

University of Exeter Sexual Misconduct Policy for Students

1. Statement of Commitment and Values

- The University of Exeter (the “**University**”) recognises and understands that sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment and sexual violence, are a significant public health and social problem across society and the Higher Education sector, and that incidents may occur within or at the University.
- Sexual misconduct can have a devastating impact on those who experience it, and cause significant physical and psychological harm as well as being a violation of human dignity. The University will therefore ensure that those reporting sexual misconduct are taken seriously and treated with dignity and respect.
- The University is committed to promoting and ensuring, through a whole-university approach, an inclusive, positive and safe cultural environment for all, in which all members of its community can flourish and be equally valued and respected, and in which any and all forms of sexual misconduct are not tolerated and individuals are supported and taken seriously.
- The University expects that all its members will take responsibility for building and maintaining an inclusive, equal, positive and safe cultural environment for all.
- The University is committed to ensuring effective prevention and effective response to sexual misconduct when incidents occur.
- The University is committed to promoting: healthy positive relationships based on mutual respect and clear consent; social norms which do not tolerate any form of sexual misconduct; a culture in which bystanders are empowered to challenge problematic behavior; and a culture in which all members feel able to speak out and will be supported and taken seriously.
- It is recognised that harm can be caused unintentionally but a lack of intent to do another harm does not mean that no offence has been committed.

2. Overarching Principles

- The University recognises that as an educational institution we have moral and legal duties as well as civic responsibility to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct, and also to learn from sector best practice in policy, research, evidence-based approaches in order to drive continuous improvement.
- The University’s senior leadership team recognises that it must actively promote a culture of zero tolerance with regard to any form of sexual misconduct and ensure that there are arrangements in place to support all students who experience it. This will include ensuring that all senior leaders are appropriately trained.
- The University recognises that the immediate priority upon disclosure of any experience of sexual misconduct, whether current or historic, is the safety and welfare of the disclosing party. The support available to those who report experiencing sexual misconduct will not be determined by the individual being a member of the University or a third party at the time it occurred.
- We will respect the right of the individual making a disclosure to choose how to proceed and we will provide clear and consistent advice as to support and reporting options. Where formal action is taken, the University will ensure that appropriate support options are presented to those involved.
- However, in certain circumstances, where there is a clear and immediate risk to

the health, safety and well-being of the disclosing party or evidence of a criminal act, the University does reserve the right to refer the matter to the police.

- The University will provide clear, transparent and accessible webpages dedicated specifically to sexual misconduct with clear signposting to:
 - support both internally and from external agencies;
 - pathways to reporting;
 - our policies and procedures;
 - details of accessible counselling services;
 - guidance relating to consent and defining sexual misconduct; and details of the work being undertaken in this area.
- The University intends to create a safe environment through its commitment to education, training and raising awareness about sexual misconduct.
- The University will respond to reports of sexual misconduct in accordance with this Policy and the Sexual Misconduct Procedure, which is included as the Appendix.
- Owing to the impact sexual misconduct has on all involved, the University will ensure that reports will be taken forward as quickly as possible, and with due regard to the needs of those involved. If there are many different issues, welfare needs for the parties involved, and/or a lot of evidence to weigh up, this may affect how quickly a case is progressed.
- The University is committed to ensuring that those reporting misconduct and those accused of it are given fair opportunity to understand and respond to an allegation.
- The University recognises and is committed to providing supportive and fair processes and ongoing specialist training and support for any staff involved in:
 - Investigatory and disciplinary processes, including review; and
 - Supporting both the disclosing and accused parties
- The impact of being accused of sexual misconduct is recognised by the University; and that when defending oneself against an allegation of this nature an individual may seek support to respond to the allegation. Honesty and insight will be given appropriate recognition.
- The University will hold accountable any individual who has committed sexual misconduct. This may include facing major disciplinary action, including expulsion.

This Policy applies to all students (as further described in the Sexual Misconduct Procedure), regardless of whether the alleged sexual misconduct takes place on University premises. Students who wish to report sexual misconduct by staff should raise the matter through their Faculty. You may also seek the support of the Lead for Sexual Misconduct (LSM), a trained expert in the area of supporting victims of sexual misconduct, who is available to provide initial support for all students (undergraduate and postgraduate) and staff who experience and/or wish to report an incident of sexual misconduct (see section 2 of the Procedure).