

PSBU SDG 5.2 Policy: Protection from Discrimination, Harassment, and Violence

Purpose

PSBU upholds a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, harassment, and violence based on gender or any characteristic. This policy is designed to ensure a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all students, staff, and visitors. It sets out the mechanisms for prevention, reporting, response, support, and accountability in relation to gender-based harm.

Scope

This policy applies to all members of the PSBU community, including students (undergraduate, postgraduate, part-time, full-time), academic and non-academic staff, contractors, visitors, and external partners. It covers conduct occurring on campus, during university-related activities off campus, online, or at events sponsored by PSBU.

Policy Commitments

PSBU will:

1. Establish Clear Reporting Mechanisms and Protection Measures

- Provide multiple accessible channels for reporting discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, sexual violence, or any form of gender-based harm.
- Allow victims to choose between formal reporting, confidential disclosure, or anonymous reporting where feasible.
- Ensure protection for complainants, reporters, and witnesses from retaliation.
- Implement precautionary measures during investigations (e.g. temporary changes to classes, accommodation, or duties) to safeguard safety and wellbeing.

2. Awareness, Training, and Prevention

- Develop regular awareness / education campaigns on rights, respectful conduct, informed consent, gender sensitivity, and the negative impacts of harassment and violence.
- Provide training for staff and faculty in recognising, responding to, and preventing gender-based harm, with special training for those likely to receive disclosures.



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- Include modules on respectful relationships, gender equity, and bystander intervention in student orientation.
- Ensure awareness materials are culturally sensitive, available in multiple languages (where relevant), and inclusive of diverse gender identities.

3. Support for Survivors / Victim-Survivors

- Provide access to compassionate, trauma-informed counselling and psychological services for those affected.
- Offer academic adjustments or protections (e.g. extensions, alternative assessments) to minimise impact on studies.
- Ensure that survivors are informed about their rights, support options, and are supported in navigating reporting processes (if they choose to).
- Facilitate referrals to legal, medical, and other external services as needed.
- Accountability, Investigation, and Consequences
- Ensure investigations are carried out promptly, fairly, transparently, and with procedural fairness.
- Define clearly the standard of proof, roles and responsibilities of investigators, and process timelines.
- Impose sanctions for proven misconduct up to and including dismissal or expulsion, depending on severity.
- Maintain confidentiality and privacy throughout, with respect for the dignity and rights of all involved.
- Collaboration with Legal and Social Services
- Develop partnerships with external legal, medical, police, and social support organisations to provide comprehensive support.
- Liaise with local authorities for matters that may be criminal in nature.
- Ensure that PSBU policies are consistent with national and international human rights laws and regional legislation.

Responsibilities

- **University Leadership / Rector / Executive Team:** endorse this policy; allocate resources; ensure visibility; ensure compliance.
- **Designated Officer(s) / Complaints Handling Unit:** ensure reporting mechanisms are functioning; manage investigations; ensure confidentiality.
- **Human Resources / Student Services / Counselling Services:** provide support; deliver training; offer academic protections.
- **All Staff, Teachers, Faculty:** complete training; understand their role in prevention and response; treat disclosures with respect and care.
- **Students:** uphold respectful conduct; report incidents; support peers; engage in prevention.



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- **Quality Assurance / Policy Review Committee:** monitor policy implementation; review data; recommend changes; produce periodic reports.

Measurement & Accountability

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to be tracked:

- Number and type of reports, disclosures, and complaints (gender-disaggregated).
- Timeframes for responding to reports and investigations.
- Satisfaction of complainants and respondents with support processes.
- Number of staff trained in handling gender-based harm and staff / student awareness levels.
- Incidence/prevalence data from safety surveys or similar tools.
- Outcomes: proportion of cases resolved; sanctions applied; policy adjustments made.

Annual reporting to PSBU leadership and governance bodies will be made, with summaries available to the university community to ensure transparency.

Related Policies and Strategies

- PSBU Gender Equality Policy
- Equal Access to Education and Opportunities (SDG 5.1)
- Harassment / Bullying / Discrimination Policies
- Student Code of Conduct; Staff Code of Conduct
- Health & Counselling Services Policies
- Legal & External Liaison Policies

Review Cycle

This policy will be reviewed every two to three years, or earlier if:

- New legislation or regulations arise
- There is evidence from data that policy/practice is not effective
- Significant external benchmark changes or best practices emerge



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External Best Practice Benchmarks

These examples from Australian universities and sector bodies provide useful points of comparison and guidance for PSBU.

Institution / Initiative	What they do / Key Features	Relevance for PSBU
Universities Australia – Sexual Harm Response Guidelines (2023)	Provides sector-wide guidelines, including definitions, reporting options (formal vs disclosure), trauma-informed responses, confidentiality, multiple reporting channels, and inclusivity. (Universities Australia)	PSBU should ensure its policy has similarly multiple accessible reporting pathways; trauma-informed care; and clarity about definitions.
University of the Sunshine Coast – Sexual Assault, Sexual Harassment and Respectful Relationships Policy	Clear statements of zero tolerance; procedural fairness; support services; confidentiality; inclusive language; student conduct linked to misconduct rules. (University of Sunshine Coast)	A good example for integrating policy with student conduct and ensuring policies are accessible and comprehensive.
University of Newcastle – Prevention and Response to Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Policy	Distinct policy that addresses definitions, reporting, investigations, sanctions, support services, and includes monitoring and review. (policies.newcastle.edu.au)	PSBU can model its structure: separate procedures, clear responsibilities, and review mechanisms.
TEQSA / Good Practice Guidance on Preventing & Responding to Sexual Harassment and Assault	Emphasis on primary prevention, visibility of policies and support services, data-collection, oversight and accountability. (TEQSA)	PSBU should embed prevention (awareness-raising, bystander training etc.), ensure policies are visible, ensure data is collected and published.



Next Review Date: September 2026 (Academic Year 26/27)