

Activity Report

2018–2019

September 2018 to April 2019

Bureau des droits de la personne
Human Rights Office



uOttawa

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Introduction

This 2018–2019 annual report has been shortened due to the transition at the Human Rights Office. The time covered by this report saw the retirement of one HRO director, Sonya Nigam, and the arrival of a new one, Noël A.J. Badiou. As well, to ensure better oversight and reporting of our resources, we decided to match the period covered by our annual report to the University's fiscal year. Thus, this report covers an eight-month period from September 2018 to April 2019.

The Human Rights Office has focused on creating a policy framework and consistent procedures to handle complaints of harassment, discrimination and sexual violence, as well as requests for accommodation under the Ontario Human Rights Code and issues related to accessibility and inclusion. Much of our work has involved clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the various campus services, to promote good decision making while ensuring transparency and accountability for the sake of all members of our community.

The Human Rights Office opened 154 files, including:

- 52 concerning cases of harassment
- 31 concerning cases of discrimination, including 13 based on disability and 9 based on race
- 71 related to sexual violence

It should be noted that while the HRO serves the entire University community, the majority of those who sought our services were students (a total of 99).

Regarding accessibility, we responded to 173 requests for information.

As well, as more people have become aware of our services, we have had to adjust to manage an increasing number of complaints and requests for help and training.

About the Human Rights Office

Since its creation, the Human Rights Office has played an essential role within the University. Management has made a point of keeping abreast of all issues related to the office's mandate, to ensure an inclusive, respectful work and learning environment. The Human Rights Office team works with the entire University community to create an inclusive environment by providing expert advice on development, implementation and assessment of policies, procedures and practices concerning diversity and inclusion, employment equity, accessibility, harassment and discrimination, and sexual violence.

The Human Rights Office team offered its expertise on many sensitive issues. In addition to active involvement in many working groups, committees and associations, HRO team members set up internal and external partnerships benefitting stakeholders and members of the University community.

Finally, we raised public awareness through events and activities focused on prevention. While we offer consultation, complaint resolution and investigation services, it is important to note that this year, our prevention and intervention work was shaped by new social norms and government standards promoting a culture change when it comes to fighting sexual violence.

Diversity and inclusion

One of the main goals of the Human Rights Office is to help people acquire or enhance the skills they need to incorporate inclusive practices in their day-to-day lives. Studies show that when diversity is properly addressed with inclusive practices and policies, institutions and the people associated with them grow and positive indicators (on engagement, innovation and productivity) increase.

Skills development

Consultation

Assessing current practices, identifying barriers, establishing new, inclusive practices and providing guidance and training.

Awareness-raising training and programs

The following workshops were created. They were offered on request by the Leadership Learning and Organizational Development (LLOD) section of Human Resources:

- Introduction to Diversity and Inclusion
- Inclusive Leadership: The Strength of Diversity in Your Teams
- Inclusive Leadership: Creating an Open, Inclusive Work Environment
- Inclusion and Conscious and Unconscious Biases

Partnership

Collaboration with the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity and Sports Services at the University of Ottawa. Training for employees who work in sports facilities and their managers.

Internal and external relations

- International Development Research Centre (IDRC)
- Webinar on spirituality at work
- Participated in the Conference Board of Canada “Fostering an Inclusive Workplace: Recognizing the Rewards of Inclusion” webinar
- Participated in the “Native Spirituality in Mental Wellness and Caring for the Four Powers of the Human Self” event presented by the Indigenous Resources Centre
- Participated in the “Embracing Inclusion: Evaluating Equity” webinar
- Participated in the Pride at Work Canada “The Case for LGBT Workplace Inclusion” training
- Participated in the Hire Immigrants Ottawa “Employer Summit”
- Participated in the Winters Group “Leading Inclusively Master Class Part I and II: Leading from the Heart” webinar
- Participated in the Employment Accessibility Resource Network (EARN) annual conference
- Participated in the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion “Navigating Race in Canadian Workplaces” training
- Participated in the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion “Intersection of Inclusion and Wellness in the Workplace” conference

Employment equity

The University of Ottawa fosters working conditions to end inequalities experienced by the four designated groups in Canada: women, Indigenous persons, persons with disabilities and racialized persons. The University develops, implements and assesses policies and programs designed to facilitate employment and education for members of these groups. The Human Resources Service ensures that the Employment Equity Act is applied appropriately regarding these groups.

Skills development

Consultation

- Ongoing collection of employment equity data, in collaboration with Human Resources: each new full-time, permanent employee is asked to fill out a self-identification questionnaire.
- Ongoing discussions with Employment and Social Development Canada, a federal government agency responsible for overseeing the Federal Contractors Program, to identify the impact of government changes on the University of Ottawa as well as any actions the University should take.

External relations and partnerships

- Membership in Hire Immigrants Ottawa (HIO), which aims to improve employer access to qualified immigrants in the Ottawa area, notably by helping to eliminate barriers in this regard
- Active membership in the Employment Accessibility Resource Network (EARN)
- Membership in the Ontario Employment Equity Practitioners Group (EEPG)

Accessibility

The Human Rights Office offers the University guidance in meeting the latter's mandate in terms of accessibility and accommodating persons with disabilities, in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Governance

Assisting senior managers in decision making

Presenting the current situation concerning accessibility on campus and possible solutions when programs, measures, priorities, procedures and policies are developed.

Progress on academic regulation on accommodation of students with disabilities

Academic Regulation I-16 — Academic Accommodation, for students with disabilities, was re-worked, in collaboration with the vice-provost, academic affairs; the associate vice-president, teaching and learning support; Legal Services; SASS (Student Academic Success Service); and the secretary general.

Notices re multi-year accessibility plans for designated services

In December 2018, a new approach was presented to CAOs to facilitate the drafting of the multi-year accessibility plan for 2019–2024 and to provide an update on the 2013–2016 plan. On February 28, 2019, services designated under [Policy 119](#) received a notice from the Office of the Secretary General to submit their progress reports for 2013–2016 and their multi-year accessibility plans to the Human Rights Office by May 1, 2019.

The plans had to include the following:

- A report on their 2013–2016 commitments
- The state of affairs in 2019
- A strategic plan on accessibility for 2019–2024
- Consultation et rétroaction

The HRO will use this information to create a progress report on accessibility matters since 2016 and to develop a multi-year accessibility plan for 2019–2024.

Awareness-raising

Inviting the University community to use technology-based accessibility tools developed to meet our campus needs.

Skills development

Creating technological solutions

The Human Rights Office continued to develop and improve the following online tools:

- **Accessibility Hub**
Between September 2018 and April 2019 these changes were made:
 - Links to sites to rent accessible equipment, hire accessibility-related services and find information on purchasing accessible technology-based tools were added.
 - Links were added on the uOttawa website to short videos on [making web content accessible](#) and [making documents accessible](#).
- **University of Ottawa virtual maps**
Between September 2018 and April 2019, we worked with Facilities to add [individual, non-gendered and accessible toilets](#), platform lifts, stairlifts for wheelchairs, nursing rooms, multi-faith prayer spaces, on-campus microwaves and passageways to building floor plans on [virtual maps of the University](#). Information about perfume, tobacco, vaping devices and cannabis on campus was also added to all building floor plans.
- **@uOaccessible Twitter account**
The account has 455 followers. Since it was created, we have posted 202 notices.

Accessible online consultations

The HRO enabled two online surveys to allow services to better determine the needs of University community members with disabilities and to allow the latter to easily share their needs anonymously.

Training on specific topics

The HRO worked with SASS — Academic Accommodations, Legal Services and the Teaching and Learning Support Service to offer three sessions on academic accommodations for professors and staff, to assist them in meeting their duty to accommodate and provide accessible services.

Consultations

Consultations covered the following topics regarding compliance with accessibility requirements and the duty to accommodate persons with disabilities:

- Creating and ensuring accessible information and communication (websites, social media, web content, ads, campaigns, multimedia, newsletters, email and video tutorials)
- Procurement of accessible products and services (learning management systems, content management systems, public notification systems, mobile apps, e-learning software, rentals of residences and other spaces, and redevelopment, renovation and innovation plans)
- On-campus accommodations (for classrooms, residences, Sports Services, the Dining Hall, ceremonies and conferences, admission, experiential learning, libraries and other spaces, as well as platform lifts and stairlifts for wheelchairs, transportation and parking)
- Health and safety (tobacco and cannabis use, smudge ceremonies, allergies, cleaning products and perfumes, mental health needs and service animals)

Internal/external relations and partnerships

- The HRO manages [ACCESS-EDU](#), a free listserv designed to facilitate knowledge and information-sharing related to accessible, equitable and inclusive services for students at Canadian postsecondary institutions.
- Participated in the Ontario Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility [Standards Development Committee](#)
- October 2018: Participated online in the AODA coordinators sub-committee, a network managed by the Council of Ontario Universities comprised of those responsible for implementing the AODA at Ontario universities
- October 2018: Presentation on “Web Accessibility” for first and second year students in the University of Ottawa Department of Communication
- December 2018: Participated in the United Nations [International Day of Persons with Disabilities](#) event
- March 2019: Presentation on accessibility issues related to French as part of the *Journée de l'accessibilité AQICESH* in Montreal

For more statistical data, see Appendix A.

Harassment and discrimination

Under Policy 67a — Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination and Procedure 36-1 — Complaints of Harassment/Discrimination Initiated by Students and Procedure 36-2 — Complaints of Harassment/Discrimination Initiated by Employees, as well as sections on harassment and discrimination in University of Ottawa collective agreements, we handle allegations of harassment and discrimination involving members of the University community fairly and equitably. Our services are confidential and impartial.

Complaint management and prevention services

The senior adviser, human rights and conflict resolution, handles complaints of harassment and discrimination under Policy 67a and procedures 36-1 and 36-2, as well as the applicable collective agreements. She also offers training and advice to her team and to the University community on relevant legislation and the current status of the law as it applies to harassment, discrimination, sexual violence, accessibility and equity.

Skills development

Administrative procedures and collective agreements

Consultations offered to Faculty Relations, Human Resources and unions regarding review of sections of collective agreements relating to harassment, discrimination and sexual violence.

Consultations

We advised faculties and services on recognizing incidents of harassment and discrimination and handling them in keeping with procedural fairness, as well as on prevention.

- Faculty of Arts
- Faculty of Education
- Faculty of Law, Civil Law Section
- Faculty of Law, Common Law Section
- Faculty of Engineering
- Faculty of Medicine
- Faculty of Health Sciences
- Faculty of Social Sciences
- Telfer School of Management
- Facilities
- Sports Services
- Protection Services
- Faculty Relations

Presentations, training and awareness-raising

- Faculty of Health Sciences — presentation on our services
- Faculty of Education — “Workplace Harassment”
- “Mobilizing the Bystanders” training — to various services throughout the year
- International Office — training on “Prevention of Harassment, Discrimination and Sexual Violence in the University Setting”

Partnerships

- Participated in the “President’s Welcome” event
- Participated in the SFUO “Social Justice Fair”
- Participated in the Faculty of Law, Civil Law Section’s Fauteux 101 orientation
- Participated in the “Showcase” event as part of the orientation program for new professors
- Participated in the Person of Concerns committee with various faculties

External relations

- Participated in the Law Society of Ontario 7th Annual Human Rights Summit
- Participated in the Borden Ladner Gervais LLP Women in Leadership Conference
- Participated in the Law Society of Ontario “Recruitment, Retention and Advancement: Countering Unconscious Bias” conference
- Participated in the “Workplace Investigations Update” talk at the Ottawa Conference and Event Centre

For more statistical data, see Appendix A.

Sexual violence

The Human Rights Office is mandated to handle disclosures, incidents and complaints of sexual violence, to assist survivors in their requests for accommodations and to work on preventing sexual violence on campus, as stipulated in Policy 67b — Prevention of Sexual Violence.

Management of disclosures, incidents and complaints

The Human Rights Office responded to disclosures of sexual violence that it received in a neutral, impartial and confidential manner, using a survivor-centred approach. The #MeToo movement, which made headlines in 2017, elicited considerable interest in the University community. In this regard, it is interesting to note an increase in the number of incidents declared and handled. We are also working on developing a confidential online system to simplify reporting incidents.

Academic and workplace accommodations

Out of the 72 disclosures we received during this period, 15 survivors requested accommodations, for an average of approximately four requests per person. It should also be noted that three survivors who disclosed incidents before the period covered by this report made a total of 10 requests for accommodation.

In brief, the Human Rights Office handled 72 requests for accommodation for the period in question. Most of the requests were made by students concerning matters such as the following:

- Receiving an extension on an assignment
- Postponing an exam
- Course withdrawal without a mention of failure
- Changes in course enrolment
- Reimbursement of tuition fees
- Assistance with appeals against mandatory withdrawal from a program
- Justifications for absence from class or class-related activities
- Implementation of preventive measures in the classroom or workplace
- Support in keeping financial aid

Prevention

Many initiatives were put in place during this period.

Promotional material

We introduced a new initiative to encourage students to bring up the issue of consent systematically before initiating sexual activity. Stickers were created and placed on individual bags containing condoms. The stickers read: “Did you ask? Consent is never negotiable.”

This new item, as well as other promotional items regularly used by the Human Rights Office, was distributed by sexual violence prevention mobile teams and HRO members at various campus appearances (tables, presentations, training sessions). As well, they were included in the kits various services handed out to new students.

Sexual violence prevention mobile teams

Starting in fall 2018, mobile teams made up of student volunteers were created to raise awareness among students and prevent sexual violence on campus. These student volunteers, who were duly trained, were tasked with initiating conversations with other students on different topics touching on sexual violence, such as consent, as well as on services offered and procedures and policies in place to support them when needed. Thirteen student volunteers were trained.

6 Weeks of Sexual Violence Prevention on Campus

Six weeks of activities were also planned beginning the first week of September 2018.

Week 1: “Do you NO the limit? — 360° of consent”

Week 2: Talk and creation of a collective art work with the CALACS francophone d'Ottawa

Week 3: Poster making for the “Take Back the Night” march

Week 4: #IBelieveYou campaign

Week 5: “Sisters in Spirit” vigil

Week 6: “Mobilizing the Bystanders” workshop

National day of fasting and support for the Moose Hide Campaign

Along with the Indigenous Resources Centre and the Moose Hide Campaign, we participated in the third national gathering to stop violence against women and children. First, we created signs for the march, to denounce violence and promote prevention but also to send a message of support to victims and their families.

Panda Game

We wrote messages related to sexual violence prevention on the sidewalks at TD Place, we spoke to students who were present and we distributed promotional items. We also helped the volunteer teams for part of the game, to assist students in need.

“Sexual violence: Support and prevention” website

We are creating a confidential online incident reporting system, as well as revising content.

Support to the University community

Standing Committee on the Prevention of Sexual Violence

The sexual violence prevention officer and the director of the Human Rights Office are ex-officio members of the Standing Committee on the Prevention of Sexual Violence, to support the committee's activities and mandate.

Training

Mobilizing the Bystanders

During the period covered by this report, the Human Rights Office offered seven training sessions, including four in French and three in English. Sessions were also presented by other sections, such as Sports Services, the Housing Service and the Student Federation of the University of Ottawa. A “training the trainers” session was offered as part of a course at the School of Social Work, which allowed us to train a dozen or so students.

Awareness-raising

We offered presentations on services offered by the Human Rights Office as well as on sexual violence prevention to these academic units and services, as well as at the following events:

- Civil Law Section (Fauteux 101)

- Student Federation of the University of Ottawa (“Social Justice Fair” and “Take Back the Night” march)
- Interdisciplinary School of Health Sciences
- “Can I Kiss You?” one-person show
- Mental Health and Wellness “Wellness Café”

Partnerships

- Women’s Resource Centre (SFUO)
- Pride Centre (SFUO)
- Graduate Students Association of the University of Ottawa (GSAÉD)
- Student services programming team
- Indigenous Resource Centre
- Native Women’s Association of Canada
- Moose Hide Campaign
- Centre d’aide et de lutte contre les agressions à caractère sexuel (CALACS)
- Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre (ORCC)
- Carleton University
- Algonquin College
- La Cité

External relations

- Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health — “Mental Health Awareness” online training
- Participated in the “Femmes et pouvoir : l’après #metoo” talk by Pascale Navarro
- Participated in the Human Rights Research and Education Centre launch and talk marking the UN 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign at the University of Ottawa
- Participated in the FemAnVi research collective’s “Coercive Control: Improving Responses to Domestic Violence” symposium
- Participated in the University of Ottawa Professional Development Institute’s “Le stress post-traumatique et ses différentes dimensions” training
- Participated in Western University’s “Upstander Training” for trainers
- Participated in Ryerson, Carleton, Wilfrid Laurier and Brock universities’ “Can Justice Heal? Exploring Accountability Models to Address Sexual Violence on Campus” symposium
- Collaborated with regional organizations including the CALACS and the ORCC on organizing the “Take Back the Night” march

For more statistical data, see Appendix B.

Statistical analysis

Appendix A: Accessibility statistics

Overview of requests, September 2018 to April 2019

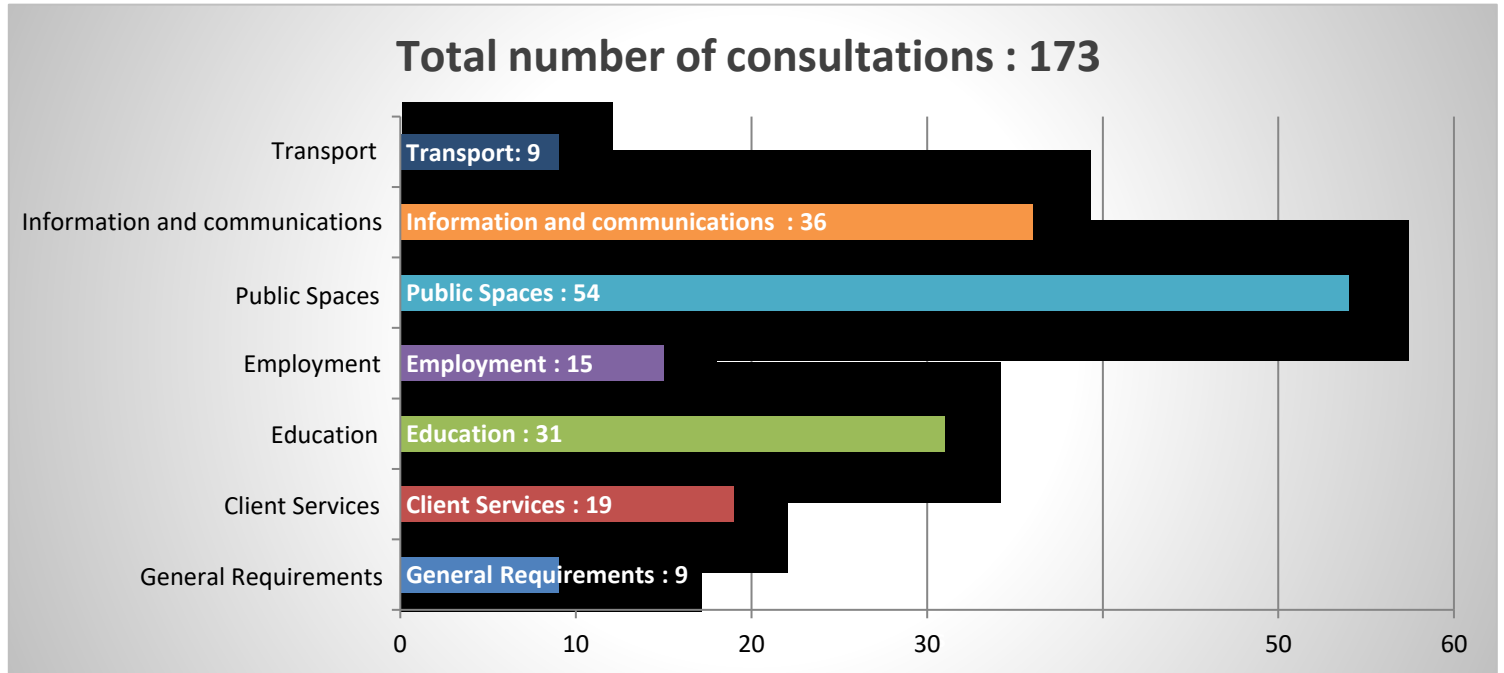


Figure 1: Number of requests, September 1, 2018 to April 31, 2019

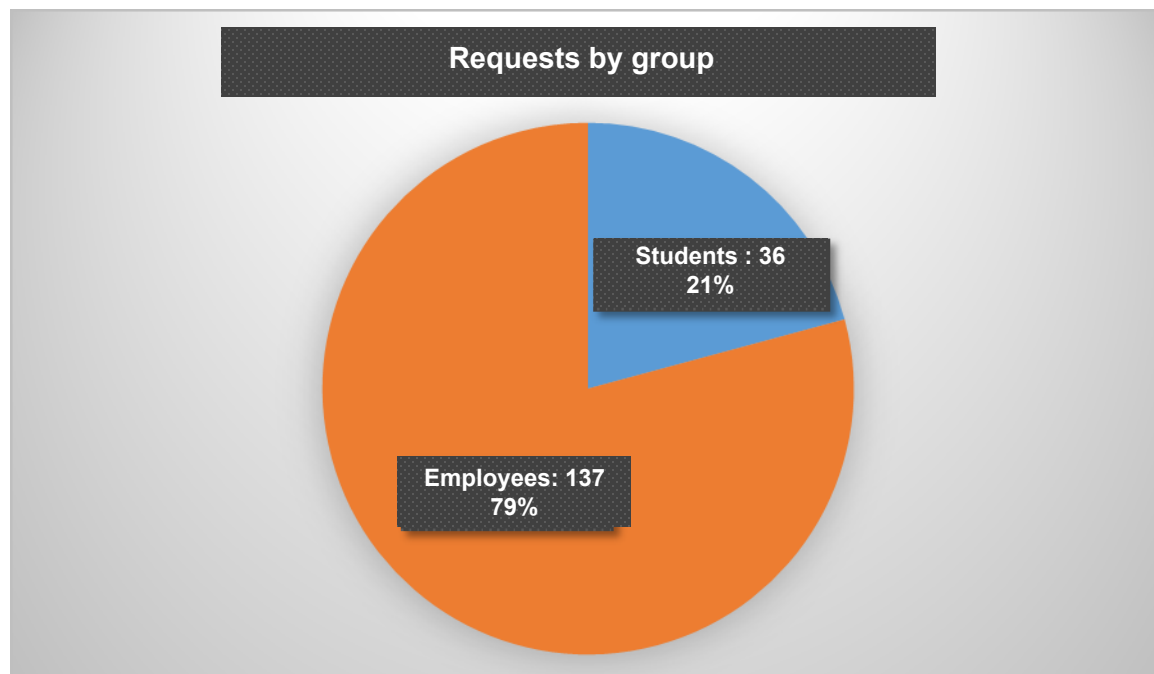


Figure 2: Requests by group, September 1, 2018 to April 31, 2019

Appendix B — Harassment, discrimination and sexual violence

2018–2019

Figure 1: Status of complainant and respondent

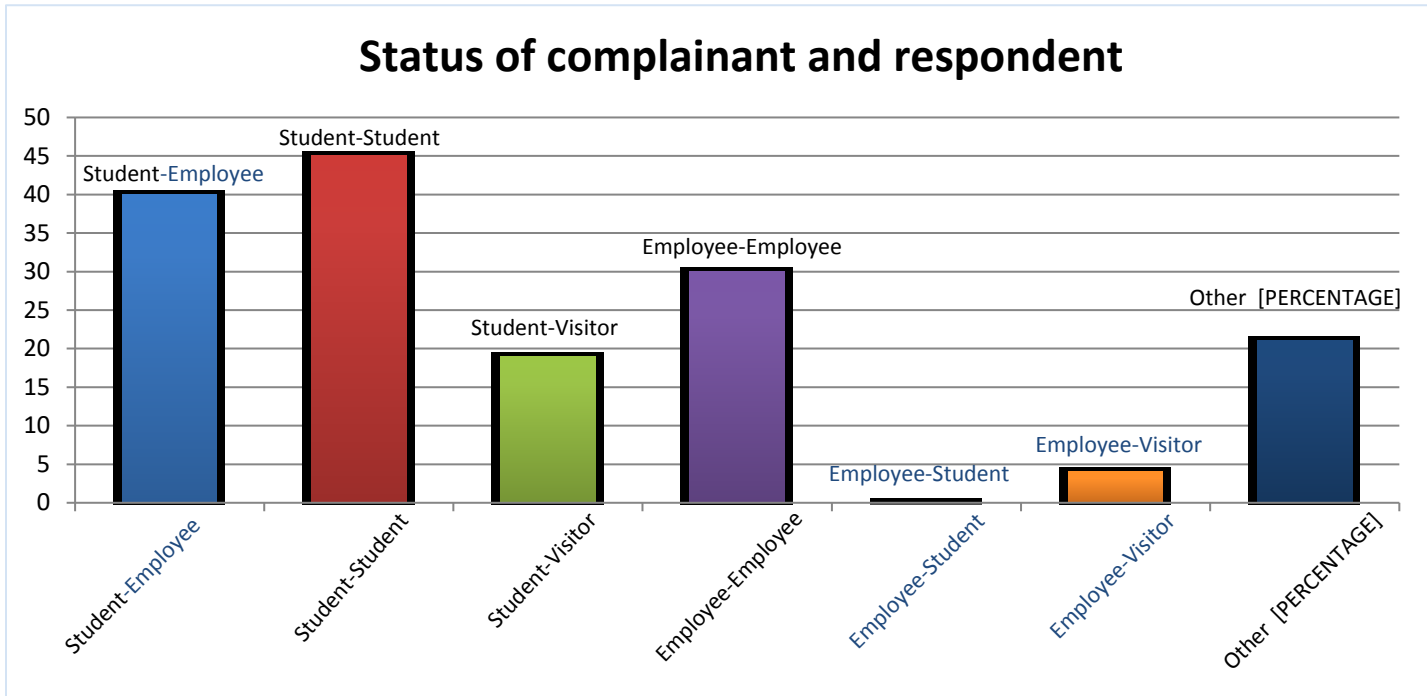


Figure 2: Types of complaints

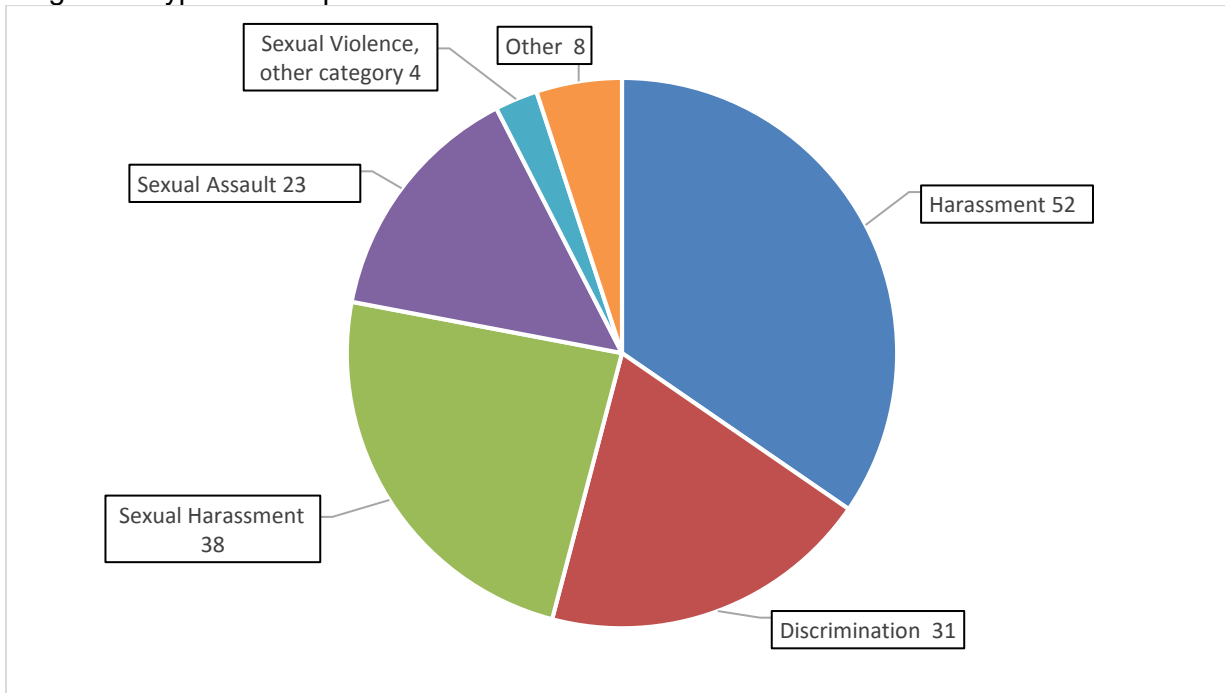


Figure 3: Grounds of discrimination as per the Ontario Human Rights Code

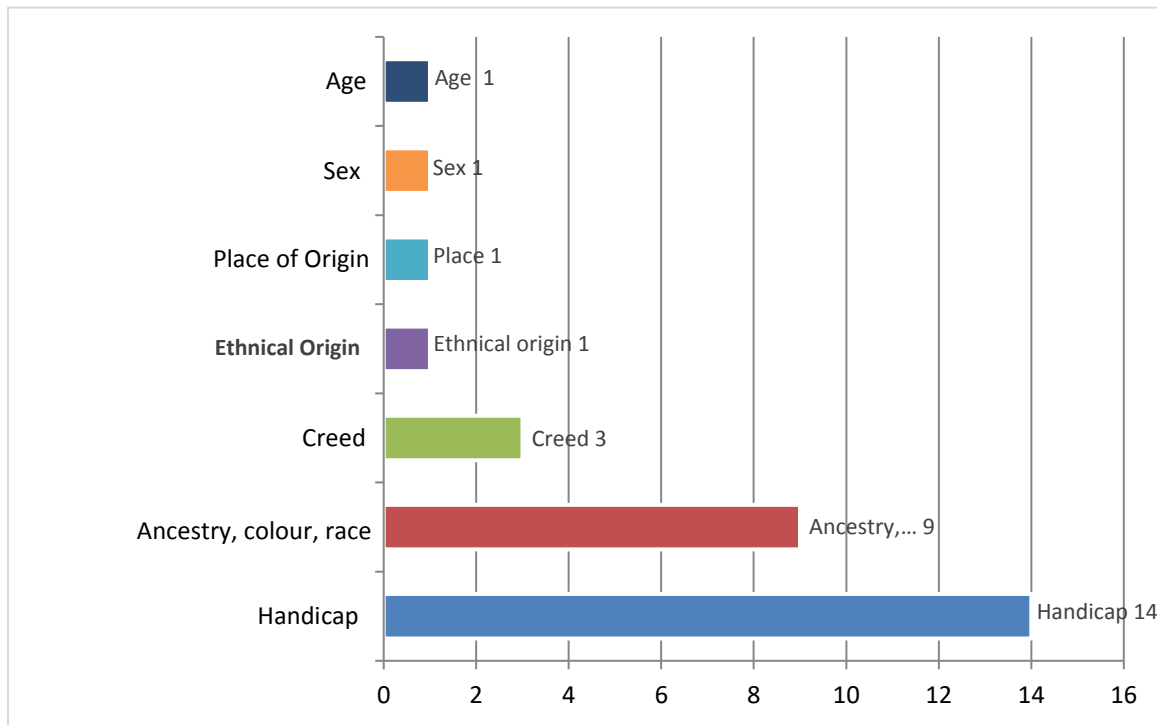


Figure 4: Details of sexual violence complaints

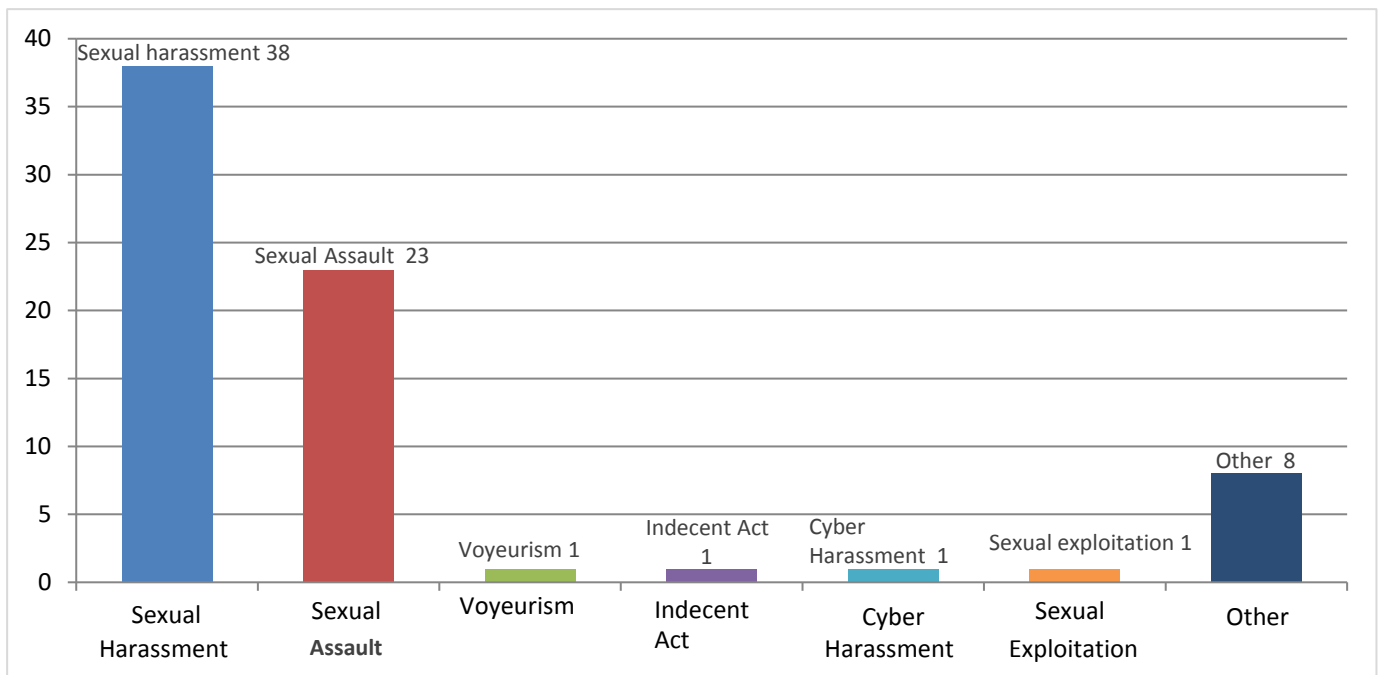


Figure 5: Language of complainant

