

# Annual Report

## 2019-2020

May 2019 to April 2020

Bureau des droits de la personne  
Human Rights Office



uOttawa

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## Message from the Human Rights Office team

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 in order to promote good decision making while ensuring transparency and accountability for the sake of all members of our community.

Three months before this report was published, COVID-19 turned our world upside-down. We realize that the pandemic has significantly, and perhaps disproportionately, affected members of our academic community who belong to groups protected by the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#).

Rest assured that the University's response to this crisis is based on compassion and determination to support the University community, guided by the values of equity, diversity and inclusion that it champions. The Human Rights Office works with key University decision-makers to ensure that actions taken during the COVID-19 pandemic comply with [Public Health Ontario](#) guidelines and the human rights principles enshrined in the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#).

Although we have had to adapt our strategies to the new reality, and extend non-critical deadlines in order to mobilize the resources needed to manage the COVID-19 crisis, work on meeting critical human rights deadlines and addressing the needs of our University community continues remotely.

We would like to thank senior management for their support, as well as all those one who work to protect and promote our institutional core values of equity, diversity and inclusion.

The Human Rights Office Team

## About the Human Rights Office

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The Human Rights Office plays 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 Academic 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.

## Objectives of the report

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This report documents the actions and commitments of the Human Rights Office (HRO) between May 1, 2019 and April 30, 2020.

The objectives of this activity are:

- Report on progress by the HRO
- Identify obstacles to overcome to help the HRO meet its commitments
- If necessary, review HRO strategies

For more information about HRO services, please visit the [Human Rights Office website](#).

## Brief statistical overview

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The HRO team participated in 24 prevention activities.



The Office received 869 requests between May 1, 2019 and April 30, 2020.



An all new self-identification questionnaire was created, allowing the University to expand its analysis of gender, Indigenous peoples, members of racialized groups, and members of LGBTQI2S+ communities.



The confidential disclosure/reporting of incidents of sexual violence is now possible, even anonymously, on the sexual violence prevention website.



The HRO offered advice/consultations over 521 times to members of the academic community.



The virtual map of the campus was consulted 297, 892 times.



More than 291 students and 162 employees used our services during the period covered.

## Supporting institutional commitments

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As a leader in research and responsible for knowledge sharing, the University of Ottawa has made a public commitment to certain equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives. Between April 2019 and May 2020, the Human Rights Office supported senior management, faculties, services, and student groups in taking action on the following commitments:

- Universities Canada Principles on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
- The federal government's Dimensions: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Canada program
- The Comprehensive Approach to Addressing Racism and Discrimination on Campus
- The Canadian Accessibility Network
- CRC Institutional Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Plan

## Participating in internal committees

- **President's Advisory Committee for a Discrimination-Free Campus:** In the summer of 2019, an incident on campus resulted in allegations of racism, racial profiling, and harassment. In response to these allegations and their impact on our University community, President and Vice-Chancellor Jacques Frémont announced a series of measures to combat racism and discrimination on campus. One of the measures implemented was the creation of the President's Committee for a Discrimination-Free Campus. The Committee's role is to advise the President on ways to combat racism and promote tolerance, acceptance, and inclusion across the campus and within our community. Noël Badiou, HRO Director, chairs the Committee.
- **Standing Committee on the Prevention of Sexual Violence (SCPSV):** The Director and the Sexual Violence Prevention Worker of the Human Rights Office sits on this committee. Among other things, the Committee's mandate is to a) work with the University community to foster a safe learning environment, and b) recommend relevant initiatives, strategies or programs to ensure and improve the continuity of services, policies, procedures, and other prevention measures.
- **Standing Committee on Student Wellbeing:** Since the Director of the Human Rights Office participates in this Committee, the HRO forms ties with various partners on campus and works jointly to meet the wellness needs of the student population.
- **Mandatory Training Committee:** managed by Human Resources
- **Advisory Committee on the Design of Public Spaces:** managed by Building Services
- **Occupational Health and Safety Committee:** managed by Risk Management

## An aware and informed University community

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The Human Rights Office is committed to raising awareness of equity, diversity and inclusion, accessibility, harassment, discrimination and sexual violence among all members of the University community. To do so, the Human Rights Office works closely with senior management, the Communications Directorate, and its internal and external partners to develop and promote awareness, prevention, information and training activities.

## Activities to raise awareness

This year, the following actions informed, raised awareness, and promoted a culture of research based on equity, diversity and inclusion.

### Sexual Violence

- Six weeks of sexual violence prevention on campus
  - Sexual Violence Prevention Day
  - #JustGotWeird campaign
  - #IBelieveYou Day
  - Take Back the night
  - Let's Talk About Sex with Venus Envy
  - Consent and Inclusive Yoga
  - Vigil – Sisters in Spirit
- Peer Help Group
- Panda Game
- 4@7 international - Do you NO the limit? - 360° of consent
- Sixteen days of activism against gender-based violence
- *A way with Images and Words; A Survivor's Journey*
- Conference on Human Trafficking
- *National vigil to commemorate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Polytechnique massacre*, an event organized by the Université de Montréal, which invited the University of Ottawa.
- Wellness Week
- Workshop: Supporting our friends in the time of #MeToo, sponsored by the OCTEVAW
- Participation in information booths and other on-campus events
- Escape the UCU
- Social Justice Fair
- Information Table – 101 Week
- Fauteux 101
- Wellness Café
- Welcome Week

### Accessibility

- The [#NoMouse Challenge](#)

## Training activities

### Harassment, discrimination and sexual violence

- Mobilizing the Bystanders training sessions
- Mobilizing the Bystanders trainer training
- Training offered to review committees, such as that provided by [Policy 67b – Prevention of Sexual Violence](#)
- Training on the Prevention of Sexual Violence, offered to the mobile Sexual Health team of the Health Promotion Service
- Training on harassment, discrimination and sexual violence prevention, as well as the obligations of employees and managers, offered to Human Resources
- Training on harassment, discrimination and sexual violence prevention offered to Food Services
- Training series on harassment, discrimination and sexual violence prevention, offered to new international students

- Training on harassment, discrimination and sexual violence prevention, offered to Facilities
- Training on harassment, discrimination and sexual violence prevention; the professor/student relationship, offered at the School of Music

### **Diversity, equity and inclusion**

- Training on intercultural awareness and unconscious bias offered to senior management at the University of Ottawa. Collaboration between the HRO, HR and Labour Relations.
- Training on intercultural awareness and unconscious bias, offered to Protection Services. Collaboration between the HRO and HR.
- The HRO issued a Statement on COVID-19 to remind members of the University of Ottawa community of its role in protecting the values of equity, diversity and inclusion that the University champions.
- Helped coordinate the Sisters in Spirit Vigil organized by the Mashkawazìwogamig Centre to commemorate missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

### **Accessibility**

- Meeting with webmasters to discuss Web accessibility requirements.
- PowerPoint presentation on AODA training requirements to CAOs.
- Meeting with webmasters to discuss video accessibility.

### **Information tools**

#### **Finding inclusive services on campus**

[University of Ottawa virtual interactive maps](#) are an important online resource for easily locating inclusive services at the University, such as short, barrier-free and indoor paths (tunnels), wheelchair lifts, universally accessible change rooms, [gender-neutral washrooms](#), multi-faith prayer spaces, change tables, accessible washrooms, accessible sports facilities, microwaves, breastfeeding rooms, sensory spaces, quiet rooms, ergonomic desks, accessible parking, food services for people with dietary restrictions and bus shelters or pick-up locations for adapted transportation services. The map also allows users to quickly find information on service disruptions and emergency contact information to report incidents, equipment failures, or to request snow removal at entrances.

#### **Greater visibility on social media**

The Human Rights Office hired a work-study student in the summer of 2019 to lend a hand with communications, especially social media. Many publications were created to underscore the various national and international days commemorating diversity.

### **Clear and transparent guidelines**

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The University of Ottawa is required to uphold the provisions of the *Ontario Human Rights Code* with respect to accommodation in light of the grounds prohibited by the Code. The Office worked in collaboration with the various units and faculties to create and publish the following measures and guidelines.

## University policies

- Creation of [Academic Regulation I-16 - Academic Accommodations](#) for students with a disability
- A comprehensive review of [Policy 67a – Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination](#), and harmonization of the following applicable administrative methods to clarify and simplify the complaint procedure:
  - [Procedure 36-1 – Complaints of Harassment/Discrimination initiated by students](#) (Procedure 36-1);
  - [Procedure 36-2 – Complaints of Harassment/Discrimination initiated by employees](#) (Procedure 36-2)
- A review of [Policy 67b – Prevention of Sexual Violence](#) in collaboration with the Sexual Violence Prevention Committee. In light of this review, several changes and a few clarifications were suggested to make certain sections more explicit. This review, which was presented to and approved by the various internal levels of authority, identified that more substantial changes were required. For example, the reviewers recommended that the complaint procedure be updated and possibly simplified. The HRO is currently reviewing the policy in depth and a broad consultation will be launched to gather input from the University community. This initiative will allow us to establish a policy that best meets the needs of the University community.
- Participation in discussions on the development of [Policy 124 – Provision for Indigenous. Ceremonial Practices for Events on University Campus](#)
- Participation in discussions concerning development of the [Cannabis on Campus](#).

## Guidelines

- Participation in developing a glossary for essential program requirements. The purpose of this resource is to help faculties identify the essential requirements of their courses and programs.
- Participation in discussions leading to the development of a more inclusive admissions process for future undergraduate students whose grade point average is below average. This includes the possibility of sharing life experiences using the [Declaration of Personal Experience](#) form. This information will receive consideration before a decision is made. The purpose of this pilot project is to give due regard to the wealth of experience that each student contributes to the University through the path they have followed in life, and to make access to education and academic excellence more inclusive. This initiative complements others by the [Faculty of Medicine](#), the [Faculty of Education](#), and the [Common Law Section](#) of the Faculty of Law, which have already instituted their own procedures for evaluating the life journey of applicants.

## Evidence-based data to achieve excellence

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The Human Rights Office aims to improve the quality of its services and services to the University community with the help of evidence-based recommendations that are inclusive and compliant with information management and privacy policies. This year, the HRO worked with Information Management Services to create a roadmap for improving data quality.

### New data collection procedure

#### Employment equity

Given that it hosts at least five Canada Research Chairs, the University of Ottawa must comply with federal policies on non-discrimination and [employment equity](#) and meet the equity, diversity and inclusion requirements of the Canada Research Chairs Program.

More specifically, the HRO contributed to the following actions:

- Report on the status of equity, diversity and inclusion on campus between 2016 and 2019;
- Improve the procedure for collecting qualitative and quantitative data to measure, monitor, understand and publicly report on challenges and progress;
- Include EDI priorities in the University's action plan, [Transformation 2030](#).

### **Diversity and inclusion on campus**

A new employee self-identification survey was launched in the spring of 2020. The survey is designed to allow the University of Ottawa to expand its analysis of gender, Indigenous peoples, members of racialized groups, members with disabilities, members of the LGBTQI2S+ communities, and members of the Francophone, Anglophone and bilingual communities.

### **Sexual violence**

In collaboration with the Standing Committee on the Prevention of Sexual Violence, the HRO created a document to collect data from the faculties and certain services and departments. This data collection, which will be implemented in 2020, will provide more insight into the scope of sexual violence on campus and allow us to partner with different sectors to support survivors in our community.

## An impartial service that listens to the University community

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Throughout the year, the Human Rights Office enhanced its advisory and investigative procedures to better identify the needs University community members who belong to groups protected under the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#) and to better advise senior management, faculties, and departments. As a result of these consultations, the following initiatives were developed.

### **A global approach to address racism and discrimination on campus**

The Human Rights Office worked with senior management to create the [Comprehensive Approach to Addressing Racism and Discrimination on Campus](#), which consists of a series of measures to address racism and discrimination on campus.

### **Washrooms for everyone, regardless of gender identity**

In response to requests from members of our academic community and in consultation with groups representing the LGBTQI2S+ communities on campus, 189 individual and non-gendered washrooms in 63 University of Ottawa buildings have been made available to the University community. These gender-neutral [washrooms](#), easily identified by a simple image of a toilet, are intended to promote the physical security and safety of all members of our academic community, regardless of their gender identity.

### **Consultations with University community members living with a disability**

During consultations on the [2019-2024 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan \(pdf, 373 KB\)](#) with University community members with a disability, these members were invited to apply for a position on the University's new [uOaccessible Advisory Committee](#) and to be added to the HRO distribution list so they can be notified of future online consultations about accessibility.

The invitation to participate in this consultation meeting was published in the *Gazette*, posted on the University's social media pages, sent to addresses on the SASS – Academic Accommodations distribution list, and broadcast on TV screens across campus for one month.

We compiled applications from individuals interested in sitting on the advisory board; a selection process for the advisory board will begin at the start of the 2020-2021 academic year.

After being reviewed by the AC, the multi-year accessibility plan was posted on the [Human Rights Office Plans/Reports](#) for public consultation.

Members of the University community with disabilities were invited to submit comments in person during a meeting hosted by the HRO on December 3, 2019, and to complete a brief, confidential online survey between December 17, 2019 and February 15, 2020. For more details about the consultation's results, see [Results/Interpretation: Accessibility Plan 2019-2024 survey \(pdf, 603 KB\)](#).

## Transparent, concrete, and measurable outcomes

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### Sexual violence on campus this year

The tabling of the [University of Ottawa 2019-2020 Sexual Violence Prevention Report \(pdf, 177.17 KB\)](#) by the Standing Committee on Sexual Violence Prevention (SCSVP) outlines the prevention, awareness and education efforts by the HRO and its partners to address sexual violence on campus. The report also provides data on disclosures, complaints and accommodations made to support members of our student community affected by sexual violence on campus.

### Current accessibility on campus

Under the AODA, the University is required to take steps to make its goods, services, and employment opportunities accessible by 2025 and to report publicly on the status of these commitments. The Human Rights Office worked with various units under Section 31 of [Policy 119 – Accessibility](#) to draft and publish the following documents:

- The [Accessibility Plan 2019-2024 \(pdf, 386.63 Ko\)](#) describes the University's strategies to prevent and eliminate barriers and also to meet the accessibility requirements under Ontario law.
- The 2017-2019 Accessibility Compliance Report (in English, available on request) submitted to the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility.
- The [2019-2020 annual progress report \(pdf, 308 KB\)](#) describes the progress of steps taken by the HRO and other designated units to implement the strategy described in the 2019-2024 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.
- The [Survey on the 2019-2024 Accessibility Plan: Results and Interpretation report \(pdf, 603 KB\)](#)

## Experts responding to the needs of their partners

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### Advisory services

To help the University of Ottawa meet these obligations, the HRO provided advisory services 869 times to units and faculties concerning the following regulations:

- 279 times concerning Academic Regulation 67a-Prévention of Harassment and Discrimination
- 209 times concerning Academic Regulation 67b-Prevention of Sexual Violence
- 181 times concerning Policy 119-Accessibility
- 43 times concerning the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA), Psychological Harassment
- 22 times concerning Academic Regulation I-16 - Academic Accommodations

The HRO also received requests related to employment equity and the student code of conduct, and over 124 requests outside the Office's mandate.

### The HRO provides advisory services to the following committees:

- Architecture Review Board on Information Technologies.
- The Committee on essential requirements, managed by the Vice-Provost, Academic Affairs
- The Drupal migration assessment committee, for candidate assessment
- The Standing Committee on Student Wellbeing

### New online form to disclose sexual violence

Various partners on campus mentioned that it can sometimes be difficult for survivors to obtain services in order to disclose situations of sexual violence or get support. To correct this situation, a suggestion was made to create an online disclosure form that members of the University community could use to contact the HRO.

The product of a joint effort by the HRO and the SCPSV, this form is now available on the [Sexual violence: support and prevention](#) website under "Disclosing/Reporting an Incident." It can be completed and sent to the HRO anonymously, thus opening access to the full range of services available.

### **Review of Mobilizing the Bystanders training**

The HRO conducted a full review of this training in light of feedback and requests received from participants and trainers. Information was added on 1) intersectionality, 2) the bystander effect, 3) myths, 4) the survivor-centred approach and consent. The HRO also updated certain information, most notably in response to revisions to [Policy 67b — Prevention of Sexual Violence](#).

### **New online training on preventing sexual violence**

At the request of a few on campus partners to the HRO, a proposal was made to create online training for the student community on sexual violence prevention.

The HRO is currently working with Concordia University to adapt that institution's online training and make it available to the uOttawa community. This will allow us to train a greater number of people on topics such as sexual violence, consent, the bystander effect, the survivor-centred approach, the services offered, and [Policy 67b](#).

### **Collaboration between the University of Ottawa and survivor support organizations**

The HRO worked with the Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre and CALACS Francophone d'Ottawa to sustain a partnership now several years strong. Moreover, thanks to additional government funding received in 2019, hours of service were extended to more effectively meet demand, which is increasing significantly year after year.

### **Participation in staffing process for the inclusion librarian position**

This new position aims to enhance collaboration with campus and community partners to ensure that the Library is as inclusive and accessible as possible for all current and potential users.

## The HRO engaged in the community

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### **Community of Practice – The Courage to Act**

The HRO sexual violence prevention worker is a member of the Francophone community of practice under [The Courage to Act](#) project, a national initiative designed to address and prevent gender-based violence on the campuses of institutions of higher learning across Canada. Our involvement will undoubtedly lead us to acquire new tools to address sexual violence on our campus.

### **ACCESS-EDU Network Management**

The [ACCESS-EDU](#) network (formerly CADSPPE-L) is a free distribution list maintained by the University of Ottawa to help facilitate the exchange of knowledge and information on providing services that are accessible, equitable, and inclusive to postsecondary students in Canada.

### **Post-Secondary Education Standards Development Committee**

The senior accessibility policy officer within the HRO is a member of the [Post-Secondary Education Standards Development Committee of the Ontario Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility](#), which aims to eliminate barriers to accessibility in Ontario's post-secondary institutions.

### **Committee of the AODA Sub-Group of the Council of Ontario Universities**

The senior accessibility policy officer within the HRO is a member of the AODA Sub-Group of the Council of Ontario Universities, which aims to share best practices with other accessibility experts in Ontario.

## A sensitive response to trauma and intersectionality

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Under the legal framework established by the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, the University has obligations with respect to harassment and discrimination and, under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, obligations with respect to harassment in the workplace. It must also meet its obligations under the *Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act*, the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and the *Human Rights Code* with respect to sexual violence, sexual harassment, and sexual harassment in the workplace. In some situations, discrimination, harassment, and sexual violence may be considered criminal acts under the *Criminal Code of Canada*. The collective agreements applicable to various groups of University employees, and the professional and ethical obligations of learners and faculty members within the Faculty of Medicine, also include provisions on harassment, discrimination, and sexual violence.

### A trained team

All members of the Human Rights Office have received training on how to respond to complaints with consideration for intersectionalities. The new Indigenous Cultural Safety Ontario Foundations Training Program (delivered in English only) builds on past training on sexual violence, mental health, and trans and non-binary issues.

Three members of the Human Rights Office have also received training on restorative justice to learn more about this approach and how it may be useful in resolving cases involving harassment, discrimination, and sexual violence.

One member of the Human Rights Office has also taken the human rights training offered by the Law Society of Ontario, and training on emerging issues related to workplace investigations, again offered by the Law Society of Ontario.

## Disclosure and complaint processing

### Sexual violence

In all, between May 1, 2019 and April 30, 2020, the HRO received 209 requests from the University community for services related to sexual violence. This number includes 110 consultations (follow-up on files opened in previous years, requests for accommodation, disclosures, etc.), 89 requests for information (referrals to internal or external services, information about *Policy 67b* and services or complaint procedures, etc.) and 10 cases that led to complaints.

Of these service requests, the HRO received a total of 100 new disclosures from the community involving the following types of sexual violence: Sexual assault: 31, Sexual harassment: 47, Criminal harassment: 8, Indecent assault: 4, Sexual exploitation: 1, Other (other types or survivors chose not to specify): 6.

During the period under review, the HRO assisted members of the student community with 98 accommodation requests, including assignment or exam deferrals, course changes, preventive measures in the classroom, letters of support for various appeals, requests for tuition reimbursement, and excused absences from class.

Finally, of the nine complaints received, three led to outside investigations, five were resolved by informal or alternative means, and one was dropped.

[See the 2019-2020 Report on Preventing Sexual Violence at the University of Ottawa \(pdf, 4320 KB\)](#)

See Appendix 1 for detailed statistics

### Harassment and discrimination

The HRO formally and informally processed 279 complaints and requests related to harassment and discrimination involving the University population, services and faculties with the following reason codes:

- Age, ancestry, criminal record, citizenship, beliefs, gender expression, disability, gender identity, place of origin, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, race, sex, family status.

See Appendix 1 for detailed statistics

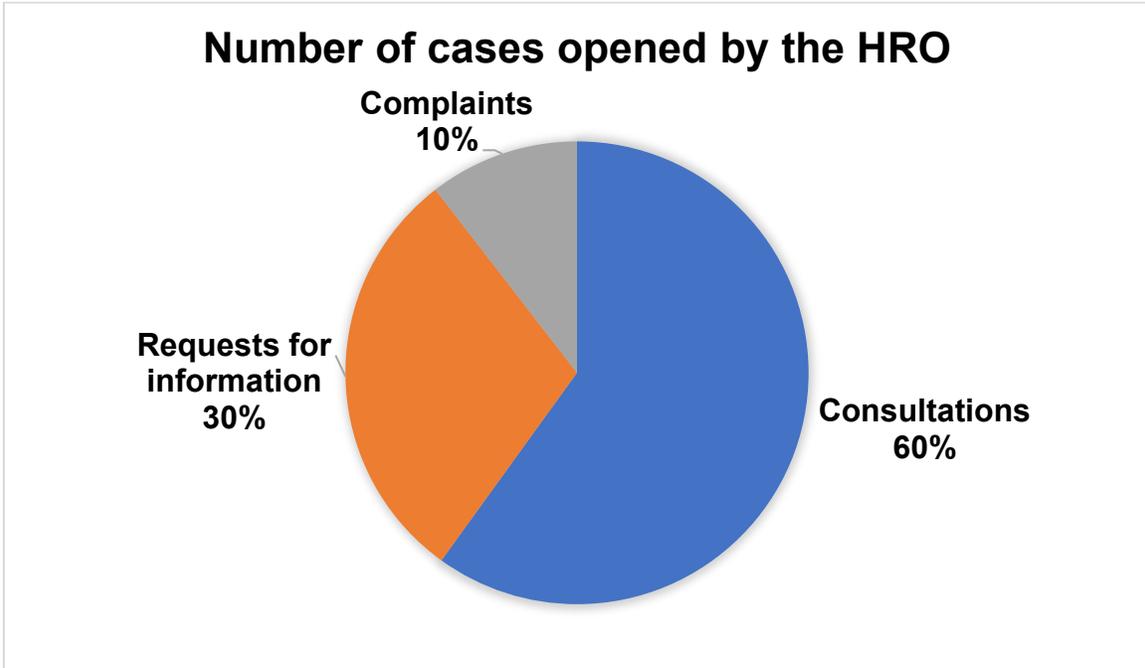
## Many thanks to our partners

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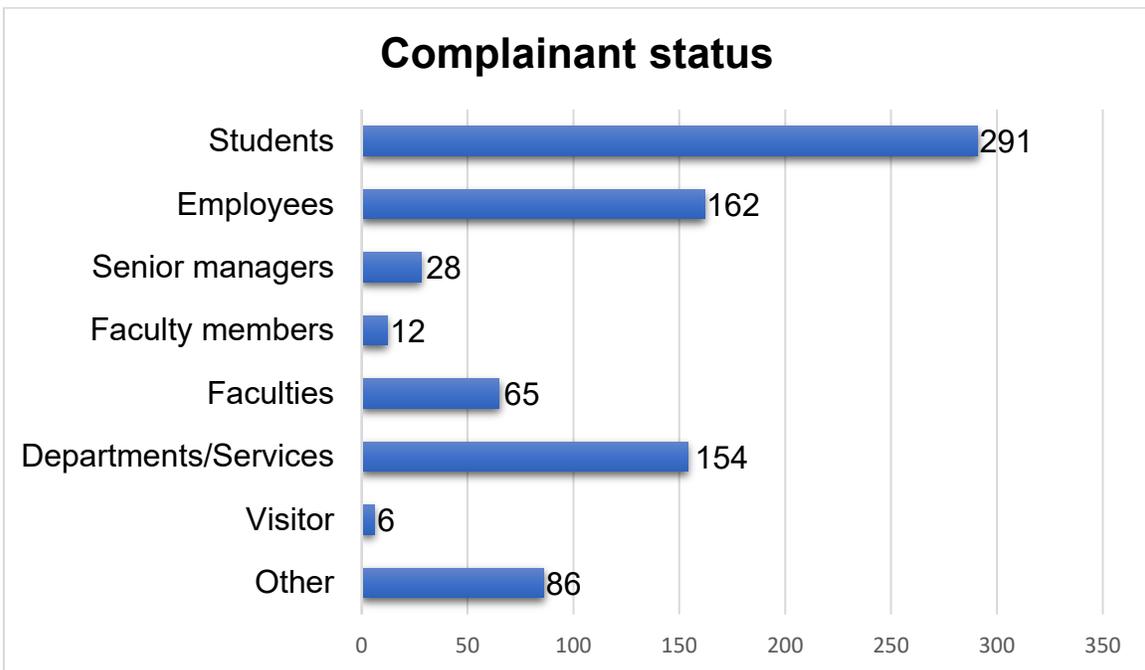
- University of Ottawa Students' Union (UOSU)
- Womxn's Resource Centre
- University of Ottawa Graduate Students (GSAED)
- Student Life
- Housing Services
- Mashkawaziwogamig: Indigenous Resource Centre (IRC)
- Communications Directorate
- International Office
- Health Promotion Service
- Food Services
- Protection Services
- CALACS francophone d'Ottawa
- Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre (ORCC)
- Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women (OCTEVAW)
- Carleton University
- Algonquin College
- La Cité

## Appendix 1

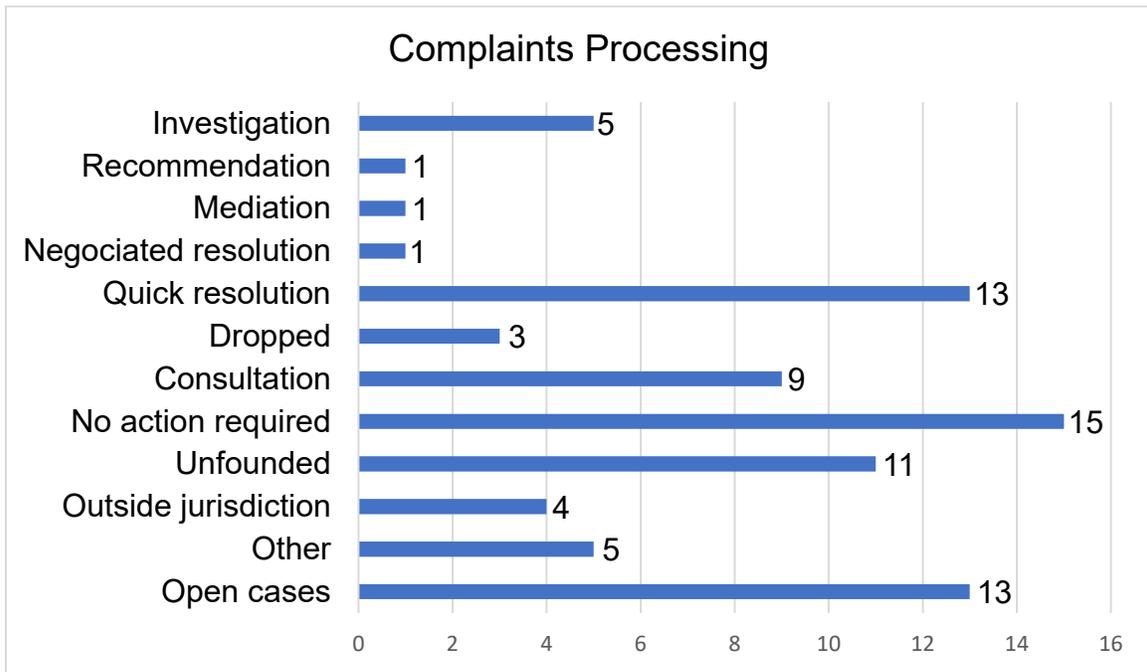
The HRO received a total of 869 requests between May 2019 and April 2020. Of this number, 521 requests led to consultations, 257 to requests for information and 91 to complaints, and covered all areas of HRO activity: accessibility, harassment and discrimination, sexual violence, equity and inclusion



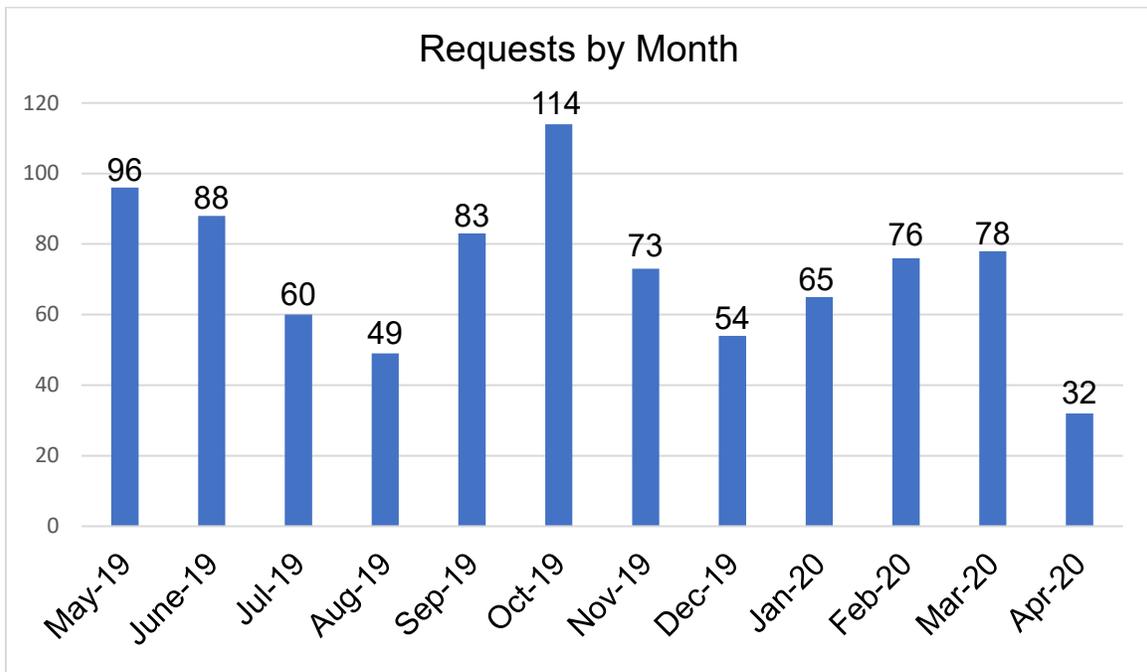
Over 291 students and 162 employees used our services during the period in question.



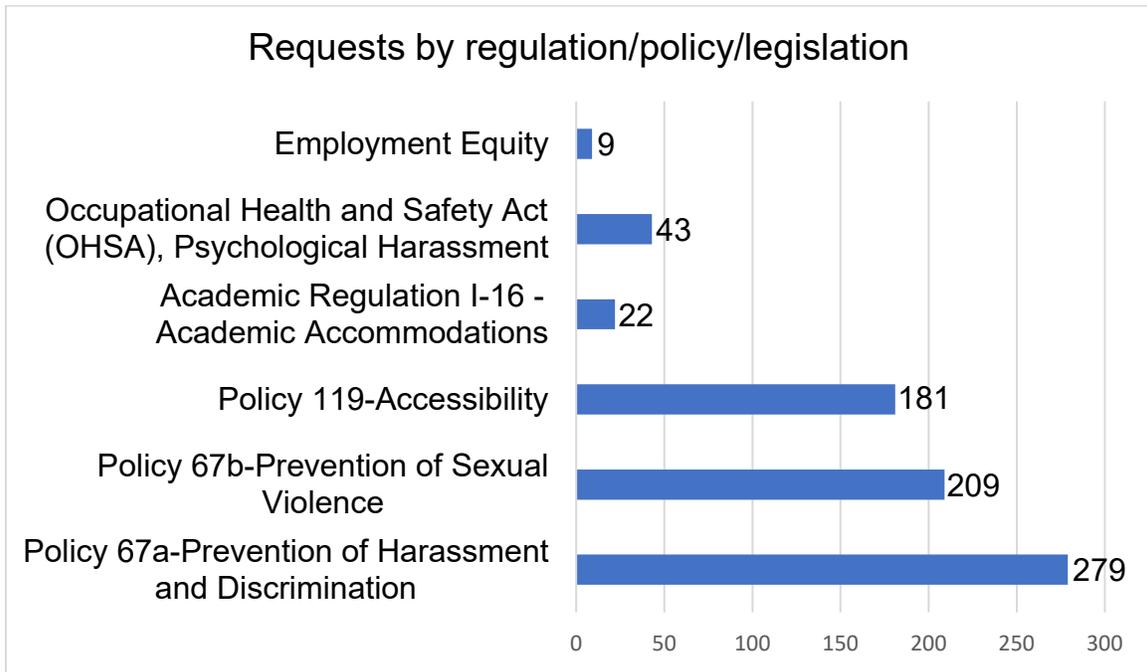
Of the 91 complaints submitted to the HRO, 5 led to external investigations, 11 were unfounded, 15 required no action by the HRO, and 13 were quickly resolved.



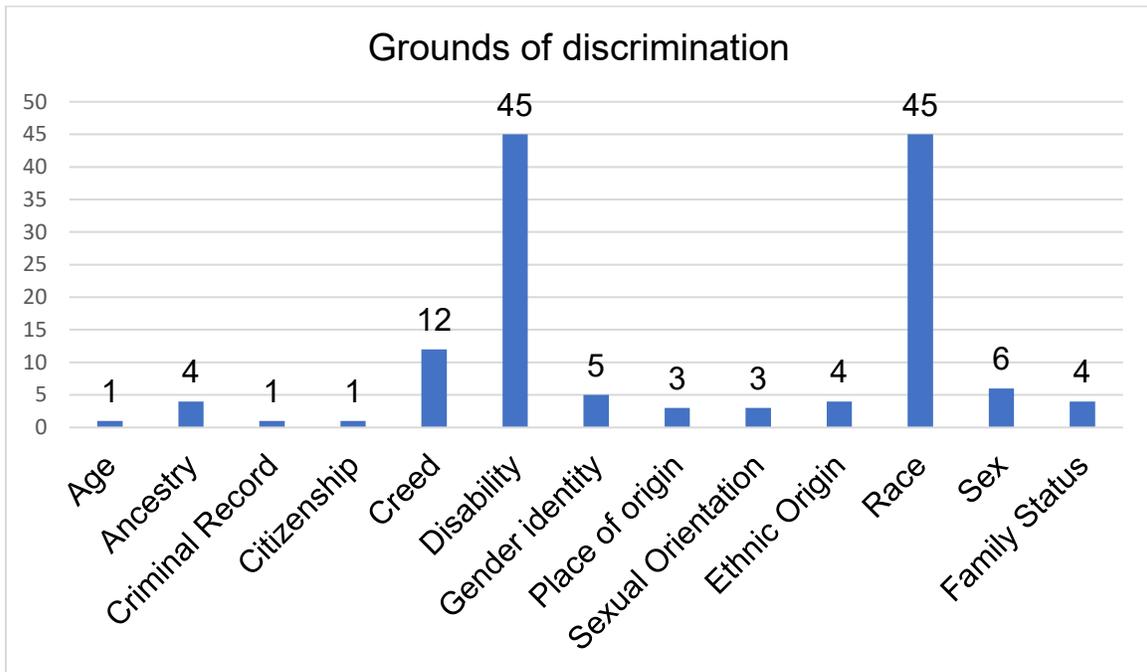
The HRO experienced periods of heavy workflow, including in October, when requests reached 114. The busiest months often occur at the start or end of a term.



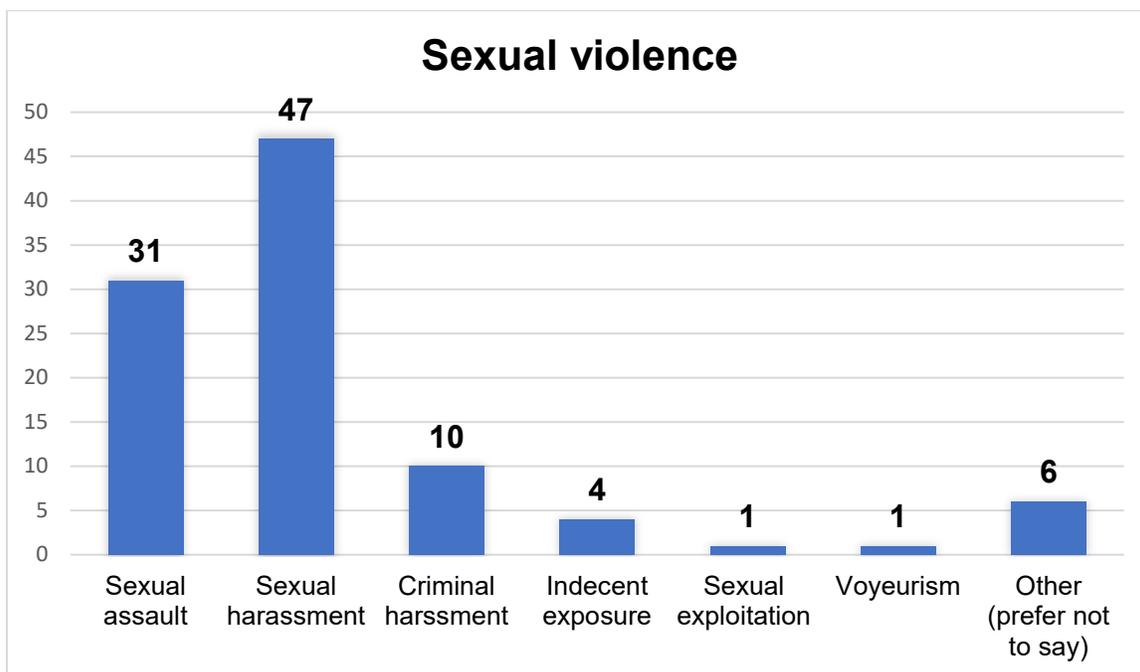
Harassment and discrimination with sexual violence, and accessibility, still account for most requests submitted to the HRO



Many of the requests concerned discrimination under the *Ontario Human Rights Code* related to a disability (45) or race (45).



Among these service requests, the HRO received a total of 100 new disclosures from the University community, which include the types of sexual violence specified in the chart below.



## Appendix 2, Annual comparisons

