

Sexual Violence Prevention Report University of Ottawa

May 2023 – April 2024



Presented by:
The Standing Committee on the Prevention of Sexual Violence (SCPSV)



uOttawa

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Background

The University of Ottawa (University) is required by law¹ to annually provide certain data and information about the actions it takes to prevent sexual violence to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities and to the University's Board of Governors.

In order to meet this obligation, the University's Administration Committee created the Standing Committee on the Prevention of Sexual Violence (Committee).

Among its duties, the Standing Committee on the Prevention of Sexual Violence is mandated to:

- Recommend strategies and introduce initiatives aimed at promoting a culture of respect and at ending sexual violence on campus.
- Receive and review updates on sexual violence from every sector (including students and community members) that include the following information:
 - The number and types of incidents and complaints of sexual violence reported by students and employees;
 - The number of times students or employees requested or received services, support or accommodations following an act of sexual violence and related details;
 - Initiatives, training and programs introduced to promote awareness of services and support available to students and employees;
 - Any other relevant information, questions or concerns concerning the prevention of sexual violence.
- Make recommendations on [Policy 67b - Prevention of Sexual Violence](#) to the Office of the President and ensure the policy is reviewed every two (2) years.
- Make recommendations to the Office of the President on additional resources necessary or on any new measures to help end sexual violence on campus.
- Make recommendations on allocating Campus Safety Grant funds.
- Produce an annual report for the Office of the President for submission to the Board of Governors.
- Review and make recommendations for sexual violence training programs and oversee implementation and coordination of these programs and monitor their effectiveness.

This annual report has been prepared in accordance with the requirement of item 1.8 of the Committee's terms of reference. The report was prepared by a working group internal to the Committee for review, update and approval by the Committee, and contains consolidated information gathered from various University sectors.

¹ Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act paragraphs 17(7) and (7.1).

Section I – Overview of Initiatives, Training and Programs

Standing Committee on the Prevention of Sexual Violence

Training for students

Following recommendations in the previous report, the Committee has created a sub-committee to work on online training offered to students.

For the past few years, both online and in-person training has been available to the student population, but the Committee recommended that the online training become mandatory for all students at the University.

After a number of meetings and discussions, the sub-committee joined forces with the Faculty of Engineering to start a pilot project in the coming year, as suggested by the Committee in its previous recommendations. Once the logistics are in place, the project will be launched and then evaluated, so that we can learn from it and expand it to other faculties.

Communication strategies

The Committee has also set up a sub-committee to look at ways of improving communication strategies and reaching out to the University community about sexual violence prevention. These strategies may also be useful during public consultations during the review of [Policy 67b](#), for example.

The Human Rights Office

Services to the community

The Human Rights Office (HRO) took part in a number of events and offered several workshops and training courses during the year, including:

- Mobilizing the Bystanders workshops
- Training for the Review and Appeal Committees (under [Policy 67b](#))
- Wellness Café
- Partnership with Health Promotion to create awareness messages that were shared on Health Promotion social media channels
- Presentations on sexual violence prevention for the Telfer Student Association
- Training programs for community members who have violated [Policy 67b](#)

The HRO also offered assistance and services to survivors, along with consultations with various campus partners to assist them in preventing and responding to sexual violence on campus.

Revision of Policy 67b – Prevention of Sexual Violence

This year, the HRO worked with the Committee and other partners to initiate a revision of [Policy 67b](#), which will be finalized before the end of 2024.

They held consultations with the University community to update the policy and propose changes to meet the needs of the community.

Online training for students

As mentioned above, online training is currently available to students, but the HRO is in the process of creating a brand new, more up-to-date course that would be available to all students via their student portal. Furthermore, in response to the Committee's previous recommendations, information has been added concerning university life.

Protection Services

In May 2023, all Protection Services staff took the time to review the obligations of [Policy 67b](#).

That same month, the Feminist Resource Centre held awareness-raising seminars for all uniformed and administrative team members of Protection Services.

Between May and June 2023, CALACS francophone d'Ottawa also provided workshops on their services to our team.

At the end of May 2023, the Investigation and Training divisions also took part in an activism and training event hosted by the CALACS francophone d'Ottawa on the power of solidarity to stop sexual assault against black/racialized women.

RAD for Women ®

In November 2023, Protection Services trained two cohorts for a total of 31 participants.

Some 90% of those taking part were members of the student body, staff or alumni, or people accompanying them. The courses were advertised in the University of Ottawa *Gazette* and on the Protection Services website.

Other participants were members of the external community.

In January 2024, the RAD program was discontinued due to a lack of human resources and certified personnel. Protection Services is currently analyzing future programs.

Training for Protection Services members

Between January and April 2023, all uniformed Protection Services officers completed the following training via the Canadian Police Knowledge Network (CPKN):

- Victim Rights in Canada
- Interviewing Victims and Witnesses
- Crisis Intervention and De-escalation

Housing Service

Student staff training

Before the start of the school year, new and returning Housing Service staff received “supporting survivors” training through which staff (re)learn about and apply the University's policies and expectations, namely what to do when they encounter individuals who disclose an incident of sexual violence and how to support such individuals.

Human Resources

Training sessions

To date, 70% of employees have completed the “What to do When Someone Discloses an Alleged Incident of Sexual Violence” online training course. Human Resources has updated this training to ensure that, for example, all links work properly to inform and direct the community to the appropriate services.

Office of the Chief Risk Officer

The Office of the Chief Risk Officer (Office) is responsible for managing the Campus Safety Grant, and this year, a new framework for the grant was introduced to encourage applications from members of the University community. A selection committee has been set up, comprising various stakeholders from the University community, and the projects selected were publicized.

The projects that received a 2023-2024 Campus Safety Grant were:

- Counselling for Survivors of Sexual Violence - CALACS and CTSACT
- WorkAlone (SecurUO)
- Self Defense Course, RAD for Women ®
- VCRT Equipment
- Indigenous Student Safety Initiative
- Campus Security Cameras
- Residence Safety Team training

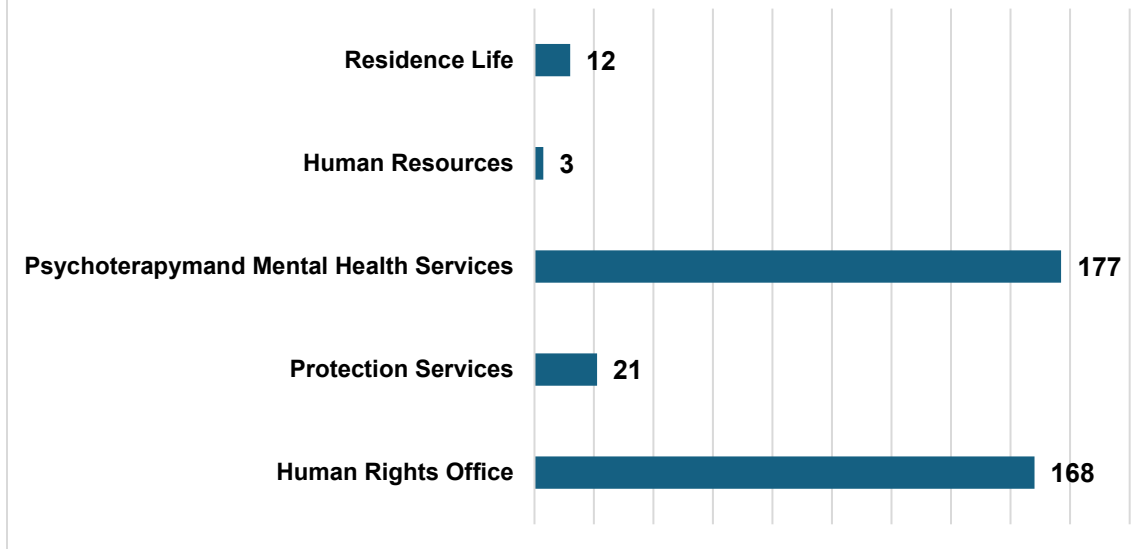
The Office also offered a presentation on the Campus Safety Grant to the Committee to ensure that committee members have a clear understanding of the terms, conditions and selection process.

The Committee believes that this new approach will encourage University members to use the fund to raise awareness of sexual violence in our community.

Section II – Data on Disclosures, Complaints and Accommodations

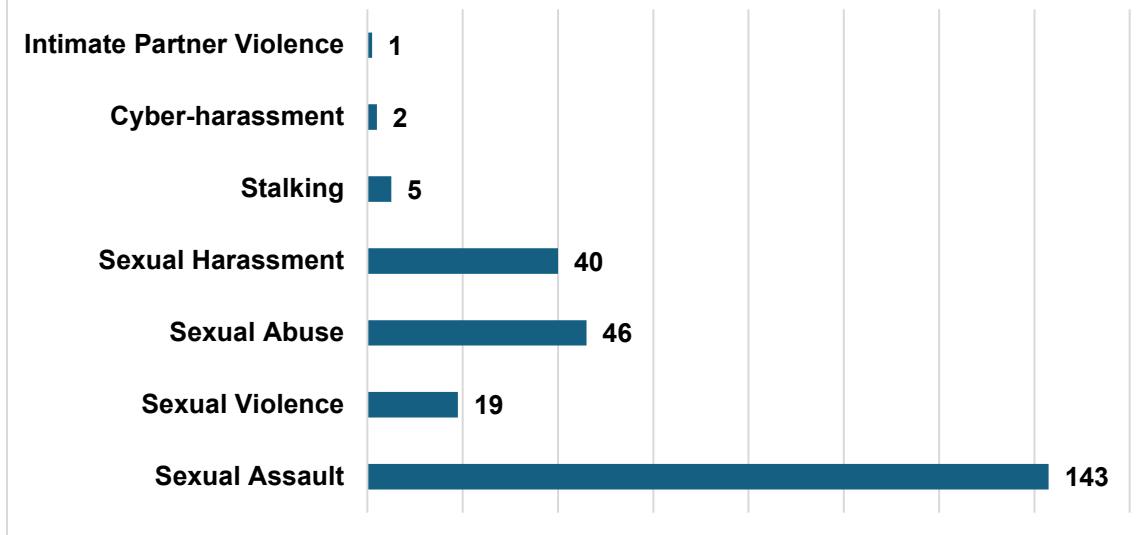
Between May 1, 2023, and April 30, 2024, the support services at the University received a total of 381 requests related to sexual violence. Of these 381 requests, the HRO received 168, Protection Services received 21, Psychotherapy and Mental Health Services received 177, Residence Life received 12, and Human Resources received 3.

Distribution of Requests Among Services (May 1, 2023 - April 30, 2024)



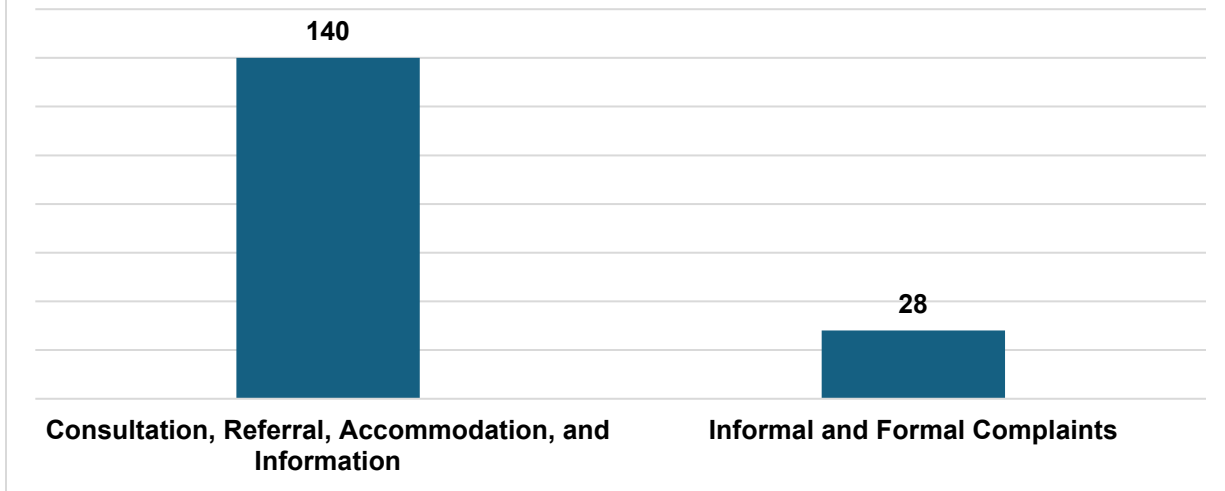
While most of the requests for service did not include details of the type of sexual violence encountered, many cases could be assigned to specific categories: Sexual Assault (143), Sexual Violence (19), Sexual Abuse (46), Sexual Harassment (40), Stalking (5), Cyber-harassment including unsolicited sexual images and cyberstalking (2), and Intimate Partner Violence (1).

Distribution of Cases Related to Specific Categories



The HRO received 168 requests for information, which were divided into 140 requests for consultation, referral, accommodation, and information on support services and available resources, as well as 28 informal and formal complaints. Survivors requested various types of accommodations, including a change of room in residence, extensions for assignments or a chance to rewrite exams, reweighting of grades, maintenance of scholarships, arrangements to avoid losing participation points due to absences, evaluations of schedules to prevent conflicts between parties, changes to work teams, provision of materials for missed courses, and assistance with appeals for retroactive withdrawals.

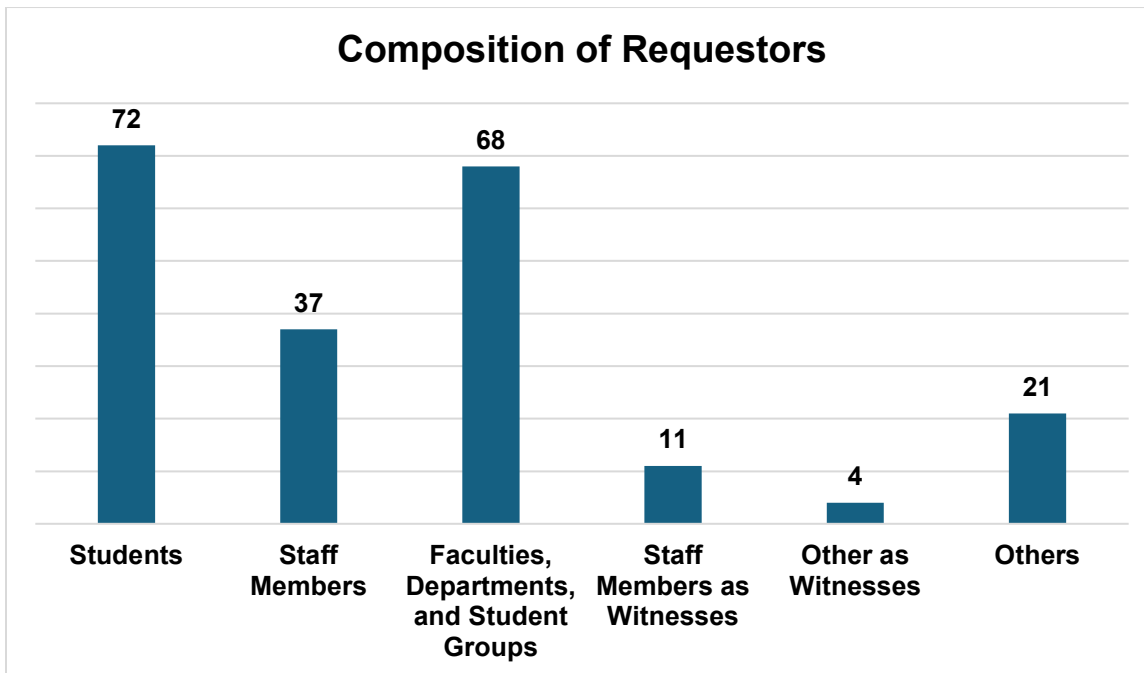
Distribution of Requests Received by the Human Rights Office



Again, although not all requests included details about those who filed the request, among those that did include details, 11 service requests were filed by staff members as witnesses and 4 were filed by others as witnesses. Additionally, 72 requests came from students, 37 from staff members, 21 from others, and 68 from faculties, departments, and student groups.

The Committee strongly believes that the fact that **some service requests were made by witnesses** indicates that the bystander training is proving effective in addressing incidents of sexual violence on campus.

Composition of Requestors



Limitations

Types of sexual violence reported

In creating this report, we noticed that the types of sexual violence data collected varies from one service to the next. It would be interesting to standardize the types of data collected to improve the consistency of our data collection and gain a truer picture of the extent of sexual violence on campus and possible trends. This would help us better understand the issues and find effective strategies to prevent and respond to sexual violence.

Section III – Recommendations

Recommendations on resources for students

The Committee believes that the current support available on campus for survivors of sexual violence is limited. For example, there is a cap on the number of free visits to mental health consultants, which may not be sufficient to meet the needs of all survivors. Additionally, the Feminist Resource Centre, a key agency offering support on campus, has experienced funding cuts. These financial constraints can negatively impact the quality and availability of support services provided to survivors, potentially hindering their recovery and well-being.

To address these limitations, the University should increase funding for mental health services and the Feminist Resource Centre. This could involve seeking additional grants, forming new partnerships, or raising funds to ensure that survivors have access to the support they need. The University could also consider expanding the number of free visits to mental health consultants and provide more comprehensive support services to better meet the needs of survivors.

Recommendations on sharing responsibility for responding to, and preventing, sexual violence

In 2019, Statistics Canada reported that “a majority (71%) of students at Canadian postsecondary schools witnessed or experienced unwanted sexualized behaviours in a postsecondary setting.”

The Committee recommends that the initiatives and resources required to prevent sexual violence and address the impacts of sexual violence within the University community, be shouldered by the many different University services rather than being solely focused on the HRO. We suggest that departments look at their mandates and incorporate sexual violence prevention and support within the scaffolding of services they currently provide to students. For example, the HRO currently manages contracts for off-campus counselling provided to student survivors of sexual violence. The Committee suggests that within the Psychotherapy and Mental Health Service’s mandate to provide counselling supports to students, consideration should be made for the counselling needs of those who have experienced unwanted sexualized behaviour.

Recommendations on data collection

We believe that the statistics collected are not representative of the entire University population. It is quite possible that other incidents are being disclosed to other departments or staff members. We recommend that the University consider a strategy to improve data collection in order to get a better idea of the extent of sexual violence on campus.

This would also be very helpful in identifying trends and putting in place strategies to improve support services for survivors.

Recommendations on training for employees

Although online training for employees is mandatory, we note that not all employees are currently trained. To this end, we recommend that the University find strategies to ensure that its employees and professors take the training to be properly equipped to respond to a disclosure and prevent sexual violence on campus.

Conclusion

While we continue to make strides in terms of acknowledging and confronting sexual violence on campus, we still have much work to do. We have made progress towards implementing mandatory training for students and we look forward to seeing this rolled out in the coming months.

As the disclosure numbers show, collaboration between services is critical to ensuring that all survivors are well-supported and receive the care they need. We hope to continue this collaborative effort to make sure that as a community, we are surrounding our survivors with the support they need and encouraging everyone in our community to become active bystanders. We maintain the need for a strong focus on sexual violence reduction and prevention, and for seeking innovative approaches to respond to the needs of our community.

Finally, the Committee would like to extend our warmest thanks to our partners, both on and off campus, all of whom make a difference, in their own way, for members of our community affected by sexual violence.

Appendix 1 – Membership of Standing Committee on the Prevention of Sexual Violence

Chair

Alyssa Peyton, coordinator for the University of Ottawa Student's Union Feminist Resource Centre and undergraduate student

Vice-Chair

Tiffany Ticky, senior director, Human Rights Office (April to December)

Marie-Claude Gagnon, interim director, Human Rights Office (December to March)

Voting Members

Allan Charbonneau, manager, Residence Life, Housing Service

Mélissa Lafrance, manager, Psychotherapy and Mental Health Services

Robert Paiement, lead coordinator, Training

Natalie Morris, manager, International Student Support Services, International Office

Mathieu Hudon, senior lead advisor, Labour and Employee Relations, Human Resources

Eileen Barak, manager, Strategic Communications, External Relations

Imani Bunzigiyee, equity commissioner, University of Ottawa Students' Union

Xaand Bancroft, student representative, Graduate Student's Association des étudiant.es diplômés.es

Martha Capener, undergraduate student

Jayne Hackett, undergraduate student

Farinaz Basmehchi, graduate student

Kharoll-Ann Souffrant, graduate student

Daphne Gilbert, associate professor, Faculty of Law

Sophie Ménard, part-time professor, Faculty of Education

Anne Thibaudeau, external member, Department of Women and Gender Equality, Government of Canada

Non-Voting Members

Klehr D'souza and Marie-Lou Villeneuve-Hobbs, senior advisors, sexual violence prevention, Human Rights Office