%***	53%***

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Intersectional analysis of staff survey by gender and job role

Having established that there were pervasive difference in responses to the survey key indicators by gender, the intersection of the gender and job role was further explored. This analysis was made by comparing male and female staff responses as they intersected with two job roles: (a) Academic (male: n = 655, female: n = 1,095), and (b) Professional support / technical support staff (male: n = 296, female: n = 1,026). The number of non-binary staff members was not sufficient to include this group of staff in the analysis. The Mann-Whitney statistical test was used to assess differences in survey responses between male academic and male support staff, and separately, differences in responses between female academic and support staff.

Sexual violence and harassment. In the table below, it can be noted there were no significant differences between male academic (n = 416-517) and support staff (n = 194-245) in their survey responses on sexual harassment. There were significant differences on a number of the harassment sub-scales among female academics (n = 607-901) and female support staff (n = 648-837). Female academic staff reported significantly higher levels of sexist and sexual harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexualised comments. This meant that, of all four sub-groups, female academics described the highest level of sexual harassment.

Table 47. Mean scores on measures of sexual harassment, for staff members, with statistical comparisons made between male academic and male support staff groups, and between female academic and female support staff groups.

	All	Male Academics	Male Support	Female Academics	Female Support
Sexist harassment	1.5	0.8	0.8	1.9***	1.6***
Sexual harassment	0.7	0.4	0.4	0.8**	0.6**
Unwanted attention	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2***	0.1***
Sexualised comments	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.5*	0.4*
Sexual coercion	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

There were no significant differences by gender / job role on experiences of sexual violence described by the staff members who responded to the survey. This extended to the analysis of female academics (n = 766) and female support staff (n = 730), and the analysis of male academics (n = 438) and male support staff (n = 207).

Table 48. Mean scores on sexual violence, for staff members, with statistical comparisons made between male academic and male support staff groups, and between female academic and female support staff groups.

	All	Male Academics	Male Support	Female Academics	Female Support
Experiences of sexual violence	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.3

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Campus environment. In comparing the survey responses of male academic and male support staff, a number of significant differences were noted in perceptions of the campus environment and institution, personal awareness, and willingness to engage in training between male academics and male support staff. Compared with male support staff, male academics were significantly less willing to engage in training related to consent, sexual violence and harassment, and had less positive attitudes and self-appraisals of knowledge regarding institutional policies, institutional responses to SVH, and the perception of institutional support and validation.

Significant differences were even more pronounced in comparisons of female academics and female professional support and technical staff. There was a similar pattern as noted above for male academic / support staff, with female academics describing themselves as less positive and informed about institutional policies and responses, institutional resistance and devaluing, and awareness of training and messaging. These findings demonstrate that, of all four sub-groups, female academics felt least informed and positive about institutional policy and responses.

Table 49. Mean scores for campus environment items, for staff members, with statistical comparisons made between male academic and male support staff groups, and between female academic and female support staff groups.

	All	Male Academics	Male Support	Female Academics	Female Support
Effective policies, visibility, commitment	10.5	11.2*	11.7*	9.6***	10.7***
Clarity of response and knowledge of procedures	18.2	19.5**	20.5**	17.0***	18.3***
Awareness of training and messaging	5.7	6.3	6.4	5.2***	5.6***
Willingness to engage in training	13.2	12.5*	13.0*	13.4***	13.7***
Institutional support and validation	11.5	12.0***	12.7***	10.8***	11.7***
Institutional resistance and devaluing (Reversed)	6.6	6.7	7.0	6.4***	6.6***

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Attitudes, perceptions, self-appraisal of capacity to respond. There were several significant differences between male academics and support staff on key measures of attitudes, perceptions, and self-evaluations of relevant skills. Compared with male support staff, male academics had significantly higher scores on the perception that SVH is a problem for the campus community, and were significantly less likely to indicate that they had heard sexual consent issues discussed by staff and students in the past four years. There were no significant differences between male academics (n = 500) and support staff (n = 239) on rape myth beliefs and on positive consent attitudes (male academics: n = 443, male support staff: n = 201).

Similarly, there were relatively few significant differences between female academics and female professional support and technical staff on measures of attitudes, perceptions, and self-evaluations of relevant skills. Female academics did feel significantly less safe on campus compared with female support staff, and had significantly higher ratings on the perception that SVH is a problem on campus. Female academics were significantly more likely than female support staff to feel responsible to intervene as a bystander, but were less likely to have heard about consent issues among staff or students than female support staff. There were no significant differences between female academics (n = 894) and support staff (n = 859) on rape myth beliefs and on positive consent attitudes (female academics: n = 776, female support staff: n = 713).

Table 50. Mean scores for measures of attitudes, beliefs and peer perceptions, for staff members, with statistical comparisons made between male academic and male support staff groups, and between female academic and female support staff groups.

	All	Male Academics	Male Support	Female Academics	Female Support
Rape myth	24.8	25.7	25.9	24.3	24.4
Consent attitudes and intentions	19.3	19.3	18.9	19.3	19.4
Campus safety – Personal safety concerning SVH	7.6	8.2	8.3	7.2***	7.7***
Campus safety - Perception of the problem of SVH	6.3	6.1*	5.9*	6.5**	6.3**
Respond effectively to a disclosure of an incident of sexual harassment and / or violence	2.3	2.5	2.5	2.2	2.2

Can make effective intervention as a bystander	2.2	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.1
Heard sexual consent issues discussed by students in last four years (% Yes)	35%	29%*	36%*	36%*	40%*
Heard sexual consent issues discussed by staff in last four years (% Yes)	36%	32%*	40%*	35%*	41%*
Feeling responsible to intervene as a bystander (% Yes)	55%	60%	62%	57%**	52%**

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Intersectional analysis of staff survey by gender and sexual orientation
The next intersectional analysis carried out on staff survey responses took place by examining intersections between gender and sexual orientation. The number of non-binary staff was not sufficient to include this group as a separate gender category. All of the non-heterosexual sexual orientations were combined into one category to include as many staff members as possible in an analysis of gender and orientation. This resulted in a new grouping variable comprising 178 female non-heterosexual staff members, 2,159 female heterosexual staff, 128 male non-heterosexual staff members, and 907 male heterosexual staff members.

This intersectional grouping of staff gender and sexual orientation resulted in the identification of a number of significant differences in experiences of sexual harassment. These were focused on the experience of sexist and sexual harassment, and of sexualised comments. There were several other significant differences in responses to key indicators noted in this intersectional analysis on measures of campus environment and attitudes.

Sexual violence and harassment. There were significant differences between male heterosexual and non-heterosexual staff members. Non-heterosexual male staff (n = 91-133) had higher levels of sexist and sexual harassment and sexualised harassment compared with heterosexual male staff (n = 583-720). The same pattern was noted when female non-heterosexual staff (n = 91-142) responses were compared with female heterosexual staff (n = 1,273-1,757).

Of the four sub-groups, non-heterosexual male staff experienced the highest level of sexualised comments overall, followed by female non-heterosexual staff. These two groups also had the highest level of sexual harassment. Sexist harassment was most commonly experienced by non-heterosexual females and female heterosexual staff members.

Table 51. Mean scores on measures of sexual harassment, for staff members, with statistical comparisons made between male heterosexual and male non-heterosexual staff groups, and between female heterosexual and non-heterosexual staff groups.

	All	Male Not heterosexual	Male Heterosexual	Female Not heterosexual	Female Heterosexual
Sexist harassment	1.5	1.1***	0.7***	2.2***	1.7***
Sexual harassment	0.7	1.0*	0.3*	1.0**	0.7**
Unwanted attention	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2
Sexualised comments	0.5	0.8***	0.4***	0.6**	0.4**
Sexual coercion	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

There was a significant difference between non-heterosexual males (n = 96) and heterosexual males (n = 614) on the experience of sexual violence. The non-heterosexual male staff group described a

significantly higher level of sexual violence. Among the four groups overall, non-heterosexual females (n = 113) and males had the highest levels of sexual violence. Male heterosexual staff members had the lowest level of sexual violence, followed by heterosexual females (n = 1,526).

Table 52. Mean scores on sexual violence, for staff members, with statistical comparisons made between male heterosexual and male non-heterosexual staff groups, and between female heterosexual and non-heterosexual staff groups.

	All	Male Not heterosexual	Male Heterosexual	Female Not heterosexual	Female Heterosexual
Experiences of sexual violence	0.3	0.4**	0.2**	0.4	0.3

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Campus environment. There were several significant differences by intersectional sub-group on measures of the campus environment, personal awareness and skills. Compared with heterosexual male staff members, non-heterosexual male staff members had significantly less positive appraisals of institutional policies, clarity of response and knowledge of procedures, institutional support and resistance, while also being less aware of training and messaging.

There were fewer significant differences between non-heterosexual female staff and heterosexual female staff members, but where these differences did occur a similar pattern was followed. As with their male counterparts, non-heterosexual female staff had a less positive view of the institution than female heterosexual staff members. Overall, non-heterosexual female staff had the least positive responses to survey indicators related to perceptions of institutional policy and responses.

Table 53. Mean scores for campus environment items, for staff members, with statistical comparisons made between male heterosexual and male non-heterosexual staff groups, and between female heterosexual and non-heterosexual staff groups.

	All	Male Not heterosexual	Male Heterosexual	Female Not heterosexual	Female Heterosexual
Effective policies, visibility, commitment	10.5	10.5***	11.5***	9.6**	10.2**
Clarity of response and knowledge of procedures	18.2	18.3***	20.0***	16.6**	17.7**
Awareness of training and messaging	5.7	5.9*	6.4*	5.3	5.5
Willingness to engage in training	13.2	12.8	12.6	13.7	13.5
Institutional support and validation	11.5	11.4**	12.3**	10.6*	11.3*
Institutional resistance and devaluing (Reversed)	6.6	6.4**	6.9**	6.3	6.6

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Attitudes, perceptions, self-appraisal of capacity to respond. There were four significant differences between male heterosexual and non-heterosexual staff members on survey key indicators related to attitudes, beliefs and self-appraisals of relevant skills. Compared with heterosexual males, non-heterosexual male staff had significantly less positive perceptions of personal safety and viewed SVH as a problem on campus as significantly more of an issue. They also were significantly more likely to have heard consent issues being discussed by students and staff. There were no significant differences on rape myth beliefs by male non-heterosexual staff members (n = 104) compared with

heterosexual male staff (n = 708) or in consent attitudes (male non-heterosexual staff: n = 99, male heterosexual staff: n = 611).

Compared with heterosexual female staff, non-heterosexual female staff had significantly higher agreement that SVH is a problem on campus, and had a significantly higher level of agreement that they could make an effective intervention as a bystander. Non-heterosexual female staff were also more likely to have heard sexual consent issues being discussed by students and to feel responsible for intervening as a bystander. There were no significant differences on rape myth beliefs by female non-heterosexual staff members (n = 140) compared with heterosexual female staff (n = 1,774), or consent attitudes (female non-heterosexual staff: n = 139, female heterosexual staff: n = 1,483).

Table 54. Mean scores for measures of attitudes, beliefs and peer perceptions, for staff members, with statistical comparisons made between male heterosexual and male non-heterosexual staff groups, and between female heterosexual and non-heterosexual staff groups.

	All	Male Not heterosexual	Male Heterosexual	Female Not heterosexual	Female Heterosexual
Rape myth	24.8	26.0	25.9	23.5	24.3
Consent attitudes and intentions	19.3	19.2	19.1	19.5	19.4
Campus safety – Personal safety concerning SVH	7.6	7.5***	8.3***	7.2	7.5
Campus safety - Perception of the problem of SVH	6.3	6.3*	6.0*	6.9***	6.3***
Respond effectively to a disclosure of an incident of sexual harassment and / or violence	2.3	2.5	2.5	2.2	2.2
Can make effective intervention as a bystander	2.2	2.4	2.4	2.3*	2.1*
Heard sexual consent issues discussed by students in last four years (% Yes)	35%	39%*	30%*	49%***	36%***
Heard sexual consent issues discussed by staff in last four years (% Yes)	36%	45%**	33%**	35%	37%
Feeling responsible to intervene as a bystander (% Yes)	55%	60%	60%	62%*	53%*

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Intersectional analysis of student survey responses
The HEA Student Survey participants were grouped into two sets of intersecting categories to facilitate an intersectional analysis. These used (a) Gender and sexual orientation, and (b) Gender and disability status. As with the analysis made of the staff data set, an analysis was carried out first using gender to examine responses on the key indicators from the student survey. This established that gender was an important organising factor to use in analysing the student responses.

Following this first round of analysis, the analysis was extended to an intersectional analysis of gender and sexual orientation based on the following groups:
- Male heterosexual students
- Female heterosexual students

- Male non-heterosexual students
- Female non-heterosexual students

Separately, an intersectional analysis was made using gender and disability. In this case, the student numbers for each sub-group were sufficient to include non-binary students. This resulted in the following groups:
- Female students with a disability
- Female students without a disability
- Male students with a disability
- Male students without a disability
- Non-binary students with a disability
- Non-binary students without a disability

The respondents to the HEA Student Survey comprised 6,051 female students, 1,640 male students, 167 non-binary students, and 1,640 male students, and 43 students who preferred not to indicate their gender identity. An analysis was made of group differences on the survey indicators between male, female, and non-binary students. Given the relatively small number of students who preferred not to indicate their gender identity, this group was not included in the analysis.

A number of gender-based differences were identified in the responses made to the survey indicators:
- Consistent differences were identified between male and female students on the key survey indicators. The only non-significant difference between males and females was on the number of consent and SVH promotion and support activities that were engaged with.
- Differences were consistently noted between male and non-binary students' survey responses. The only indicators where there was not a significant difference was in the perception of SVH as a significant issue, information received from the HEI about sexual violence and harassment, perception of negative peer reactions, consent literacy, and self-appraisal of bystander preparedness.
- There were a number of differences between female students and non-binary students on the HEA Student Survey indicators. These were noted with respect to three forms of sexual harassment, whether the HEI would take a report of SVH seriously, engagement in consent promotion and resource activities, and with most indicators of attitudes, intentions and preparedness to respond to SVH.

Sexual violence and harassment. Compared with male students (n = 884-1,438), female students (n = 2,690-5,465) described lower levels of all the forms of sexual harassment included on the survey. For example, 85% of female students described having experienced some form of sexist harassment, while 61% reported maximum scores on the three rescaled (0-1) sexist harassment items. By comparison, 55% of male students had experienced sexist harassment, with 15% reporting maximum scores on the rescaled sexist harassment items.

Male students' sexual harassment scores were consistently different from those of non-binary students (n = 106-156). For example, 92% of non-binary students described having experienced some form of sexist harassment, with 62% experiencing the maximum score on the rescaled (0-1) items. Differences extended to female and non-binary students too. For example, non-binary students described significantly higher levels of electronic-based sexual harassment compared with female students. A total of 74% of non-binary students described experiencing some form of electronic-based harassment (20% of these students recorded the maximum level of electronic harassment on the 4 rescaled 0-1 items), compared with 65% of female students (11% recorded the maximum score), and 43% of male students (4% recorded the maximum score).

Table 55. Mean scores for measures of sexual harassment, for students, with statistical comparisons made of female, male, and non-binary student groups.

	All	Female	Male	Non-Binary
Sexist harassment	2.0	2.2[a]	1.1[a, g]	2.3[g]
Sexual harassment	2.2	2.4[a]	1.3[a, g]	2.4[g]
Unwanted attention	1.0	1.1[a, e]	0.5[a, g]	1.0[e, g]
Sexualised comments	1.1	1.2[a, d]	1.0[a, g]	1.8[d, g]
Sexual coercion	0.6	0.6[a]	0.2[a, g]	0.6[g]
Electronic communication	1.3	1.4[a, d]	0.8[a, g]	1.9[d, g]

Female / male: a = significance level <.001, b = significant at p.01, c = significant at p.05
Female / non-binary: d = significance level <.001, e = significant at p.01, f = significant at p.05
Male / non-binary: g = significance level <.001, h = significant at p.01, i = significant at p.05

While there were no significant differences between females (n = 3,398-4,605) and non-binary students (n = 65-134) on indicators of sexual violence included in the survey, there were significant differences between females and males (n = 820-1,197) on all relevant indicators. There were also significant differences between males and non-binary students. For instance, 48% of females experienced non-consensual sexual touching, compared with 42% of non-binary students, and 19% of male students. Thirty per-cent of female students had some experience of attempted non-consensual anal, oral or vaginal sex, as did 29% of non-binary students, and 9% of male students.

Table 56. Mean scores for measures of sexual assault and violence, for students, with statistical comparisons made of female, male, and non-binary student groups.

	All	Female	Male	Non-Binary
Non-consensual sexual touching	1.5	1.7[a]	0.6[a, g]	1.8[g]
Non-consensual oral sex	0.6	0.7[a]	0.3[a, g]	0.8[g]
Non-consensual vaginal penetration (female students)	1.2	1.2	n/a	1.2
Made to perform anal or vaginal sex (male students)	0.3	n/a	0.3[i]	0.5[i]
Non-consensual anal penetration	0.3	0.3[a]	0.1[a, i]	0.2[i]
Attempted anal, oral or vaginal sex	1.0	1.2[a]	0.4[a, g]	1.3[g]

Female / male: a = significance level <.001, b = significant at p.01, c = significant at p.05
Female / non-binary: d = significance level <.001, e = significant at p.01, f = significant at p.05
Male / non-binary: g = significance level <.001, h = significant at p.01, i = significant at p.05

Campus environment. In comparing males, females, and non-binary students, the male respondents to the survey had the most positive responses with respect to knowledge of HEI supports for SVH and the reporting process, perceptions of the HEI taking reports seriously, and personal safety, along with lowest endorsement of the idea that SVH was a significant issue for the campus community. Differences between male and female students' responses were significant on each of these indicators. Differences between male and non-binary students were significant on all but one of the indicators (perception of SVH as a significant issue). There was also one significant difference between female and non-binary students, with non-binary students having the least positive expectation that the HEI would take the report seriously and provide support to survivors.

Table 57. Mean scores for measures of perceptions of the campus environment, for students, with statistical comparisons made of female, male, and non-binary student groups.

	All	Female	Male	Non-Binary
Knowledge of supports available and reporting process	6.9	6.6[a]	8.0[g]	6.7
HEI taking the report seriously and providing support	40.2	39.7[a,d]	42.8[g]	36.1
Perception of SVH as a significant issue	10.1	10.2[b]	10.0	10.1
Personal safety	15.4	14.2[a]	19.9[g]	14.0

Female / male: a = significance level <.001, b = significant at p.01, c = significant at p.05
Female / non-binary: d = significance level <.001, e = significant at p.01, f = significant at p.05
Male / non-binary: g = significance level <.001, h = significant at p.01, i = significant at p.05

Female students had significantly lower scores than males on the items referring to information on SVH received from their HEI. Non-binary students reported significantly greater engagement with consent promotion and resource activities than either females or males.

Table 58. Mean scores for exposure to HEI information, consent promotion and support activities, for students, with statistical comparisons made of female, male, and non-binary student groups.

	All	Female	Male	Non-Binary
Information received from the HEI	1.4	1.4[a]	1.7[a]	1.5
Promotion and support activities	3.5	3.5[e]	3.5[h]	4.0[e, h]

Female / male: a = significance level <.001, b = significant at p.01, c = significant at p.05
Female / non-binary: d = significance level <.001, e = significant at p.01, f = significant at p.05
Male / non-binary: g = significance level <.001, h = significant at p.01, i = significant at p.05

Attitudes, behavioural intentions, and preparedness to respond to SVH. There was a significant difference between male and female students on all indicators related to consent, bystander, and disclosure attitudes, behavioural intentions, and preparedness to respond to SVH. Compared with males, female students anticipated significantly greater negative peer reactions to a disclosure of sexual violence or harassment, and had lower preparedness for disclosure and bystander intervention. Female students had significantly lower rape myth beliefs than males, more positive attitudes to consent and bystander intervention, higher personal support for students who disclose SVH to them, lower passive consent behavioural intentions and higher intentions for nonverbal and verbal consent behaviours. Their scores on the consent literacy measure were significantly lower than those of male students.

Male students had significantly different scores on all measures of attitudes, beliefs and preparedness to non-binary students, with the exception of consent literacy and self-appraisal of preparedness to engage as a bystander. Non-binary students' responses on these indicators followed a similar trend to those of female students. Thus, of the three student groups, males anticipated the least likelihood of negative peer reactions to a disclosure of SVH, the highest rape myth belief scores, least positive attitudes to consent and bystander intervention, least supportive disclosure attitudes, and the highest level of intention to engage in passive consent.

Finally, several significant differences were noted between female and non-binary students. Non-binary students had significantly higher scores on anticipation of negative peer reactions to SVH, lower scores on rape myth beliefs, the most positive consent and bystander intervention attitudes, verbal consent behavioural intentions, consent literacy, preparedness to receive a disclosure and to intervene as a bystander.

Table 59. Mean scores for measures of attitudes, behavioural intentions, and preparedness to respond to SVH, for students, with statistical comparisons made of female, male, and non-binary student groups.

	All	Female	Male	Non-Binary
Perception of negative peer reactions	7.9	8.1[a, d]	7.1[a, g]	8.7[d, g]
Rape myth beliefs	33.0	31.4[a, d]	39.5[a, g]	28.8[d, g]
Positive consent attitudes and intentions	35.6	35.8[a, d]	34.3[a, g]	38.3[d, g]
Bystander intervention attitudes	38.9	39.9[a, d]	35.1[a, g]	41.2[d, g]
Disclosure support	9.7	9.7[a]	9.5[a, h]	9.7[h]
Passive consent behavioural intentions	4.9	4.6[a]	5.9[a, g]	4.8[g]
Nonverbal consent behavioural intentions	9.0	9.1[c, d]	8.9[c, h]	8.2[d, h]
Verbal consent behavioural intentions	15.8	15.9[c, d]	15.6[c, g]	16.3[d, g]
Consent literacy	7.6	7.6[a, e]	7.9[a]	8.0[e]
Self-appraisal of bystander preparedness (1 item)	3.0	3.0[a, f]	3.2[a]	3.2[f]
Self-appraisal of disclosure preparedness (1 item)	3.2	3.2[b, d]	3.3[b, i]	3.6[d, i]

Female / male: a = significance level <.001, b = significant at p.01, c = significant at p.05
Female / non-binary: d = significance level <.001, e = significant at p.01, f = significant at p.05
Male / non-binary: g = significance level <.001, h = significant at p.01, i = significant at p.05

Intersectional analysis of student survey by gender and sexual orientation
Extensive gender differences were noted in response to the key indicators on the student survey. This observation was built on by creating two additional variables in the student data set. The first combined sexual orientation with gender. For this analysis, as many students as possible were included by combining non-heterosexual students into one category. This enabled the creation of six groups:

- Heterosexual female (n = 4,312)
- Heterosexual male (n = 1,237)
- Heterosexual non-binary (n = 7)
- Non-heterosexual female (n = 1,552)
- Non-heterosexual male (n = 367)
- Non-heterosexual non-binary (n = 151)

As noted above, the number of heterosexual non-binary students was low (n = 7) and so it was not possible to include a combined variable of non-binary identity and orientation. This resulted in a set of four groups that were used for the analysis, combining heterosexual / non-heterosexual and female / male student groups.

Sexual violence and harassment. There was a pattern of consistent significant differences when heterosexual female (n = 1,952-4,312) and non-heterosexual female student (n = 1,552) responses were compared with respect to experiences of sexual harassment. Non-heterosexual females had significantly higher scores on each measure of sexual harassment compared with heterosexual females.

A broadly similar pattern was noted with respect to heterosexual male (n = 1,237) and non-heterosexual males' (n = 367). With the exception of sexist harassment, there were significant differences between the two groups on measures of sexual harassment. Non-heterosexual males

had higher levels of sexual harassment experience than heterosexual males. Overall, when comparing the mean values for the four sub-groups, it can be noted that non-heterosexual females had the highest level of sexual harassment across all categories of harassment, while heterosexual males had the lowest level of sexual harassment.

Table 60. Mean scores for measures of sexual harassment, for students, with statistical comparisons made between heterosexual and non-heterosexual female groups, and heterosexual male and non-heterosexual male groups.

	All	Heterosexual female	Non-heterosexual female	Heterosexual male	Non-heterosexual male
Sexist harassment	2.0	2.2***	2.4***	1.1	1.1
Sexual harassment	2.2	2.4***	2.6***	1.3***	1.6***
Unwanted attention	1.0	1.1*	1.2*	0.5**	0.6**
Sexualised comments	1.1	1.1***	1.5***	0.9***	1.2***
Sexual coercion	0.6	0.6*	0.7*	0.2***	0.3***
Electronic communication	1.3	1.3***	1.7***	0.7***	1.2***

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

A similar pattern was noted in the student intersectional sub-group responses when experiences of sexual violence were reviewed. There were consistent significant differences between non-heterosexual female students (n = 879-1,185) and heterosexual female students (n = 1,569=3,289). There were also significant differences between non-heterosexual male (n = 183-280) and heterosexual male students (n = 620-891) in the incidence of sexual violence that they described, with the exception of being made to perform anal or vaginal sex. Non-heterosexual males had significantly higher levels of sexual violence experience compared with heterosexual males. Overall, in a visual comparison of mean values, heterosexual female students had higher incidence of sexual violence than either male student category, but of all the student groups, non-heterosexual females had the highest incidence of sexual violence.

Table 61. Mean scores for measures of sexual assault and violence, for students, with statistical comparisons made between heterosexual and non-heterosexual female groups, and heterosexual male and non-heterosexual male groups.

	All	Heterosexual female	Non-heterosexual female	Heterosexual male	Non-heterosexual male
Non-consensual sexual touching	1.5	1.6***	1.9***	0.5**	0.8**
Non-consensual oral sex	0.6	0.7*	0.8*	0.2**	0.4**
Non-consensual vaginal penetration (female students)	1.2	1.0***	1.4***	n/a	n/a
Made to perform anal or vaginal sex (male students)	0.3	n/a	n/a	0.3	0.4
Non-consensual anal penetration	0.3	0.3*	0.4*	0.1***	0.3***
Attempted anal, oral or vaginal sex	1.0	1.0***	1.5***	0.3***	0.6***

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Campus environment. A similar pattern of differences was noted for key indicators related to student perceptions of the institutional culture for taking SVH seriously and for personal knowledge

of supports and the reporting process. Thus, compared with non-heterosexual female students, heterosexual females had significantly higher and more positive appraisals of their knowledge of supports and reporting, views on the HEI taking the report seriously, and personal safety. This distinction was also reflected in the survey responses of heterosexual and non-heterosexual males, as heterosexual males had higher scores than non-heterosexual males on the same measures. An inspection of the mean values on each of these factors demonstrated that non-heterosexual females were the sub-group with the least positive impression of institutional policies and responses, and had an especially low sense of personal safety compared with the other groups.

Table 62. Mean scores for measures of perceptions of the campus environment, for students, with statistical comparisons made between heterosexual and non-heterosexual female groups, and heterosexual male and non-heterosexual male groups.

	All	Heterosexual female	Non-heterosexual female	Heterosexual male	Non-heterosexual male
Knowledge of supports available and reporting process	6.9	6.7**	6.5**	8.0*	7.6*
HEI taking the report seriously and providing support	40.2	40.4***	37.9***	43.4***	40.9***
Perception of SVH as a significant issue	10.1	10.2	10.2	10.0	10.1
Personal safety	15.4	14.5***	13.5***	20.3***	18.6***

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

HEI information, consent promotion and support activities. A significant difference was not identified between heterosexual and non-heterosexual male students on the number of consent / SVH promotion and support activities that they had engaged with. However, the two groups did differ significantly on the information they had received from HEIs about sexual violence and harassment. Non-heterosexual males had engaged in more of information activities than heterosexual males.

There were significant differences between heterosexual and non-heterosexual females on both indicators. Non-heterosexual females had significantly higher engagement with HEI information and with activities that promote and support consent / SVH supports. Overall, the pattern that emerged was of greater engagement among males with information provided by the HEI, compared with the two female sub-groups, but the highest number of promotion and support activities were engaged in by non-heterosexual females and males.

Table 63. Mean scores for exposure to HEI information, consent promotion and support activities, for students, with statistical comparisons made between heterosexual and non-heterosexual female groups, and heterosexual male and non-heterosexual male groups.

	All	Heterosexual female	Non-heterosexual female	Heterosexual male	Non-heterosexual male
Information received from the HEI	1.4	1.3**	1.4**	1.7	1.7
Promotion and support activities	3.5	3.3***	3.9***	3.4**	3.8**

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Attitudes, behavioural intentions, and preparedness to respond to SVH. There were significant differences between heterosexual and non-heterosexual females on nearly all of the student survey key indicators of attitudes, intentions, and preparedness to respond to SVH. Compared with

heterosexual female students, non-heterosexual female students had significantly higher agreement with the positive consent and bystander intervention attitudes scales. They also had significantly higher behavioural intentions with regard to passive and verbal consent behaviours, and higher consent literacy scores. They evaluated themselves significantly more capable with regard to responding to a disclose of SVH or in bystander intervention. Their rape myth belief scores were significantly lower than those of heterosexual females, but they had a greater expectation that peers may react negatively following disclosure of SVH.

A broadly similar pattern was identified in the comparison of heterosexual and non-heterosexual male students' responses to this section of the survey. The non-heterosexual male students had more positive attitudes (positive consent and bystander intervention attitudes, rape myth beliefs, disclosure support). They also had significantly higher behavioural intentions with regard to verbal and passive verbal consent behaviour, and a greater expectation that peers would react negatively following SVH.

Overall, across the four sub-groups, the non-heterosexual female student group emerged with the most positive and proactive set of attitudes and beliefs, and the highest expectation for negative peer reactions to SVH. As a group, heterosexual males had the highest mean scores on rape myth beliefs, along with the lowest mean scores on positive consent and bystander intervention attitudes.

Table 64. Mean scores for measures of attitudes, behavioural intentions, and preparedness to respond to SVH, for students, with statistical comparisons made between heterosexual and non-heterosexual female groups, and heterosexual male and non-heterosexual male groups.

	All	Heterosexual female	Non-heterosexual female	Heterosexual male	Non-heterosexual male
Perception of negative peer reactions	7.9	8.0***	8.5***	7.0***	7.5***
Rape myth beliefs	33.0	32.2***	29.4***	40.5***	35.6***
Positive consent attitudes and intentions	35.6	35.3***	37.3***	34.0***	35.3***
Bystander intervention attitudes	38.9	39.5***	40.9***	34.3***	37.5***
Disclosure support	9.7	9.7	9.7	9.5***	9.6***
Passive consent behavioural intentions	4.9	4.5**	4.7**	6.0***	5.6***
Nonverbal consent behavioural intentions	9.0	9.1	9.0	8.9	9.0
Verbal consent behavioural intentions	15.8	15.7***	16.3***	15.4***	16.2***
Consent literacy	7.6	7.5***	7.8***	7.9	7.8
Self-appraisal of bystander preparedness (1 item)	3.0	3.0***	3.2***	3.2	3.1
Self-appraisal of disclosure preparedness (1 item)	3.2	3.2***	3.5***	3.3	3.4

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Intersectional analysis of student survey by gender and disability status

A further gender-based intersectional analysis of student survey responses was carried out by combining gender identity with disability status. This led to the following six sub-groups:
- Female students with a disability (n = 1,192)
- Male students with a disability (n = 223)
- Non-binary students with a disability (n = 93)
- Female students without a disability (n = 4,614)
- Male students without a disability (n = 1,359)
- Non-binary students without a disability (n = 58)

The non-binary student sub-groups had relatively low numbers (n = 58-93). For the purposes of an exploratory analysis these groups were carried forward into the comparison of responses on the key indicators included in the survey.

Sexual violence and harassment. The six groups' mean total scores on the measures of sexual harassment are presented in the table below. Having established in the earlier analysis that there were typically significant differences by gender, each of the gender categories (male, female, non-binary) were examined with respect to disability status. Statistical analysis was applied to review whether each gender sub-group was significantly different to the other. When comparing female students with a disability (n = 518-1,109) with female students without a disability (n = 2,077-4,119), significant differences on all measures of sexual harassment were identified. Female students with a disability had significantly higher sexual harassment scores than females who did not have a disability. A similar pattern was found when comparing male students with a disability (n = 120-191) with male students without a disability (n = 740-1,202). Male students with a disability had significantly higher scores on each type of sexual harassment.

It should be noted that, given the lower numbers of students in each of the disability / non-binary categories, the criterion for statistical significance is likely to be higher. There were fewer significant differences in sexual harassment experience described by non-binary students with a disability (n = 56-86) and non-binary students without a disability (n = 38-55). There was one significant difference, with non-binary students with a disability having significantly higher levels of sexual harassment via electronic communication than non-binary students with no disability. In addition, the difference between these two groups on sexualised comments approached significance.

Table 65. Mean scores for measures of sexual harassment, for students, with statistical comparisons made between females with a disability and without a disability, males with a disability and without a disability, and non-binary students with and without a disability.

	All	Female disability	Female No disability	Male disability	Male No disability	Non-binary disability	Non-binary No disability
Sexist harassment	2.0	2.4***	2.2***	1.3*	1.1*	2.3	2.3
Sexual harassment	2.2	2.7***	2.3***	1.7***	1.3***	2.4	2.2
Unwanted attention	1.0	1.3***	1.1***	0.6*	0.5*	0.9	0.9
Sexualised comments	1.1	1.3***	1.1***	1.2*	0.9*	1.9	1.4
Sexual coercion	0.6	0.8***	0.6***	0.3**	0.2**	0.6	0.5
Electronic communication	1.3	1.7***	1.3***	1.1***	0.7***	2.1**	1.4**

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

With respect to experiences of sexual violence, the intersectional analysis of gender and disability revealed the greatest number of differences when females with a disability (n = 736-952) were

compared with female students with no disability (n = 2,530-3,482). There were significant differences across all of the measures of sexual violence relevant to them, with female students who had a disability more likely to describe having experienced non-consensual sexual touching, non-consensual oral sex, non-consensual vaginal penetration, non-consensual anal penetration, and attempted anal, oral or vaginal sex.

Male students with a disability (n = 121-172) were significantly more likely than males without a disability (n = 679-998) to have been made to perform anal or vaginal sex and to describe attempted anal, oral or vaginal sex. There were also two significant differences identified when comparing non-binary students with a disability (n = 39-75) and non-binary students without a disability (n = 21-47). Non-binary students with a disability had significantly higher scores on the measure of non-consensual vaginal penetration and attempted anal, oral or vaginal sex.

Overall, when the mean responses of the six student sub-groups are reviewed, it can be noted that females with a disability experienced the highest levels of sexual violence, followed by non-binary students with a disability. Males without a disability had the lowest level of sexual experience among the six groups reviewed.

Table 66. Mean scores for measures of sexual assault and violence, for students, with statistical comparisons made between females with a disability and without a disability, males with a disability and without a disability, and non-binary students with and without a disability.

	All	Female disability	Female No disability	Male disability	Male No disability	Non-binary disability	Non-binary No disability
Non-consensual sexual touching	1.5	2.4***	1.5***	0.8	0.5	1.9	1.7
Non-consensual oral sex	0.6	1.2***	0.6***	0.4	0.2	0.8	0.6
Non-consensual vaginal penetration (female students)	1.2	1.8***	1.0***	n/a	n/a	1.5**	0.3**
Made to perform anal or vaginal sex (male students)	0.3	n/a	n/a	0.4*	0.3*	0.5	0.3
Non-consensual anal penetration	0.3	0.6***	0.2***	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2
Attempted anal, oral or vaginal sex	1.0	2.0***	0.9***	0.6*	0.3*	1.5*	0.6*

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Attitudes, behavioural intentions, and preparedness to respond to SVH. In comparing female students with a disability and female students without a disability, significant differences were noted on three of the four key indicators of student views on the institutional response to SVH, their perception of SVH as a significant campus issue, and their own personal safety. With the exception of the perception of SVH as an important issue, females with a disability had significantly lower scores compared with females who did not have a disability.

There were two significant differences noted when comparing male students with a disability with males who did not have a disability. Males without a disability had higher scores on agreement that the HEI takes reports of SVH seriously and provide support, and also viewed their personal safety more positively. Finally, there was one significant difference between non-binary students with and

without a disability. Non-binary students without a disability had a more positive perspective on the HEI taking reports seriously and providing support.

Overall, females with a disability emerged as having the lowest knowledge of supports available and the reporting process, the belief that the HEI would take SVH reports seriously and provide supports, and of personal safety. Male students, especially those without a disability had more positive views of HEI responses to SVH and viewed their personal safety far more positively.

Table 67. Mean scores for measures of perceptions of the campus environment, for students, with statistical comparisons made between females with a disability and without a disability, males with a disability and without a disability, and non-binary students with and without a disability.

	All	Female disability	Female No disability	Male disability	Male No disability	Non-binary disability	Non-binary No disability
Knowledge of supports available and reporting process	6.9	6.5*	6.7*	8.0	8.0	6.7	6.9
HEI taking the report seriously and providing support	40.2	38.2***	40.2***	41.1***	43.2***	35.5***	37.4***
Perception of SVH as a significant issue	10.1	10.2	10.2	10.0	10.0	9.8	10.8
Personal safety	15.4	13.2***	14.5***	18.9**	20.1**	13.6	14.9

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

HEI information, consent promotion and support activities. There were no significant differences between the two female groups, male groups, or non-binary groups on the amount of information on SVH that they had received from their HEI. However, there were group-based differences on the number of consent and SVH-related promotion and support activities that student sub-groups took part in. Females with a disability took part in significantly more of these activities than females without a disability, while males with a disability took part in significantly more of them than their male counterparts without a disability. There was a trend in this direction with non-binary students, but it was not statistically significant. Overall, the three student sub-groups who had a disability had the highest levels of engagement with these activities.

Table 68. Mean scores for exposure to HEI information, consent promotion and support activities, for students, with statistical comparisons made between females with a disability and without a disability, males with a disability and without a disability, and non-binary students with and without a disability.

	All	Female disability	Female No disability	Male disability	Male No disability	Non-binary disability	Non-binary No disability
Information received from the HEI	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.8	1.7	1.5	1.6
Promotion and support activities	3.5	3.7***	3.4***	3.8*	3.4*	4.1	3.7

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

Attitudes, behavioural intentions, and preparedness to respond to SVH. Females with and without a disability had significantly different responses to most of the survey key indicators that related to attitudes, behavioural intentions, and preparedness to respond to SVH. Females with a disability had lower rape myth beliefs, higher expectations for peers to react unsupportively to SVH, more positive

consent and bystander intervention attitudes, and higher self-appraisals of the capacity to respond to a disclosure or through bystander intervention. They also had significantly higher behavioural intentions to engage in passive, nonverbal, and verbal consent behaviours.

A number of significant differences were also noted when comparing the responses of male students with a disability with those male students who did not have a disability. Males without a disability appraised themselves as significantly less able to respond to a disclosure, and had less positive bystander intervention attitudes, higher rape myth beliefs, and less expectation that peers would react negatively after SVH. There were two significant differences in the responses of non-binary students with and without a disability. Those with a disability had higher passive consent and nonverbal consent behavioural intentions.

Table 69. Mean scores for measures of attitudes, behavioural intentions, and preparedness to respond to SVH, for students, with statistical comparisons made between females with a disability and without a disability, males with a disability and without a disability, and non-binary students with and without a disability.

	All	Female disability	Female No disability	Male disability	Male No disability	Non-binary disability	Non-binary No disability
Perception of negative peer reactions	7.9	8.5***	8.0***	7.7***	7.0***	9.0	8.3
Rape myth beliefs	33.0	30.4***	31.7***	37.4**	39.9**	29.6	27.0
Positive consent attitudes and intentions	35.6	36.7***	35.6***	34.6	34.2	38.6	37.9
Bystander intervention attitudes	38.9	40.5***	39.7***	37.0***	34.7***	41.2	40.7
Disclosure support	9.7	9.7	9.7	9.6*	9.5*	9.7	9.6
Passive consent behavioural intentions	4.9	4.7*	4..5*	5.7	6.0	5.1**	4.2**
Nonverbal consent behavioural intentions	9.0	8.9**	9.1**	8.7	9.0	8.5*	7.7*
Verbal consent behavioural intentions	15.8	16.1***	15.7***	15.8	15.5	16.5	16.0
Consent literacy	7.6	7.7	7.5	7.8	7.9	8.0	7.9
Self-appraisal of bystander preparedness (1 item)	3.0	3.2***	3.0***	3.2	3.1	3.2	3.2
Self-appraisal of disclosure preparedness (1 item)	3.2	3.5***	3.2***	3.5**	3.3**	3.6	3.4

*** = significance level <.001, ** = significant at p.01, * = significant at p.05

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