

Creating cultures of consent and respect at the University of Auckland: an action plan to prevent and respond to harmful sexual behaviour

Leadership and Governance

Area	What do we need to do?	Why is this important?	Status
Governance	Identify senior managers in the University with responsibility for delivery of the Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) Action Plan.	Clarifying responsibility for this area of work will prevent confusion among those implementing projects for staff and students, and student organisations.	Complete
	Appoint the Harassment Governance Group as the peak group to govern the ongoing development and delivery of the HSB Action Plan.	HSB actions need to be coordinated with other initiatives within the University in the area of bullying, harassment and discrimination (BHD). The Harassment Governance Group has been established as the peak group for BHD matters, and is therefore appropriate to also oversee HSB. The membership of the Harassment Governance Group includes the Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC) Equity, PVC Māori and PVC Pacific.	Complete
	The Vice-Chancellor, through the Harassment Governance Group, provide relevant reporting to the University Council on the Action Plan and its progress.	The University Council is the peak body for health, safety and wellbeing at the University.	-
	Establish a high-level HSB reference group in partnership with Māori to support implementation of HSB Action Plan.	Across the University we have leading researchers and practitioners, as well as passionate staff and students who want to make a difference. This expertise and energy can be usefully channelled into a reference group to advise on the evolution and implementation of the Action Plan.	-

	Maintain a student focus group on HSB to inform implementation, provide feedback and make recommendations, including Māori, Pacific and LGBTQITakātapui+ representation alongside other identified priority groups.	The value of student-input into this stream of work cannot be underestimated. In addition to student representation on the HSB Reference Group, a student focus group, with a wide cross-section of students, will be maintained to inform the implementation of the plan and provide valuable real-time feedback. Student voice can also be gathered through the Student Consultative Group, Student Council, and Equity groups.	Complete
Policy	Develop a standalone HSB Policy and supporting guidelines.	Best practice recommends a stand-alone policy for HSB. A stand-alone policy signifies the importance of this area and untangles HSB from other behavioural misconduct, as well as notes the unique nature and sensitivity of HSB which may require different responses and procedures.	In progress
	Survivor-led and do-no-harm principles.	Key to any policy enhancements in this area is the need for the University to adopt a survivor-led approach and a principle to do no harm. This means that we are guided by the wishes of the person making the report or complaint, and that our processes and supports ensure that no further harm is caused to a person making a report.	In progress
	Develop guidelines for staff and student relationships.	Staff and student relationships are briefly covered in the Conflict of Interest Policy. Intimate relationships between staff and students are not just a conflict of interest matter, there is an imbalance of power and potential for harm and manipulation to occur. The guidelines would serve to inform both staff and students, rather than seek to prevent consensual relationships.	In progress
	Review the Statute for Student Discipline and associated committee processes as they relate to referrals of HSB cases.	The Discipline Committee is the peak body for considering sanctions against students who infringe the statutes, regulations, rules and policies of the University. The committee hears cases relating to academic and non-	In progress

		academic matters, including HSB cases. Students have expressed the view that they don't believe sensitive non-academic cases, such as HSB, should be referred to the Discipline Committee.	
	Review other policies and guidelines to ensure they align with any changes in policy.	The introduction of new policies or changes to existing policies (e.g. the Addressing Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy) may require other policies and guidelines to be updated.	-
Terminology	Define terminology and use consistently in all documentation and communications.	There are many terms used in this area (e.g. sexual violence, sexual misconduct, sexual harm, sexual harassment, gendered violence). The University needs to decide what terms it will use and use these consistently across all mediums, including family violence information and resources.	-
Resourcing	Assign a staff member to implement and coordinate the student-related actions in the HSB Action Plan.	There are many areas contributing to the success of this plan, and this needs to be managed by a single point to ensure actions are aligned, implemented and reported on. The staff member will be based in Campus Life, but will work closely with Human Resources, PVCs Equity, Māori and Pacific, and Communications and Marketing.	Complete
	Develop a case for additional funding if required to deliver the Action Plan.	Some of the actions in this plan don't require direct funding and can be distributed across existing areas and budgets. However, some actions in the plan may not be implemented without new funding.	-

Prevention and Awareness

Area	What do we need to do?	Why is this important?	Status
Education and training	Develop a "Creating Cultures of Consent and Respect" education/awareness online module for all students and staff. The module will cover terminology, behaviours and attitudes, consent, and respectful relationships, as well as the policy environment at UoA and where to go for more information or help.	It is important to get information to students as soon as possible in their university journey and an online module is a vital tool for getting information to students in a sustainable and scalable way. Staff also need to be equipped with the same information and knowledge to respond and support students who report HSB.	In progress
	Develop and deliver face-to-face training for student leaders and staff as a follow-on from the online education, covering responding to disclosures, support options and processes, and looking after their own wellbeing.	Students tell us they are most likely to go to other students to disclose first. We need to ensure that our student leaders are adequately trained to respond to these disclosures and provide the right advice about support available. Staff also need to know how to respond appropriately and provide support should a disclosure be made to them or they encounter a student seeking assistance.	Complete
	Annual training for all health, counselling, mental health and disability services and HR Advisory staff to ensure they are aware of current policies, support options, reporting processes and have up-to-date trauma-informed training, including culturally appropriate responses and recognition of priority groups.	Our health professionals are highly trained and skilled, and we also will ensure they know about the relevant University policies and practices, so they are offering a consistent and culturally competent service.	-

Awareness	Develop a University-wide HSB communications campaign primarily targeting a student audience (but of relevance to staff) on respectful and healthy relationships.	We need positive promotions within the University environment which promote respectful and healthy relationships, and challenge social norms.	In progress
	Review the University website and knowledge base to make sure information about HSB is well-organised, user-friendly and consistent language is used, with links to relevant information, including Family Violence information and resources.	Currently, information about HSB is spread all over the website, maintained by numerous different organisational areas, and under the general BHD area. Content needs to be joined up and coordinated to provide one source of truth.	-
	Deliver an annual or biennial lecture series on HSB.	New research is being conducted into HSB by academics within the University of Auckland, and a more prominent platform needs to be provided to surface this research. This will be of benefit to not only the University in the ongoing development of this Action Plan, but also to the wider community.	Complete
	Promote external 24/7 services for HSB and family and relationship violence and abuse to both student and staff audiences.	Apart from accommodation and security, the University does not provide 24/7 services. Awareness of external services is important for both getting support when University services are unavailable, and for those who don't wish to access University services.	Complete
Educating the educators	Ensure existing teaching programmes offered through the Faculty of Education and Social Work contain relevant, and compulsory, components on preventing and responding to HSB in all levels of education.	Early childhood education centres and schools are uniquely positioned to teach students in age-appropriate ways about sexual health and relationships. As a University with a range of education programmes, we have an opportunity to ensure that prevention of HSB is woven into capabilities of our future teachers.	-

	Ensure lecturers and other academic staff are confident and able to provide content warnings to students when lectures contain potentially disturbing topics.	To ensure that students are warned about potentially disturbing and distressing content and offered appropriate supports should they become distressed.	Complete
Safety	Review the need for a safety app and/or accelerate consideration of the Campus Card performing the role of a safety app. The safety app is useful to both student and staff audiences.	Many universities have implemented safety apps to provide an additional layer of safety for students studying or socialising on campus, particularly after usual business hours.	In progress
	Improve guidelines for student groups on organising safe events, safe venues, camps and trips including templates for health and safety plans and risk management.	Student groups deliver events and organise trips and it is important they are equipped with the information they need to organise safe activities, as well as know how to respond if there is an incident.	Complete
	Review procedures for work-based learning to ensure that prevention and awareness of HSB is taken into consideration when work-based learning opportunities are established.	The University's responsibility for preventing and responding to HSB also extends to organisations that have a work-based learning relationship with the University. The policy and procedures for work-based learning are to be reviewed to ensure HSB is considered in the establishment of these opportunities.	-
	Review training and information provided to the security team to ensure they are aware of current policies, support options, complaint processes and respond to HSB acts in a caring, sympathetic and non-judgemental way.	A security officer may be a first responder to an assault on campus, and it is important they are equipped with the skills and knowledge both from a cultural and process perspective to respond to any incident.	-

Improving Response and Support

Area	What do we need to do?	Why is this important?	Status
Response and reporting	Review use of appropriate whistle-blower line/s and anonymous reporting avenues.	The University promotes its whistle-blower hotline as an anonymous way to make a harassment complaint. The University supports an anonymous reporting tool and will review if the existing whistle-blower hotline is the most appropriate avenue to achieve this.	Complete
	Establish protocols for when appointed University investigators are expected to engage external experts to lead or support internal investigations on reports of Harmful Sexual Behaviour.	Investigations that involve HSB are highly sensitive and require skilled investigators with expert knowledge. The University has skilled investigators through the Proctors' Office and Human Resources, but for some investigations relating to HSB, independent external expertise may be advisable.	-
	Update the Student Critical Incident Response Plan (SCIRP) to include a specific response plan for rape and sexual assault.	Currently the SCIRP bundles rape and sexual assault in with general assault response. The sensitivity of this type of assault, together with the different services and supports available, requires a different response plan.	Complete
	Strengthen relationships with external agencies, other universities, and the police.	Having strong links to external mainstream and specialist providers ensures that we can keep up-to-date with the sector and provide services that are adaptable, consistent and culturally appropriate. Staff and students to have access to the same external services.	Complete
Support	Identify a culturally appropriate and inclusive space that can be dedicated to HSB with office hours for drop-ins and relevant materials available, including family violence information.	Students have indicated that a safe space that is known to have information available about HSB will encourage students to disclose and get the support they need. A space has been identified adjacent to Student Health and Counselling, and this space is available for staff and students.	Complete

	Investigate embedding a chat function on the University website specifically for HSB.	Sometimes survivors don't want to immediately talk to a human face to face or by phone, they would like a more anonymous way to take that first step toward disclosure. This could be done in partnership with an external organisation, such as Safe to Talk.	-
	Create a 24/7 support service by partnering with external agencies.	It is vital that we can provide support to students outside normal business hours. By providing 24/7 support we can ensure that survivors always have someone to talk to either via phone, chat or text.	-
	Improve the self-help information and resources.	Self-help resources can empower individuals to take control. These need to be easy to find, culturally appropriate and use language that resonates with students and is applicable for staff.	In progress
	Increase funding provided to student groups with a focus on HSB to deliver student-led activities e.g. peer-support groups.	Student groups play an important role in raising awareness and providing a supportive environment for victims and survivors.	Complete
	Continue to support student-led spaces on Campus (e.g. Queerspace, Women's Space, Cultural Space etc).	Students have indicated these spaces are vital for vulnerable members of our university community, a safe space to be and to talk openly about HSB. We need to continue to support and equip student groups who are operating these spaces to ensure they have the right training and resources.	Complete
Offender and at-risk offender support	Collaborate with the Safe Network to provide opportunities to respond and support those people that have abused.	Evidence suggests that 95% of people with sexually harmful behaviour who complete one of the Safe Network's programmes will not engage in any further harmful sexual behaviour.	-
	Work with researchers in the University community and external organisations to develop a programme	There is an opportunity to prevent abuse, to intervene early, if there is a programme that allows people to	-

	and/or campaign directed at people who are at risk of offending (having unsafe thoughts) but have not yet offended (e.g. Help before Harm).	come forward and get help and support, without stigma and fear.	
	Develop outreach programmes directed at males (toxic masculinity, safe to talk about male privileges, getting it wrong, being a better guy).	HSB, while intersectional, is predominantly a gendered act. Development of prevention and awareness programmes specifically for males ensures we target the predominant problem.	-

Reviewing Progress

Area	What do we need to do?	Why is this important?	Status
Evaluation	Identify a tool to evaluate the effectiveness of the Action Plan, including measuring shift in attitudes and awareness of processes and supports.	We need an indicator that the things we are doing are having an impact. We expect disclosures will increase once we make it easier and safer to disclose. However, we need to evaluate the effectiveness of behavioural and attitude change interventions, such as campaigns and education and training.	-
	Develop an evaluation tool to assess the experience of those who are involved in a formal complaint of HSB.	Obtaining feedback from all parties to a complaint, including those undertaking the investigation, provides an opportunity to assess our complaint management processes to ensure they operate optimally for all parties involved.	-
Reporting	Implement a central reporting system (which allows for anonymous reporting) with information and trends across the University and report to the Governance group/s on de-identified data.	Understanding the trends will enable the plan to continue to grow and develop in key areas. Given that HSB is wider than physical assaults we need to ensure we are understanding trends and then we can better respond to and focus resources to meet changing demands.	In progress

Continuous improvement	Offer a mechanism for anyone in the University community to provide feedback and suggestions for improvement.	All members of the University community have the opportunity to provide feedback and have a say in the future development of this Action Plan. An online "suggestion box" will provide an opportunity for informal feedback and input.	-
Effectiveness	Collate data on number of trainings delivered and effectiveness of training, including follow-up surveying of sustained effectiveness. Build in evaluations of communications, education and awareness campaigns.	Training needs to be current, relevant and adaptable. By exploring data and feedback regularly we can adjust to the changing needs of staff and students and ensure we are providing well informed and up-to-date training.	-