

Gender-based Violence Response Procedure

Purpose and Scope

Provide the procedure and responsibilities for the University's response to Gender-based Violence.

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

This procedure applies 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*).

Overarching Policy

[Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Policy](#)

Procedure

General

1. Disclosures and Reports will:
 - 1.1. be met with compassion, without judgement or blame
 - 1.2. be treated as genuine.
2. Information about support services, and how to make a Disclosure and Report, will be publicly available.
 - 2.1. Disclosures and Reports may be made via multiple channels, including verbally, via email, the online incident notification form or the MurdochSafe App.
3. Submitting a Disclosure or Report is free of charge.
4. The number of times and depth of detail to which a Discloser, Respondent or witness is asked to recount their experience will be minimised.
5. Prior to taking action or making a decision, the preferences of a Discloser will be genuinely considered.

6. Wherever possible, processes will meet the pace set by a Discloser.
7. Any person who has experienced or witnessed Gender-based Violence may cease their involvement in this process at any time.
 - 7.1. Where there is a risk of serious harm to a person or the University, the University may be required to continue the process without their participation.
8. There is no burden of proof on a person making a Disclosure or Report.
9. A risk assessment will be used to determine how to proceed with Disclosures and Reports. This assessment will consider:
 - 9.1. level of risk involved
 - 9.2. complexity of the situation
 - 9.3. number of people involved or affected.
10. A person will be informed of:
 - 10.1. what confidentiality encompasses
 - 10.2. any potential impact of:
 - 10.2.1. submitting information in a Disclosure or Report process anonymously
 - 10.2.2. providing de-identified information
 - 10.2.3. placing restrictions on the sharing of information
 - 10.2.4. participation in the process, including the provision of evidence.
11. Information provided through a Disclosure or Report will be:
 - 11.1. treated as confidential
 - 11.2. collected, held and handled securely
 - 11.3. de-identified unless it is necessary for the recipient to know the identity of a person to fulfill a responsibility
 - 11.4. shared only as necessary to undertake the process
 - 11.5. shared with a role whose title is not identified in this procedure only where:
 - 11.5.1. any person named in relation to that information has given informed consent, or
 - 11.5.2. there is a risk of serious harm to a person or the University.
12. Those involved will be kept informed about progress of a Disclosure or Report, including any delays, with consideration given to the preferences of Disclosers and Respondents.
13. A chair or panel member must follow the *Conflict of Interest Policy*.
14. At any stage in the process any person involved with a Disclosure or Report may identify a need for consultation or advice to ensure practice is culturally safe and/or Trauma-informed.
15. The University will not enter into a non-disclosure agreement with anyone involved in a matter unless requested by a Discloser.

16. Support services are monitored and evaluated for effectiveness at least every three years.
17. For students, more information about support services is in the *Support for Students Policy*.
18. For Murdoch employees, accommodations will be provided in accordance with employment and safety legislation.

Safety and support for the Discloser

19. Upon receiving a Disclosure or Report, the recipient will respond to any immediate safety and wellbeing concerns.
 - 19.1. If there is immediate threat to safety or health, emergency services or campus security may be contacted.
20. An assistance officer will be assigned to support a Discloser to help them make informed choices about how they participate in the process.
 - 20.1. The same employees will not be assigned to support both the Discloser and Respondent.
21. An assistance officer, in collaboration with the Discloser, will:
 - 21.1. recommend precautionary actions to ensure the safety of the Discloser and others
 - 21.2. undertake ongoing assessments to monitor and manage risks throughout the process
 - 21.2.1. identify whether a Disclosure or Report presents a risk of serious harm to a person or the University
 - 21.3. Where contact details are provided:
 - 21.3.1. respond to a Disclosure or Report by close of the next Working Day
 - 21.3.2. explain the support options available
 - 21.3.3. prioritise urgent access, when needed and/or requested, to:
 - 21.3.3.1. support services, including accommodation where necessary
 - 21.3.3.2. services of an Accredited Specialist
 - 21.3.3.3. translation and interpreter services
 - 21.3.4. ensure, where possible, that the Discloser is not required to repeat the content of Disclosures or Reports multiple times to multiple people
 - 21.3.5. advise employees with authority to implement teaching, research, research supervision, employment or living adjustments, as necessary, in response to the impact of the Discloser's experience
 - 21.3.6. where necessary, explain the investigation and disciplinary processes, including the role and options of the Discloser, and possible outcomes
 - 21.3.7. develop a tailored support plan that includes agreed actions for the above activities

21.3.8. will provide information about the progress of a Disclosure or Report, including any factors that may cause a delay and completion of any actions.

22. Information may only be requested from the Discloser in consultation with an assistance officer.

Support for the Respondent

23. Where the Respondent is identified, an assistance officer will be assigned to support a Respondent to help them make informed choices about how they participate in the process.

23.1. The same employees will not be assigned to support both the Respondent and the Discloser.

24. An assistance officer, in consultation with the Respondent, will:

24.1. recommend precautionary actions, that may adversely impact the Respondent, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the Discloser and others

24.2. undertake ongoing assessments to monitor and manage risks throughout the process

24.3. explain the support options available

24.4. prioritise access, when needed and/or requested, to

24.4.1. support services

24.4.2. services of an Accredited Specialist

24.4.3. translation and interpreter services

24.5. advise employees with authority to implement academic and/or work adjustments in response to the impact of the Respondent's experience

24.6. where necessary, discuss the investigation and disciplinary processes, including the role of the Respondent, and possible outcomes

24.7. develop a tailored support plan that includes agreed actions for the above activities

24.8. provide information about the progress of a Disclosure or Report, including any factors that may cause a delay and completion of any actions.

Disclosure

25. A Disclosure is a step a person can take to notify the University of Gender-based Violence and seek support and care.

25.1. A Disclosure may be made anonymously.

26. Members of the University Community who have experienced, witnessed or been informed of Gender-based Violence are encouraged, when they feel ready, to make a Disclosure.

27. If an Affiliated Organisation is informed of Gender-based Violence associated with the University Community, that organisation is encouraged to provide a Disclosure to the University.

27.1. The Disclosure must be de-identified by that organisation if that is the preference of the person who initially provided information.

28. If a Discloser is an International Student Visa Holder, their student visa will not be impacted.
29. If a Discloser is an employee and holds a work visa, the University will support them to manage any impact on their employment or visa, as appropriate.

Disclosure resolution

30. A Discloser may choose to only seek support and care, without requesting action be taken.
31. A Disclosure can result in a resolution that is implemented with the agreement of the Discloser and Respondent without a Report being submitted.
 - 31.1. The chair must be informed of a resolution by the employee who received the Disclosure.
32. A Disclosure can progress to a Report at the request of the Discloser.
33. Where a Disclosure presents a risk of serious harm to a person or the University, the chair will take steps to determine:
 - 33.1. any precautionary actions to ensure safety of the Discloser and others
 - 33.2. if police or other organisations must be notified
 - 33.3. whether the allegation could lead to a finding of misconduct or, for employees, misconduct or serious misconduct
 - 33.4. whether the Disclosure needs to be investigated to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students and/or employees, and
 - 33.4.1. seek and consider the views of a Discloser before progressing a Disclosure to investigation
 - 33.4.2. notify the Discloser if the Disclosure will be investigated.
34. The University will not investigate a Disclosure unless there is a risk of serious harm to a person or the University.

Report

35. A Report of Gender-based Violence is a formal statement and a request for the University to investigate.
36. A Report will be finalised within 45 Working Days, including finalisation of any disciplinary process.
 - 36.1. This timeframe may be extended where required, with an approved extension.
37. An assistance officer may help create and submit a Report, with the Discloser's approval.
38. Reports will be assessed for the ability to further investigate if the Respondent is:
 - 38.1. not a student or employee, as the University may be limited in how it can respond
 - 38.2. not a member of the University Community, as the University is unlikely to be able to investigate

38.3. a Partner employee, and the Partner organisation will be informed of an allegation.

Consideration by Chair and/or Panel

39. The chair of a panel is the decision-maker and takes advice from the panel.
 - 39.1. Following a preliminary assessment, the chair may determine a matter is suitable for resolution without convening a panel. In such cases, the approach will be proportionate to the circumstances and maintain the principles of procedural fairness and Trauma-informed practice.
40. A panel may be convened to oversee the resolution of a Report.
41. At the outset, and throughout the process, the chair and other panel members will:
 - 41.1. consult with subject matter experts, as required
 - 41.2. consult with cultural advocates, as required.
42. The chair will determine:
 - 42.1. any precautionary actions to ensure safety of the Discloser and others
 - 42.2. whether to seek legal advice
 - 42.3. if police or other organisations must be notified.
43. A panel must include employees with the following capabilities:
 - 43.1. knowledge in relation to Gender-based Violence including:
 - 43.1.1. risk and protective factors
 - 43.1.2. types, patterns and effects
 - 43.1.3. how it is experienced by different people
 - 43.1.4. the nature and impact of coercive control
 - 43.2. experience and expertise in:
 - 43.2.1. responding in a Trauma-informed and Person-centred way
 - 43.2.2. the effects of trauma
 - 43.2.3. working with specific cohorts who are disproportionately impacted
 - 43.2.4. taking and recording statements and handling Disclosures and Reports in a procedurally fair way.
44. A panel will include representatives from:
 - 44.1. Chief Experience Office, for students
 - 44.2. Chief People Office, for employees
 - 44.3. Transnational Education team, for students or Partner employees at transnational locations
 - 44.4. University Secretary's Office, for those who are not students or employees
 - 44.5. other internal areas to fulfil panel capability requirements
 - 44.6. external organisations to fulfil panel capability requirements, as needed.

Investigation

45. An investigator may be a member of the panel, another University employee, or external to the University.
46. An investigator will have the same capabilities articulated for panel members.
47. The Discloser and Respondent will be notified in writing and on the same day if an investigation will commence.
 - 47.1. The Discloser will be notified first.
48. An investigator will gather further information and report their findings to the panel, including a recommendation on the balance of probabilities whether an allegation of Gender-based Violence is substantiated, unsubstantiated, or unable to be substantiated.
49. The investigator will:
 - 49.1. consult with additional subject matter experts, as required
 - 49.2. consult with additional cultural advocates, as required.
50. An investigation may include a discussion with a Discloser, Respondent or witness:
 - 50.1. if that person accepts, they will:
 - 50.1.1. be given reasonable advance notice, taking into account all relevant circumstances
 - 50.1.2. have their preference for how and where the discussion takes place considered, subject to ensuring the participants' safety
 - 50.2. the discussion will include:
 - 50.2.1. the investigator
 - 50.2.2. the Discloser or Respondent or witness
 - 50.2.3. a support person, selected by the Discloser, Respondent or witness, if they choose to have one present.
51. The discussion may be recorded in a manner consistent with the preferences of the Discloser, Respondent or witness.
52. The person may make a written response in place of taking part in a discussion.

Outcomes

53. The chair of the panel will determine:
 - 53.1. any precautionary actions to ensure the safety of the Discloser and others
 - 53.2. whether a resolution can be implemented with the agreement of the Discloser and Respondent
 - 53.3. whether a restorative engagement process can be implemented with the agreement of the Discloser and Respondent.
54. Where the Respondent is an employee, the chair may recommend disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

55. Where the Respondent is a Partner employee, the chair may provide a report to the Partner to recommend appropriate action, including safety measures.
56. Where the Respondent is a student, the chair may determine if outcomes will be applied as outlined in the *Student Integrity Regulations*.
57. Alternative or additional outcomes may be imposed on the Respondent, including but not limited to:
 - 57.1. a requirement to undertake appropriate training
 - 57.2. a caution
 - 57.3. a behavioural expectations discussion
 - 57.4. a requirement for no or limited contact with an employee or student.
58. Unless the Discloser requests otherwise, once the investigation has concluded, written notice will be given to all parties involved. This notice, given to all parties on the same day, will include:
 - 58.1. the activities undertaken to manage the Disclosure and/or Report
 - 58.2. the findings, including reasons for the findings.
59. Following a disciplinary process, unless the Discloser requests otherwise, written notice will be given to the Discloser on the same day as the Respondent.
 - 59.1. This notice will include the outcome, including reasons for the outcome.
60. The Discloser and Respondent will be informed in writing on the same day of their right to complain and appeal internally.
 - 60.1. Students may also make an external complaint, including to the [National Student Ombudsman](#).
61. All involved in the process may be invited to provide feedback to inform improvements.

External organisation processes

62. A person always has the right to report their experience to police.
63. A University process may proceed alongside an external process following consultation to assess and mitigate potential impacts.
64. Actions taken by the University in response to allegations of Gender-based Violence will aim to avoid perceived interference with current or pending investigations.
65. After a Disclosure, the [Department of Communities](#) must be advised of all reasonable beliefs of Gender-based Violence occurring to any Child in connection to Western Australia, unless a mandatory report has already been made, and consider whether any other reporting is required to another government organisation in any location.
66. Doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers, psychologists, police officers, youth justice workers, school counsellors, boarding supervisors, ministers of religion, out-of-home care workers and early childhood workers must report all reasonable beliefs of Child sexual abuse to the [Department of Communities](#).
67. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) must be advised of any suspected, alleged or known Gender-based Violence incidents related to the

delivery of DFAT business and any investigation outcomes in accordance with the [Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy](#) and [Child Protection Policy](#).

68. Suspected misconduct or serious misconduct by employees must be reported to government authorities and professional bodies in line with legislation, which may include the Public Sector Commission and/or the Crime and Corruption Commission.

Records and Reporting

69. Records of Disclosures and Reports will be retained for at least five years.
70. Regular monitoring of the nature and prevalence of Disclosures and Reports is undertaken to inform improvements.
71. A report containing high level, de-identified information on the nature and prevalence of Disclosures and Reports will:
- 71.1. be provided to the Senior Leadership Team, Student Experience Committee and People, Safety and Culture Committee biannually
 - 71.2. be made publicly available annually.

Definitions

72. In this procedure, the following terms have the following meanings:
- 72.1. "Accredited Specialist" means a person who:
 - 72.1.1. is a psychologist, social worker or counsellor registered or accredited with their relevant industry body
 - 72.1.2. has undertaken formal training in supporting people affected by Gender-based Violence, including Trauma-informed practice
 - 72.1.3. has undertaken training to build competency in working with specific cohorts including First Nations people, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, people with disability and people of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity.
 - 72.2. "Affiliated Organisation" means an organisation that uses the University's intellectual property in its name, marketing, recruitment, or governance documents.
 - 72.3. "Child" is a person under the age of 18.
 - 72.4. "Conflict of Interest" is explained in the *Conflict of Interest Policy*.
 - 72.5. "Discloser" means a person who has shared information about their experience of Gender-based Violence.
 - 72.6. "Disclosure" means the provision of information about a person's experience of Gender-based Violence to the University by the Discloser or another person.
 - 72.7. "Gender-based Violence" is defined in the *Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Policy*.
 - 72.8. "International Student Visa Holder" is defined in the *Admission and Enrolment Policy*.

- 72.9. “Partner” means a third-party provider for education services in a transnational location.
- 72.10. “Person-centred” is explained in the *Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Policy*.
- 72.11. “Report” means the provision through formal reporting channels of information about their experience of Gender-based Violence by a Discloser to the University, which requires the University to consider taking steps beyond the offer and provision of support services, including (without limitation) the commencement of an investigation and/or a disciplinary process in appropriate circumstances.
- 72.12. “Respondent” means a person whom it is alleged has engaged in conduct that amounts to Gender-based Violence.
- 72.13. “Trauma-informed” is explained in the *Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Policy*.
- 72.14. “University Community” is defined in the *Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Policy*.
- 72.15. “Working Day” is defined in *Statute No. 8 – Interpretation*.

Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Vice Chancellor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads long term social and cultural change to prevent and respond to Gender-based Violence.
Senior Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports the Vice Chancellor to effect long term social and cultural change to prevent and respond to Gender-based Violence.
Pro Vice Chancellor Equity Diversity Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides strategic leadership in the prevention and response to Gender-based Violence. • Provides strategic oversight of the Gender-based Violence prevention and response process. • Ensures Gender-based Violence prevention and response processes and practices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ meet relevant regulatory requirements and expectations ○ are accessible, publicly available and communicated in plain English. • Approves extensions of deadlines. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provides the reason for an extension of time for finalisation of a Report to the Vice Chancellor. • Determines whether cultural advocates, other than First Nations advocates, must be consulted. • Ensures regular monitoring of Disclosures and Reports is undertaken. • Provides reports to governance committees. • Provides publicly available reports.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversees reporting to government.
Chief Experience Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversees operational management of Disclosures and Reports where the Discloser is a student. Acts as panel chair if the Respondent is a student. Initiates a disciplinary proceeding where the Respondent is a student. Ensures process and outcomes consider wellbeing and supports for all students involved. Ensures information about support services is publicly available. Ensures support services are monitored and evaluated. Ensures training is provided to students in accordance with regulatory requirements. Advises Department of Communities after a Disclosure in accordance with this procedure.
Chief People Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversees operational management of Disclosures and Reports where the Discloser is an employee. Acts as panel chair if the Respondent is an employee. Initiates a disciplinary proceeding where the Respondent is an employee. Ensures process and outcomes consider wellbeing and supports for all employees involved. Ensures information about support services is publicly available. Ensures support services are monitored and evaluated. Ensures training is provided to employees in accordance with regulatory requirements. Provides reports on suspected misconduct or serious misconduct by employees to Audit and Risk Office in accordance with this procedure.
University Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acts as panel chair if the Respondent is not a student or employee. Determines actions in relation to a person who is a not a student or employee.
Pro Vice Chancellor Transnational Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acts as panel chair if the Respondent is a Partner employee. Advises on transnational regulatory requirements. Ensures suspected misconduct or serious misconduct by Partner employees is reported to Partners in accordance with this procedure.
Chair of panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consults with Pro Vice Chancellor Equity Diversity and Inclusion regarding resolution pathways, where required.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approves recommendations for implementation of precautionary actions for Disclosers and Respondents. • Selects members of a panel. • Appoints an investigator. • Determines if a Respondent has engaged in Gender-based Violence. • Ensures decisions are recorded in accordance with this procedure. • Ensures notifications are provided in accordance with this procedure.
Pro Vice Chancellor First Nations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determines whether First Nations cultural advocates must be consulted.
Director Audit, Risk and Compliance Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides reports on suspected misconduct or serious misconduct by employees to government authorities in accordance with this procedure.
Director Quality and Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides reports to the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, as required.
Pro Vice Chancellor International	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises DFAT of incidents and outcomes in accordance with this procedure.
Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will undertake training in accordance with regulatory requirements associated with their role.

Governance

Approval Authority	Senate
Owner	University Secretary
Legislation mandating compliance	<p><u>Universities Accord (National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence) Act 2025</u> and supporting legislative instruments including the <u>National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence 2025</u></p> <p><u>Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011</u> and supporting legislative instruments including the <u>Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021</u></p> <p><u>Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000</u> and supporting legislative instruments including the <u>National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018</u></p>

	<u>Children and Community Services Act 2004</u> <u>Fair Work Act 2009</u> <u>Workplace Health and Safety Act 2020</u> <u>Sex Discrimination Act 1984</u> <u>Equal Opportunity Act 1984</u> <u>Privacy Act 1988</u>
External policy mandating compliance	<u>DFAT Child Protection Policy</u> <u>DFAT Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy</u>
Category	A function of management and Senate
Related University Legislation and Policy Documents	<u>Admission Procedure</u> <u>Conflict of Interest Policy</u> <u>Delegations and Authorisations Policy</u> <u>Enrolment Procedure</u> <u>Gender-based Violence Policy</u> <u>Managing Misconduct Procedure</u> <u>Murdoch University Critical Incident Management Plan</u> <u>Murdoch University Enterprise Agreement 2023</u> <u>Privacy Policy</u> <u>Psychological Safety and Wellbeing Procedure</u> <u>Sexual Harm Policy - Dubai</u> <u>Sexual Harm Procedure - Dubai</u> <u>Staff Code of Conduct</u> <u>Student Appeals Policy</u> <u>Student Assessment Support Procedure</u> <u>Student Behavioural Integrity Policy</u> <u>Student Code of Conduct</u> <u>Student Complaints Management Procedure</u> <u>Support for Students Policy</u> <u>Student Integrity Regulations</u> <u>Student Wellbeing (sub-critical) Incident Support Plan</u>
Date effective	01/01/2026
Review date	01/01/2029

Revision History

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