

# Sexual Violence Prevention Report | University of Ottawa

May 1, 2024 to April 30, 2025



Presented by:  
The Standing Committee on the Prevention of Sexual Violence and the Human Rights Office



uOttawa

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## Background

The University of Ottawa (University) is required by law<sup>1</sup> to annually provide certain data and information about the actions it takes to prevent sexual violence to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, Research Excellence and Security 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 (the Committee).

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

- Recommend strategies and implement initiatives aimed at promoting a culture of respect and at countering sexual violence on campus.
- Receive and review information on sexual violence provided by various sectors (including students and community members), namely:
  - The number and types of incidents and complaints of sexual violence, and related details, reported by members of the University community
  - The number of times members of the University community have requested and received services, support or accommodations following an act of sexual violence and all related details
  - The initiatives, training and programs introduced to promote awareness of services and support available to members of the University community
  - Any other relevant information, question or concern related to 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 years.
- Make recommendations to the Office of the President on additional resources required or on any new measures to help end sexual violence on campus
- Make recommendations on the allocation of Safety Grant funds to enhance safety and security on campus.
- Produce an annual report for the Office of the President for submission to the Board of Governors.
- Review sexual violence training programs, issue recommendations about them, oversee their coordination and implementation, 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act sections 17(7) and (7.1).

## Section I – Overview of Initiatives, Training and Programs

### 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](#))
- Participation in the *Take Back the Night* activity organized by the Feminist Resource Centre
- Welcome Week
- Kiosk at Panda Game
- Wellness Café
- Presentations on sexual violence prevention for the Telfer Student Association
- Customized training for various departments
- 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.

#### *Sexual Violence Prevention Week*

The Human Rights Office organized a full week of activities from January 20 to 24, 2025, in collaboration with partners including the Women’s Resource Centre and the Residence Life and Health Promotion teams. The following activities were held:

- Instagram campaign on the prevention of sexual violence
- Pizza lunch, with students invited to take the brand-new online training course with the HRO team
- Consent bingo in residences
- Friendship bracelet-making activity
- Mobilizing the Bystanders workshop
- Training on sexual violence in educational settings
- Training on sexual violence in university settings for employees
- Presence at Wellness Fair
- Draw for several door prizes

#### *Revision of Policy 67b – Prevention of Sexual Violence*

This year, the HRO worked with the SCPSV to continue revising Policy 67b. The Human Rights Office met with several partners to discuss existing processes, referral mechanisms and Policy 67b.

Following feedback from members of the SCPSV and the University community, it was suggested that the structure of the Policy be reviewed to make it simpler and more accessible. Proposed modifications will be taken into account as the new version is developed. The HRO held a public consultation in spring 2025, with a view to having a final version in autumn 2025.

### *Online training for students*

The new online training course, prepared by the HRO with the support of students, SCPSV members and the Teaching and Learning Support Service (TLSS), was officially launched on January 20, 2025. It replaces the previous version, which had become outdated.

The training course, titled *Together, let's build a culture of consent on campus*, is now available to all students on the Brightspace portal. It is divided into four units:

1. Sexual violence
2. Consent
3. Bystander intervention
4. Support for survivors, disclosure and filing a complaint

It also includes a pre-training survey, a comprehensive list of resources and a feedback survey.

During the year, the HRO met with partners including Housing Services, Sports Services and the Faculty of Engineering, with a view to making the training compulsory. A meeting was also held with several deans, the vice-provost, Academic Affairs and the Registrar's Office to discuss the possibility of making the training mandatory for all new student cohorts. It was agreed that steps would be taken to make this possible by September 2026.

The Committee and the HRO would like to extend their sincere thanks to the Faculty of Engineering and Acting Dean Michel Labrosse for their active collaboration in making the training mandatory across campus.

### **Protection Services**

Throughout the year, Protection Services worked to

- Respond quickly to acts of sexual violence
- Investigate current cases of sexual violence
- Work with partners to design creative approaches that aim to reduce occurrences of sexual violence
- Apply a survivor-centred/trauma-informed approach to interacting with survivors of sexual violence
- Assist survivors in finding the right resources, either on or off campus, and in documenting cases of sexual violence

### **Student Health and Wellness Centre**

The Psychotherapy and Mental Health team, the Student Support team (Case Management), members of the Residence Life team and the HRO took part in a training session hosted by CALACS on January 7, 2025.

The course had multiple objectives:

- Understanding the impact of sexual assault
- Developing active listening skills
- Providing guidance and support to victims
- Taking the psychological dimension of trauma into account
- Learning more about community resources

## **Residence Life**

### *Student staff training*

Before the start of the academic year, new and returning Housing Service student staff members received training on supporting survivors, during which they (re)learned about the University's policies and what the University expects them to do if someone discloses an incident of sexual violence.

## **Human Resources**

Human Resources provided strategic and operational support to the University's faculties and services. The team also worked closely with the Human Rights Office to ensure that cases of sexual violence were dealt with promptly and appropriately, in line with University policies.

## **Office of the Chief Risk Officer**

The Office of the Chief Risk Officer (Office) is responsible for managing the Campus Safety Grant.

The following projects received funding through a 2024–2025 Campus Safety Grant:

- Counselling services for survivors of sexual violence
- Production of sexual violence prevention videos
- Expansion of the campus AED and naloxone program
- WorkAlone extension in the SecurUO app
- Installation of additional security cameras in medium-to-high risk areas on campus
- Equipment for the Volunteer Crisis Response Team (VCRT)
- Activities and supplies for Sexual Violence Prevention Week
- Training for members of the Residence Safety Team
- Promotional materials for the Human Rights Office

## **Section II – Data on Disclosures, Complaints and Accommodations**

### **Disclosures and requests for services**

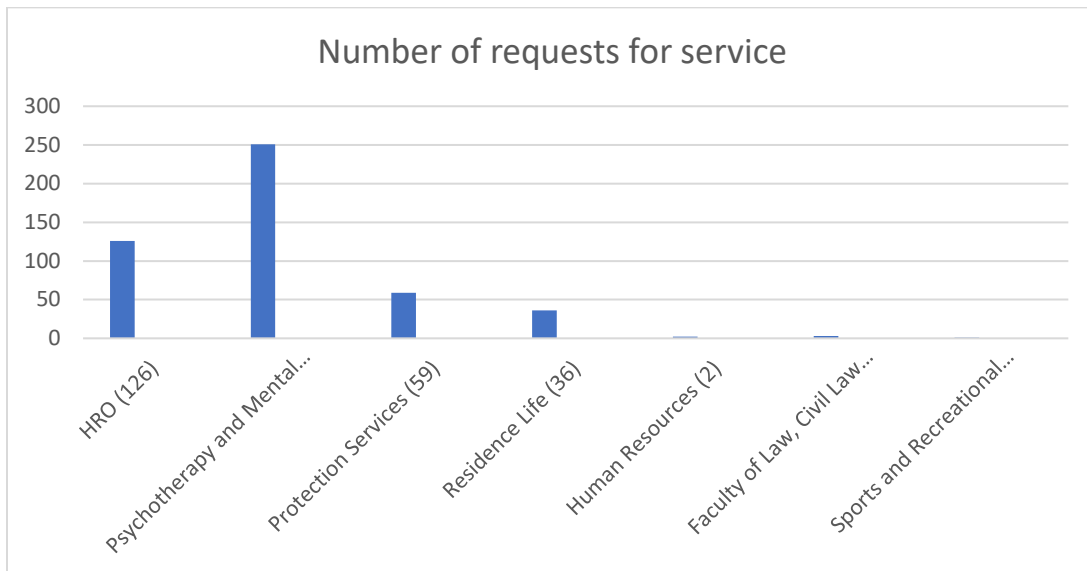
Following the recommendations of the SCPSV presented in last year's report, members of the Committee and the HRO have been reflecting on how to improve data collection, in order to get a more representative idea of incidents disclosed and services offered across campus. It was agreed that, using an internal form, key people in faculties and services would be asked to submit the following data:

- The number of disclosures, and whether they came from students, employees, professors or others
- Number of respondents from the University
- Reported location of incidents
- Type of violence reported
- Support, prevention and awareness initiatives implemented

An initial email containing all the necessary information and direct access to the form was sent to the faculties and services on June 23, 2025. A reminder email was sent on September 11, 2025. The statistics below represent all the data gathered during the collection process.

We note that services do not only collect individual disclosures, due to the significant limitations related to maintaining survivor confidentiality and the ethical considerations related to data collection when someone is disclosing sexual violence. Instead, this report wishes to highlight the number of requests for service and where uOttawa community members turn to for support. We believe collecting this data supports this committee in resource allocation, education efforts and overall prevention of sexual violence.

The data collection has demonstrated that between May 1, 2024, and April 30, 2025, the support services at the University received a total of 478 requests related to sexual violence. Of those requests, the HRO received 126; Protection Services, 59; Psychotherapy and Student Mental Health Services, 251; ResLife team, 36; Human Resources, 2; Faculty of Law – Civil Law Section, 3; and Recreation and Varsity Sports, 1.

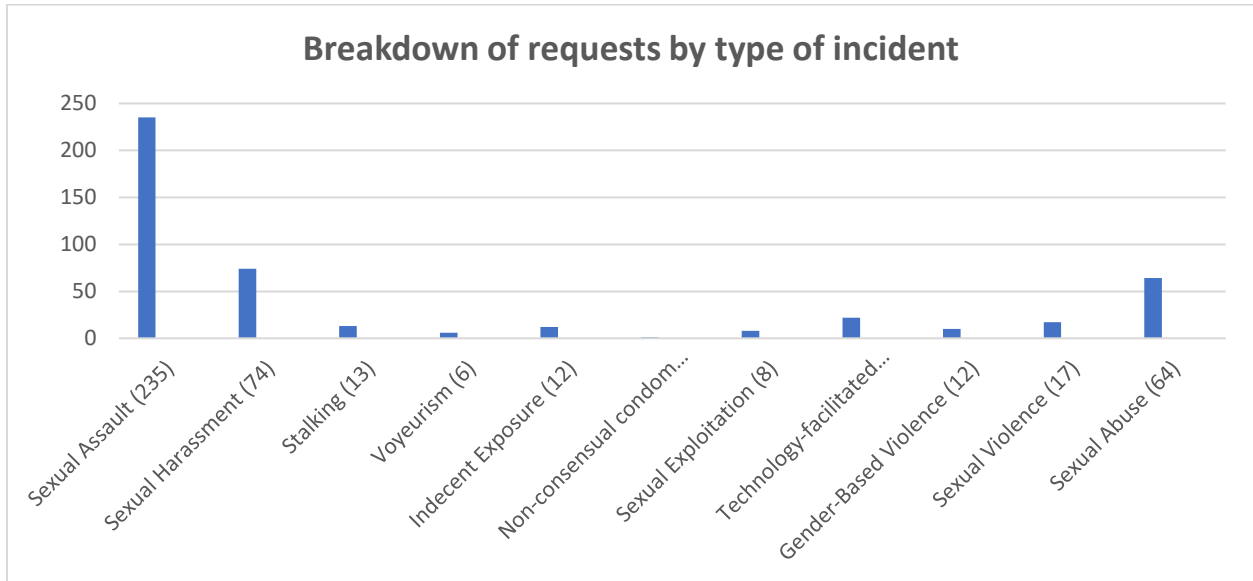


One of the objectives of the data collection was to standardize the classification of the types of sexual violence reported through service requests. Based on the data gathered by the responding services, the number of incidents for each type is as follows:

- Sexual assault: 235
- Sexual harassment: 74
- Stalking: 13
- Voyeurism: 6
- Indecent exposure: 12
- Non-consensual condom removal (stealthing): 1
- Sexual exploitation: 8
- Technology-facilitated sexual violence: 22
- Gender-based violence: 12

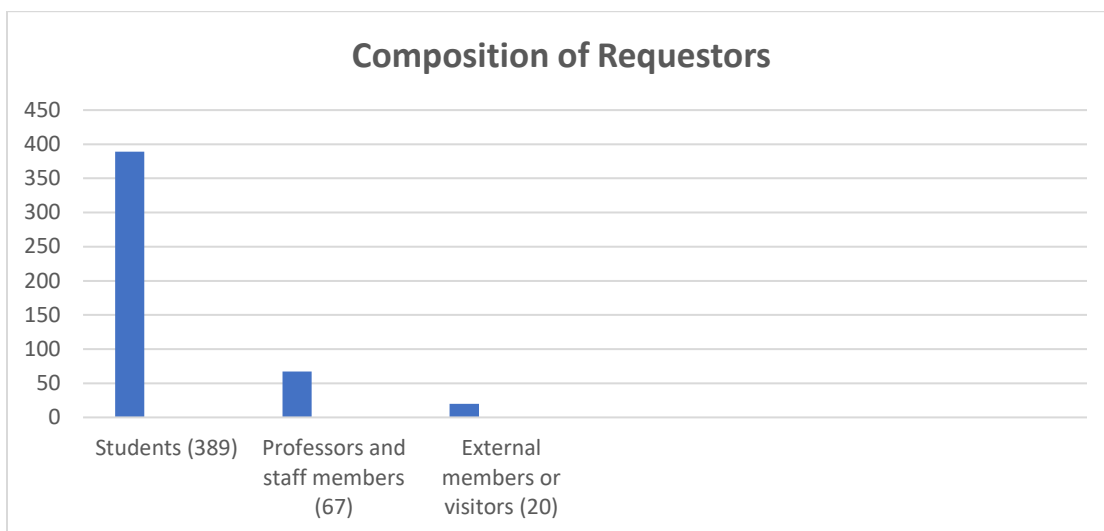
Some requests were recorded under different types in the services:

- Sexual violence: 17
- Sexual abuse: 64



It is also important to note that in some situations, survivors are not comfortable disclosing details of the incident, making it impossible for us to classify them.

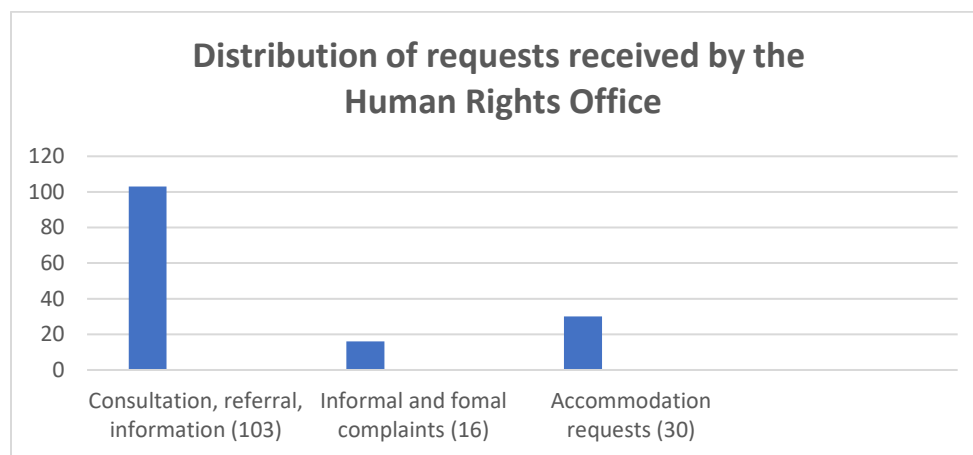
The data collected also do not always specify the group to which the person requesting the service belongs. However, among the information we were able to obtain, 389 requests were from students, 67 from professors and staff members, and 20 from external members or visitors.



## Complaints and requests for accommodation

The Human Rights Office is responsible for managing complaints and requests for accommodation. This year, the HRO received 126 requests, of which 103 were requests for consultation, referral, accommodation and information on support services and available resources, as well as 16 informal and formal complaints.

The HRO also processed 30 requests for a variety of accommodations: change of room in residence or request for a temporary emergency room; extensions for assignments or a chance to rewrite exams; reweighting of grades; arrangements to avoid losing participation points due to absences; reworking of schedules to prevent conflicts between parties; changes to work teams; access to course material that was missed; and assistance with appeals for retroactive withdrawals.



## Limitations

### Data

For the sake of data confidentiality, it was not possible to isolate each data item to avoid duplicates. In other words, a survivor may have turned to several services, and certain incidents or requests may have been counted more than once. While it might be enlightening to have a better idea of the actual incidents reported, the issue of confidentiality is paramount in order to respect the rights of the parties involved in situations of sexual violence.

### Data disparity

As this is the first year the data collection tool has been used, we are finding that not all departments are collecting the same type of data. It would be worthwhile for each sector to standardize its data by using the proposed form, in order to better understand the scope and particularities of each situation disclosed or request for support made.

## **Section III – Recommendations**

### **Improve response to data collection**

Despite efforts by the SCPSV and the HRO, there have been challenges in reaching and raising awareness among key players at the University. We recommend that the University take action to find solutions so that everyone participates in these initiatives and follows the proposed data collection methods, so that we can better understand the extent of sexual violence on campus and adequately support survivors and the services that help them on a daily basis.

### **Reduce communication issues**

The Committee noted that it is sometimes difficult to share information on preventing sexual violence and reaching members of the University community. Communication channels sometimes seem to be selective in terms of the information conveyed: important messages are not always properly disseminated and raising community awareness is challenging.

However, incidents of sexual violence are neither rare nor isolated. It is a pervasive problem that affects the entire community: professors, students and staff members. Prevention remains an essential tool for tackling the problem. But without adequate communication, it is difficult to make progress.

We therefore recommend that we reflect on how to, collaboratively, put forward prevention and awareness initiatives to better inform our community.

## Conclusion

This has been a year of collaboration. Many partners have been working together in the same direction, offering online training, holding prevention activities, sharing experiences and nurturing a shared desire to improve processes and support services. We have seen a number of partnerships take shape over the past year, and we are certain that by stepping up our efforts together, we can overcome sexual violence on our campus.

The number of disclosures and service requests has risen since last year. While this may seem worrying, we believe it is encouraging to see that survivors are increasingly trusting services, and trusting them enough to share their experiences and get support. However, since the majority of incidents go unreported, the University must continue its efforts to establish effective strategies aimed at preventing and responding to incidents of sexual violence that affect the members of our community.

Finally, the Committee would like to sincerely thank its partners on and off campus, all of whom contribute, in their own way, to changing the lives of those affected by sexual violence.

## **Appendix 1 – Members of the Standing Committee on the Prevention of Sexual Violence**

### **Chair**

Farinaz Basmechi, Graduate Student

### **Vice-Chair**

Luc Bélanger, Senior Director, Human Rights Office

### **Voting Members**

Allan Charbonneau, Manager – Residence Life, Housing Service

Mélissa Lafrance, Manager, Psychotherapy and Mental Health Services

Robert Paiement, Lead Coordinator – Training, Protection Services

Karen D'Souza, Senior Advisor – Program Management, Outreach Office, Student Affairs

Mathieu Hudon, Senior Lead Advisor – Labour and Employee Relations, Human Resources

Eileen Barak, Manager – Strategic Communications, External Relations

Suzanne Gruz, Undergraduate Student and Coordinator, Feminist Resource Centre

Imani Bunzigiye, Equity Commissioner, University of Ottawa Students' Union

Martha Capener, Undergraduate Student

Jayne Hackett, Undergraduate Student

Farinaz Basmechi, Graduate Student

Kharoll-Ann Souffrant, Graduate Student

Eucharia Uranta-Onkonkwo, Graduate Student

Daphne Gilbert, Associate Professor, Faculty of Law

Sophie Ménard, Part-time Professor, Faculty of Education

Marie-Pascale Lafrenière, External Member, Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes

Klehr D'Souza, External Member, Registered Psychotherapist

### **Non-Voting Members**

Sarah Pekeles and Marie-Lou Villeneuve-Hobbs, Senior Advisors – Sexual Violence Prevention, Human Rights Office