

Sexual misconduct survey

Thank you for considering participation in the sexual misconduct survey (SMS). The aim of this survey is to understand whether university/college students have experienced either sexual harassment and/or sexual violence since they became a student, either within or outside a university or college setting. Your answers will help us to understand the prevalence of sexual misconduct in higher education and help universities and colleges to develop strategies to tackle this serious issue.

We recognise that sexual misconduct is a sensitive topic and deeply appreciate your willingness to share your experiences. Your voice is crucial, and we want you to feel safe and empowered to participate openly and honestly.

Key information about the survey:

- There are no right or wrong answers, but it is important that you answer the questions honestly.
- All of your answers will remain completely confidential in accordance with the Market Research Society (MRS) Code of Conduct and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- You may choose 'Prefer not to say' for any question you prefer not to answer.
- If you would like to opt out or remove your responses at a later date, simply let us know by emailing the thestudentsurvey@ipsos.com.

The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete and is being conducted by Ipsos on behalf of the Office for Students (OfS), the independent regulator of higher education in England. This survey has been designed in consultation with experts and following existing best practice from similar surveys internationally. If you have any further questions about the survey, please contact thestudentsurvey@ipsos.com. You can find [the privacy policy for this research on the OfS website](#).

The survey will start by asking about your experience of behaviours related to sexual harassment. Then, the survey will ask about sexual violence. To ensure we are accurate in our measures of prevalence, there are detailed descriptions of these behaviours. All answers will remain completely confidential and will be stored securely. No individual students will be identifiable in the results of this survey.

Some of the language used in this survey is explicit and some people may find it uncomfortable. But it is important that we ask questions in this way so that you are clear what we mean.

Such questions are clearly marked with content warnings throughout and can be skipped entirely if preferred.

If you have any questions about the survey or require further information please visit the OfS website or contact us at thestudentsurvey@ipsos.com.

Please note that responses are not monitored in real-time. The OfS is unable to provide assistance or respond to specific concerns. If you would like to speak to someone regarding your wellbeing,

[Name of respondent's higher education provider] offers support resources: [Details of respondent's provider's support].

If you are currently in danger or need urgent medical attention, please contact the emergency services on 999.

Alternatively, national charities and organisations that offer help and support include:

- Rape Crisis: rapecrisis.org.uk or 0808 500 2222
- The Survivors Trust: thesurvivorstrust.org or 0808 801 0818
- Women's Aid Federation: womensaid.org.uk or National Domestic Violence Helpline (24hrs): 0808 2000 247
- Survivors UK: male rape and sexual abuse support: SurvivorsUK.org or 0203 598 3898
- Victim support: victimsupport.org.uk or 0808 168 9111
- Safeline: safeline.org.uk or 01926 402498
- Galop (the LGBT+ anti-violence charity): galop.org.uk or 0800 999 5428
- NHS mental health support: nhs.uk/mental-health
- Student Minds (the UK's student mental health charity): studentminds.org.uk
- Mind (mental health charity): mind.org.uk/information-support/helplines or 0300 102 1234.

Unwanted experiences since becoming a student

Content warning

The first question will ask about any unwanted behaviours of a sexual nature you may have experienced. Please select all that apply.

You can select “Prefer not to say” if you do not wish to answer any questions.

Scripting instruction:

Question # A: Ask all

Since being a student, have you experienced any of the following behaviours? Someone...

Multicode (10-11-12 Exclusive)

1	Making sexual gestures or exposing themselves to you
2	Making sexually suggestive looks or staring at your body
3	Asking, hinting, or making unwelcome requests that you have sex with them
4	Persisting with suggestions that you establish a sexual or romantic relationship with them
5	Making unwelcome sexual comments or asking sexualised questions about your private life, body, or physical appearance
6	Taking a nude or sexual photo or video of you without your permission
7	Posting a nude or sexual photo or video of you online, or sending it to others, without your permission
8	Privately sending you sexualised messages electronically, via text message, email, social media, etc.
9	Spreading unwelcome sexual rumours about you, either in person, or by text, email, social media, or other electronic means
10	None of the above
11	Don't know / Can't remember
12	Prefer not to say

Scripting instruction: The following screen/question [only show to those who have experienced at least one (A1=1-9)]

The unwelcome behaviours described in the previous question are examples of sexual harassment. The next few questions focus on details such as when and where this/these incidents occurred, the type of individual(s) involved, and whether you have reported the incident to your university/college.

As a reminder, there are no right or wrong answers. We understand, for example, that many people do not seek support for a variety of reasons. To remind you, you can skip any questions you do not wish to answer.

Experiences of sexual harassment in the last 12 months

Scripting instruction:

Question # B: Ask those who experienced at least one (A1=1-9)

Did any of the incident(s) you mentioned occur in the last 12 months?

Single code

1	Yes
2	No
3	Don't know / Can't remember
4	Prefer not to say

Scripting instruction:

Question # C: Ask those who experienced at least one in the last 12 months

Did any of the incident(s) you mention occur in a university/college setting?

By university/college setting we mean any place, event, or social occasion arranged by or associated with your university/college. This includes student accommodation, events organised by student groups or societies, and could be on or off campus, or online.

Single code

1	The incident(s) took place exclusively in a university/college setting
2	None were in a university/college setting
3	Some took place in a university/college setting; some took place outside of a university/college setting
4	Don't know / Can't remember
5	Prefer not to say

Scripting instruction:

Question # D: Ask those who did not experience in a university/college setting (C=2 or C=3)

Did the incident(s) involve someone connected with your university?

This might be another student, or someone who works at the university/college.

To remind you, your answers will remain confidential at all times.

Single code

1	Yes
2	No

3	Don't know / Can't remember
4	Prefer not to say

Scripting Instruction:

Question # E: Ask those who experienced at least one in the last 12 months (B1=1)

Were the people/was the person any of the following...?

Please select all that apply.

Multicode (expect 13-14 single code)

1	A student from your university/college
2	A tutor, lecturer, research supervisor, or another member of academic staff from your university/college
3	A non-academic (administrative) university/college staff member
4	A sports coach
5	Any other member of university/college staff
6	Your supervisor or co-worker at your professional placement or internship
7	An employer, manager, or co-worker at work
8	A partner
9	A hook-up, or date
10	A family member
11	A friend or acquaintance not from your university/college
12	Someone else
13	Don't know / Can't remember
14	Prefer not to say

Reporting

Scripting instruction:

Question # F: Ask those who experienced in a university/college setting or by someone connected to university (C=1, C=3 OR D=1)

The next few questions ask about reporting and making a formal complaint about the incident(s). Again, as a reminder, your answers remain confidential at all times and you can select "Prefer not to say" to skip any questions you do not wish to answer.

Have you formally reported or made a formal complaint about the incident(s) to your university? Again, as a reminder, your answers remain confidential at all times.

Single code

1	Yes
2	No
3	Don't know / Can't remember
4	Prefer not to say

Scripting instruction:

Question # G: Ask if had formally reported to the university (F=1)

Overall, how good or poor was your experience of the university/college's formal reporting process?

Single code

1	Very good
2	Good
3	Neither good nor poor
4	Poor
5	Very poor
6	Don't know / Can't remember
7	Prefer not to say

Unwanted sexual contact

Content warning

The next section of the survey will ask about your experiences of unwanted sexual contact and contains explicit language. This includes detailed descriptions of acts of sexual assault and violence which some may find distressing, but it is important that we ask questions in this way so that you are clear what we mean.

All answers will remain completely confidential and will be stored securely. No individual students will be identifiable in the results of this survey.

If you would prefer not to answer a particular question, you can select "Prefer not to say" and move on to the next question.

Please note that we do not monitor this survey in real-time. It is important that if you have any concerns about your own wellbeing or safeguarding that you contact your education provider for information on the support and services available, [Name of respondent's higher education provider] offers support resources: [Details of respondent's provider's support].

If you are currently in danger or need urgent medical attention, please contact the emergency services on 999.

Alternatively, national charities and organisations that offer help and support include:

- Rape Crisis: rapecrisis.org.uk or 0808 500 2222
- The Survivors Trust: thesurvivorstrust.org or 0808 801 0818
- Women's Aid Federation: womensaid.org.uk or National Domestic Violence Helpline (24hrs): 0808 2000 247
- Survivors UK – male rape and sexual abuse support: SurvivorsUK.org or 0203 598 3898
- Victim support: victimsupport.org.uk or 0808 168 9111
- Safeline: safeline.org.uk or 01926 402498
- Galop (the LGBT+ anti-violence charity): galop.org.uk or 0800 999 5428
- NHS Mental Health support: nhs.uk/mental-health
- Student Minds (the UK's student mental health charity): studentminds.org.uk
- Mind (mental health charity): mind.org.uk/information-support/helplines or 0300 102 1234.

Scripting instruction:

Question # H: Ask all

Since being a student, has anyone ever done the following things to you when you did not want them to?

This could have been anywhere, not just at university, and includes when you were asleep or affected by alcohol or drugs. This might have been as a result of the individual(s):

- Telling lies, threatening to end a relationship or to spread rumours about you, making promises you knew were untrue, or continually verbally pressuring you.
- Showing annoyance, criticising your sexuality or attractiveness, getting angry but not using physical force.
- Taking advantage of you when you were affected by alcohol or drugs.
- Threatening to physically harm you or someone close to you.
- Using force, for example holding you down with their body weight, pinning your arms, or having a weapon.

- Engaging in the behaviour without any indication from you that such behaviour was welcome.

Why is this information needed?

This level of detail is important to ensure people are aware of the range of different contexts where misconduct happens so we can understand the extent of the problem. All data will remain confidential, be stored securely and no individuals will be identifiable in the reporting outputs. If you would like to retract your answers at any point, simply let us know by emailing thestudentsurvey@ipsos.com.

Multicode (Exc. 7-8-9)

1	Someone touched me in a sexual manner, kissed, pinched, or rubbed up against the private areas of my body (lips, breast/chest, crotch or bottom) or removed some of my clothes when I did not want them to (but did not attempt sexual penetration)
2	Someone performed oral sex on me or made me perform oral sex with them when I did not want them to
3	Someone put their penis, fingers, or other parts of their body, or objects into my anus or my vagina when I did not want them to
4	Someone made ME perform anal or vaginal sex when I did not want them to (i.e., putting my penis or my fingers, or other body parts or objects, into their anus or vagina)
5	Even though they were not successful, someone TRIED to put their penis, fingers, or other body parts, or objects into my vagina or my anus when I did not want them to
6	Even though they were not successful, someone TRIED to have oral sex with me when I did not want them to, or TRIED to make me perform oral sex on them when I did not want to
7	None of the above
8	Don't know / Can't remember
9	Prefer not to say

Scripting instruction:

Question # 1: Show to those who experienced at least one (H=1-6)

The remaining questions focus on details such as when and where this/these incidents of unwanted sexual contact occurred, the type of individual(s) involved, and whether you have sought any support. There are no right or wrong answers. We understand, for example, that many people do not seek support for a variety of reasons.

You can skip any questions you do not wish to answer by selecting "Prefer not to say".

Experiences in the last 12 months

Scripting instruction:

Question # 1: Ask those who experienced at least one (H=1-6)

Did any of the incident(s) you mentioned occur in the last 12 months?

Single code

1	Yes
2	No

3	Don't know / Can't remember
4	Prefer not to say

Scripting Instruction:

Question # J: Ask those who experienced in the last 12 months (I=1)

Did (any of) the incident(s) you mention occur in a university setting?

By university/college setting we mean any place, event, or social occasion arranged by or associated with your university/college. This includes student accommodation, events organised by student groups or societies, and could be on or off campus, or online

Single code

1	The incident(s) took place exclusively in a university/college setting
2	None were in a university/college setting
3	Some took place in a university/college setting; some took place outside of a university/college setting
4	Don't know / Can't remember
5	Prefer not to say

Scripting Instruction:

Question # K: Ask those who did not experience in a university setting (J=2 or J=3)

Did the incident(s) involve someone connected with your university?

This might be another student or someone who works at the university, etc. To remind you, your answers will remain confidential at all times.

Single code

1	Yes
2	No
3	Don't know / Can't remember
4	Prefer not to say

Scripting Instruction:

Question # L: Ask those who experienced between 1 September 2022 and 1 September 2023 in the last 12 months (I=1)

Were the people/was the person any of the following...?

Please select all that apply.

Multicode (13-14 single code/exclusive)

1	A student from your university/college
2	A tutor, lecturer, research supervisor, or another member of academic staff from your university/college
3	A non-academic (administrative) university/college staff member
4	A sports coach
5	Any other member of university/college staff
6	Your supervisor or co-worker at your professional placement or internship
7	An employer, manager, or co-worker at work
8	A partner
9	A hook-up, or date
10	A family member
11	A friend or acquaintance not from your university/college
12	Someone else
13	Don't know / Can't remember
14	Prefer not to say

Reporting

Scripting instruction:

Question # M: Ask if incident occurred in university/college setting or involved someone from university/college (J=1, J=3, or K=1)

Have you formally reported or made a formal complaint about the incident(s) to your university/college? As a reminder, your answers remain confidential at all times.

Single code

1	Yes
2	No
3	Don't know / Can't remember
4	Prefer not to say

Scripting instruction:

Question # N: Ask if had formally reported to the university (M=1)

Overall, how good or poor was your experience of the university/college's formal reporting process?

Single code

1	Very good
2	Good
3	Neither good nor poor
4	Poor
5	Very poor
6	Don't know / Can't remember
7	Prefer not to say

Understanding of process

Scripting Instruction:

Question # O: Ask all

The next question asks about your confidence in seeking support and reporting sexual harassment or misconduct. To remind you, you can skip any questions if you do not wish to answer.

Single code

How confident are you about where to seek support within your university/college about an experience of sexual harassment or misconduct?

1	Very confident
2	Fairly confident
3	Not very confident
4	Not at all confident
5	Don't know
6	Prefer not to say

Scripting instruction:

Question # P: Ask all

In the last 12 months, have you had an intimate relationship with a member of staff at your university/college?

Please note: The member of staff could be **any** person employed by your university/college (including postgraduate students if acting in a teaching, supervisory, support or welfare capacity).

By intimate relationship we mean any relationship that includes: physical intimacy, including one-off or repeated sexual activity; romantic or emotional intimacy; and/or financial dependency. This includes both in person and online, or via digital devices.

1	Yes
2	No
3	Don't know / Can't remember
4	Prefer not to say

Scripting instruction:

Question # Q: Ask all those who had a relationship with a staff member (P=1)

The next set of questions will ask about the details of this relationship. As a reminder, all of your responses will remain confidential.

Please note, if you have had more than one intimate relationship with a member of staff at your university/college, please consider all of these relationships when answering these questions.

Has the university/college staff member(s) been involved with your education or assessment? For example, your lecturer, tutor, or supervisor?

Single code

1	Yes
2	No
3	Don't know / Can't remember
4	Prefer not to say

Scripting instruction:

Question # R: Ask all who had a relationship with staff member (P=1), single code

Has the university/college staff member(s) had any non-academic professional responsibility for you? For example, a student welfare worker, a sports coach, or security personnel

1	Yes
2	No
3	Don't know / Can't remember
4	Prefer not to say

Thank you and close

Thank you, you have reached the end of the survey. We really appreciate your support with this important research.

Further information about the research can be found on the OfS website

If you would like to speak to someone regarding your wellbeing, [Name of respondent's higher education provider] offers support resources: [Details of respondent's provider's support].

If you are currently in danger or need urgent medical attention, please contact the emergency services on 999.

Other national charities and organisations that offer help and support include:

- Rape Crisis: [rapecrisis.org.uk](https://www.rapecrisis.org.uk) or 0808 500 2222
- The Survivors Trust: [thesurvivorstrust.org](https://www.thesurvivorstrust.org) or 0808 801 0818
- Women's Aid Federation: [womensaid.org.uk](https://www.womensaid.org.uk) or National Domestic Violence Helpline (24hrs): 0808 2000 247
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- Victim support: [victimsupport.org.uk](https://www.victimsupport.org.uk) or 0808 168 9111
- Safeline: [safeline.org.uk](https://www.safeline.org.uk) or 01926 402 498
- Galop (the LGBT+ anti-violence charity): [galop.org.uk](https://www.galop.org.uk) or 0800 999 5428
- NHS Mental Health support: [nhs.uk/mental-health](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health)
- Student Minds (the UK's student mental health charity): [studentminds.org.uk](https://www.studentminds.org.uk)
- Mind (mental health charity): [mind.org.uk/information-support/helplines](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helplines) or 0300 102 1234.