

## ***Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Policy***

### **Purpose and Scope**

This policy states the University principles for the prevention and response to Gender-Based Violence.

Prevention measures are outlined in the University's *Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response Plan*.

This Policy and the supporting [Gender-based Violence Response Procedure](#) apply to students, employees and other members of the University Community regardless of where, or the context in which, Gender-based Violence occurs, with the exception of Dubai (see the [Sexual Harm Policy - Dubai](#) and the [Sexual Harm Procedure - Dubai](#)).

### **Policy**

1. Gender-based Violence is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
2. Gender-based Violence behaviours constitute misconduct and, in some cases, can constitute criminal offences.
3. The University, led and facilitated by the Senior Leadership Team, will engage in long-term social and cultural change to prevent Gender-based Violence.
4. University Community members will be equipped and supported to take reasonable steps to identify and prevent Gender-based Violence.
5. The University will identify and address enablers of Gender-based Violence including inequality, rigid gender stereotypes, discrimination, and unsafe and unequal power relationships.
6. The University will take a whole of organisation approach to addressing Gender-based Violence through its *Gender Based Violence Prevention and Response Plan*.
7. The University's approach to preventing and responding to Gender-based Violence will be:
  - 7.1. trauma-informed, which applies the principles of safety (physical, psychological, and emotional), trust, choice, collaboration and empowerment. It aims to minimise the risk of re-traumatisation and promote recovery and healing to the greatest extent possible
  - 7.2. person-centred, which ensures the discloser's needs and preferences are at the centre of decisions made in response to the disclosure. The response

affirms the discloser's dignity by involving them in decisions that affect them, genuinely considering their wishes, and the impact that decisions may have on them, while ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the discloser, respondent and others

- 7.3. evidence-based and tailored to the University context
- 7.4. informed by the knowledge that the following groups are more vulnerable to Gender-based Violence, and that intersectionality can compound the impact of Gender-based Violence:
  - 7.4.1. First Nations people
  - 7.4.2. women
  - 7.4.3. those who are culturally and linguistically diverse
  - 7.4.4. those of diverse sex, sexualities and genders
  - 7.4.5. those with disability, chronic illness and/or neurodiversity.
- 7.5. sensitive to First Nations experience and knowledges
- 7.6. culturally responsive, inclusive and accessible
- 7.7. confidential, unless there is a need to prevent the risk of serious harm to any person or the University
- 7.8. timely, procedurally fair and proportionate
- 7.9. informed by legal circumstances
- 7.10. reviewed in terms of its effectiveness and updated accordingly.
8. Employees involved in the University's approach to preventing and responding to Gender-based Violence will have appropriate knowledge, competency, experience and expertise, in accordance with regulatory requirements and expectations.
  - 8.1. Appropriate mitigations and response measures will be put in place to support the wellbeing and safety of employees involved in the management of Gender-based Violence.
9. A student making a disclosure will be supported to progress in and complete their course in a timely manner, with reasonable measures taken when needed and/or requested, to minimise or alleviate any impact on their ability to complete their studies, or to identify adjustments where required.
10. An employee making a disclosure will be supported to continue in employment, with reasonable measures taken when needed and/or requested, to minimise or alleviate any impact on their ability to perform their role, or to identify alternative duties or adjustments where required.
11. Retaliation against, or victimisation of, a person associated with Gender-based Violence constitutes misconduct or, for employees, misconduct or serious misconduct.

## **Definitions**

12. In this policy, the following words have the following meanings:

12.1. "Consent" is fully informed, active choice to engage in an activity or action, where all parties have the freedom and capacity to make that choice. People who cannot give consent are those who are unconscious, asleep, intoxicated, drugged, otherwise unable to say 'yes', are under the age of 16, or have a psychological or decision-making disability that impacts on their ability to understand what they are consenting to. Consent can change at any time before or during an incident, and this may be communicated verbally or non-verbally. Examples of non-verbal signs include turning away, pushing a hand away, or not responding to touch.

12.2. "Gender-based Violence" means any form of physical or non-physical violence, harassment, abuse or threats, based on gender, that results in, or is likely to result in, harm, coercion, control, fear or deprivation of liberty or autonomy. Gender-based violence includes behaviour or patterns of behaviour carried out based on a person's gender identity or gender stereotypes and/or that seeks to dominate, isolate or control another person, sometimes referred to as coercive control, and may involve repeated non-physical tactics such as intimidation, surveillance, restriction of movement, or control of resources. Anyone can experience Gender-based Violence regardless of their gender identity or sexuality. Examples include:

12.2.1. physical assault or threats of violence

12.2.2. psychological or emotional abuse, intimidation or humiliation

12.2.3. controlling or access to finances, employment or study opportunities

12.2.4. cultural, spiritual or religious based abuse

12.2.5. reproductive control

12.2.6. stalking or monitoring communications and movements

12.2.7. non-consensual sharing of intimate images

12.2.8. Sexual Assault, Sexual Harassment, or Sexual Abuse.

12.3. "Sexual Abuse" is when someone in a position of power or authority attempts to, or takes advantage of, a person's trust and respect to involve them in a sexual activity or behaviour, or where there is significant disparity in the developmental function or maturity of a child and another person involved in sexual behaviour. For example, Sexual Abuse can occur between a student and a teacher, a child and an adult, a child and an older child, a family member and a young person, or an employee and their superior. Sexual Abuse includes a person having a sexual relationship with someone under 18 years of age if that person has a relationship of power or authority with them, for example, they are their teacher, employer or sports coach. It also includes profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from sexual abuse of another.

- 12.4. “Sexual Assault” is any unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited act or behaviour of a sexual nature which is threatening, violent, forced, involves inducement or is coercive. This includes any act or behaviour of a sexual nature to which a person has not given Consent.
- 12.5. “Sexual Harassment” is any unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited conduct of a sexual nature which a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, could anticipate would likely offend, humiliate or intimidate the person harassed. Sexual harassment may occur in person, in writing, or online through social media, text, email, digital platforms, or with emerging digital technologies. Examples include unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited:
- 12.5.1. requests for sexual favours
  - 12.5.2. making sexual advances
  - 12.5.3. staring, leering or whistling
  - 12.5.4. intrusive questions about a person’s private life or appearance
  - 12.5.5. intrusive questions about a person’s sexuality or gender identity
  - 12.5.6. deliberately misgendering someone, using incorrect pronouns or referring to someone by a former or rejected name (“deadnaming”) to demean or belittle them
  - 12.5.7. deliberately addressing someone with an incorrect title in a way that diminishes or disrespects their professional standing
  - 12.5.8. gendered double-standards or different repercussions for the same actions
  - 12.5.9. suggestive comments or jokes
  - 12.5.10. physical touching or cornering
  - 12.5.11. requests to go on dates
  - 12.5.12. requests for sex or other sexual acts
  - 12.5.13. exposure to pornography or rude joke
  - 12.5.14. sexual gestures, indecent exposure or display of the body
  - 12.5.15. sending sexually explicit emails or messages
  - 12.5.16. taking and/or distributing sexually explicit commentary, images or film of a person
  - 12.5.17. displaying posters, magazines, screen savers or sending gifts of a sexual nature.
- 12.6. “University Community” means:
- 12.6.1. students, employees, volunteers, consultants, contractors and their employees
  - 12.6.2. members of university boards and committees
  - 12.6.3. subsidiaries of the University and their employees
  - 12.6.4. visitors to university grounds

- 12.6.5. businesses and organisations that operate on, use or lease the University's land and facilities
- 12.6.6. University guests, University function attendees
- 12.6.7. an organisation that uses the University's intellectual property in its name, marketing, recruitment or governance documents, and
- 12.6.8. any other people or organisations that perform duties, activities or functions on behalf of the University.

## Governance

<b>Approval Authority</b>	Senate
<b>Owner</b>	University Secretary
<b>Legislation mandating compliance</b>	<p><a href="#"><u>Universities Accord (National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence) Act 2025</u></a> and supporting legislative instruments including the <a href="#"><u>National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence 2025</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011</u></a> and supporting legislative instruments including the <a href="#"><u>Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000</u></a> and supporting legislative instruments including the <a href="#"><u>National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Fair Work Act 2009</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Workplace Health and Safety Act 2020</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Sex Discrimination Act 1984</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Equal Opportunity Act 1984</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Privacy Act 1988</u></a></p>
<b>Category</b>	A function of management and Senate
<b>Related University Legislation and Policy Documents</b>	<p><a href="#"><u>Complaints Management Policy</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Conflict of Interest Policy</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Gender-based Violence Procedure</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Murdoch University Critical Incident Management Plan</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Managing Unsatisfactory Performance and Misconduct Policy</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Murdoch University Enterprise Agreement 2023</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Privacy Policy</u></a></p>

	<a href="#"><u>Psychological Safety and Wellbeing Procedure</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Sexual Harm Policy - Dubai</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Sexual Harm Procedure - Dubai</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Social Media Policy</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Staff Code of Conduct</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Student Appeals Policy</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Student Assessment Support Procedure</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Student Behavioural Integrity Policy</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Student Code of Conduct</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Student Integrity Regulations</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Student Wellbeing (sub-critical) Incident Support Plan</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Support for Students Policy</u></a>
<b>Date effective</b>	01/01/2026
<b>Review date</b>	01/01/2029

## Revision History

Approved/Amended	Date Approved	Resolution No. (if applicable)
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Recommended to Senate	26/11/2025	AC/138/2025
Recommended to Senate	24/11/2026	PSCC/04/2025
Supported by SLT	03/11/2025	

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