Office for Students:
Sexual Misconduct Survey Cognitive Testing

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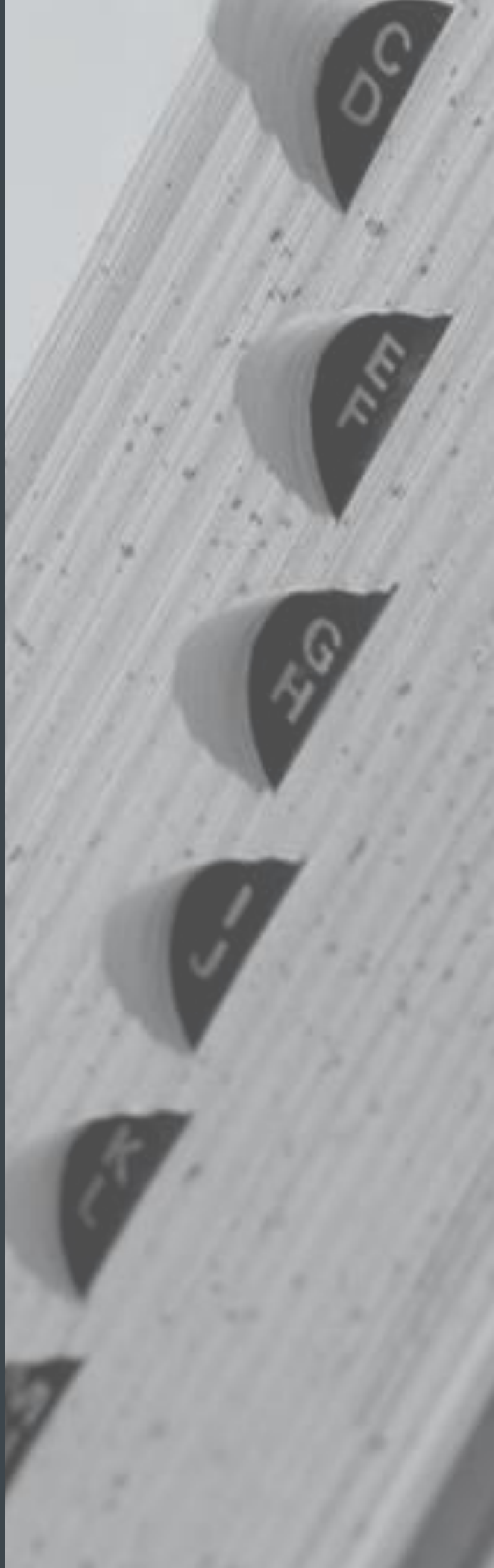

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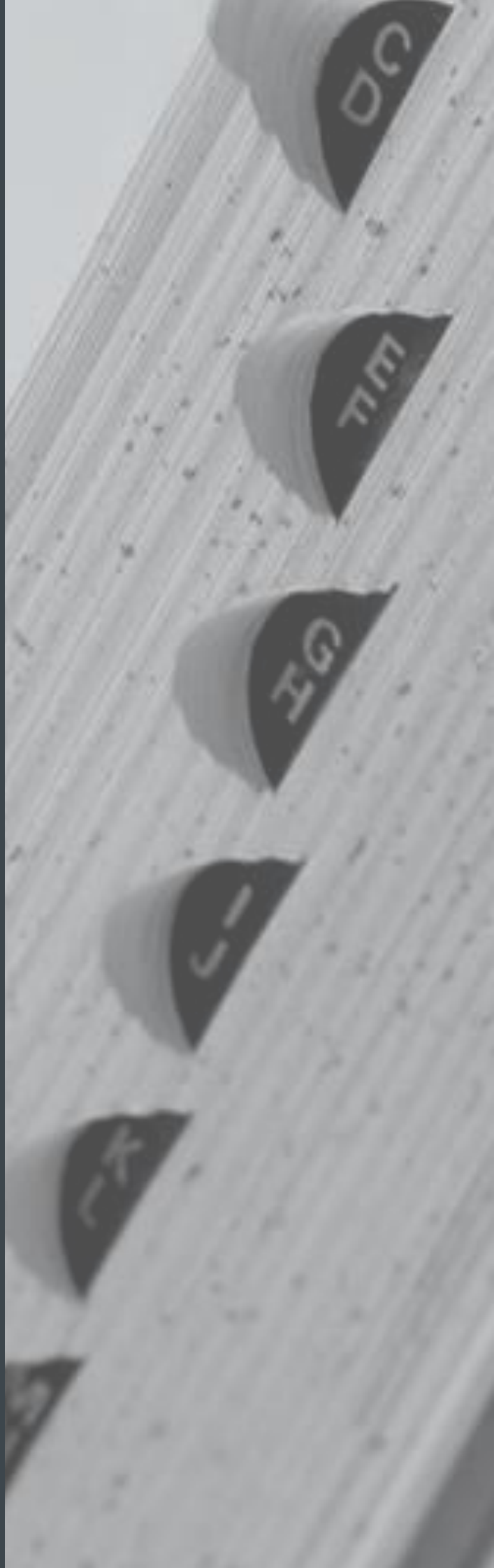

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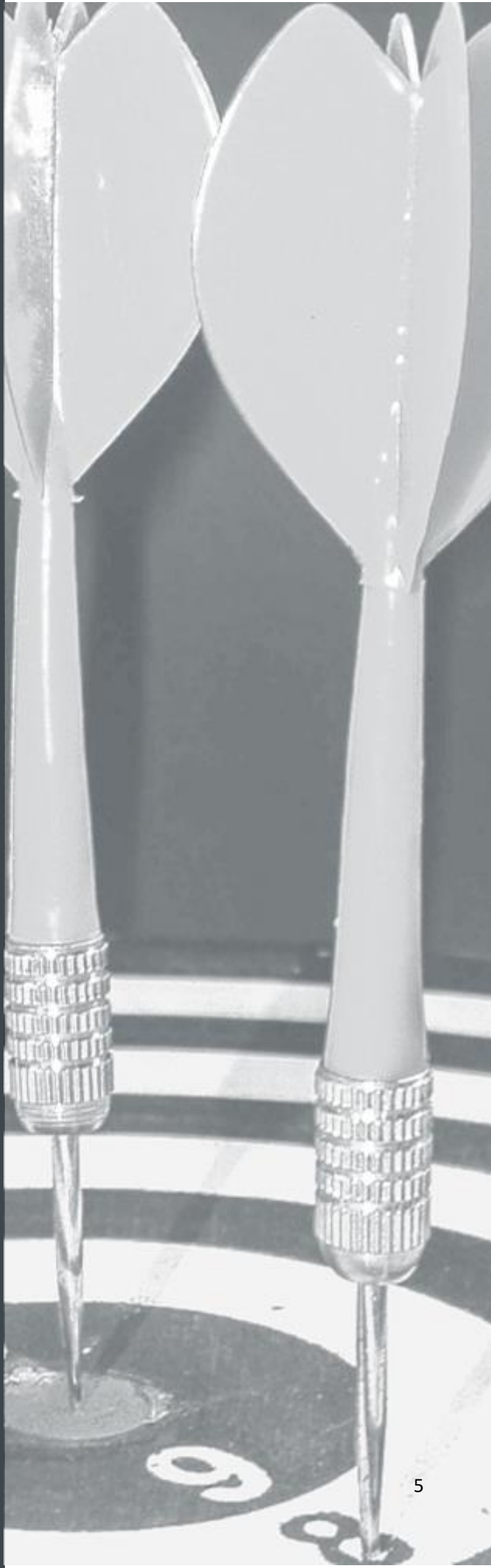
Executive summary



Executive summary

Background and methodology

The Office for Students (OfS) is developing a survey to understand the prevalence of sexual misconduct across higher education institutions in England.

The OfS developed a bank of questions to be included in its pilot prevalence survey on sexual misconduct.

The OfS commissioned Shift Insight to conduct qualitative research to test comprehension of the survey questions. To achieve this, Shift Insight conducted 39 cognitive interviews with a range of students studying undergraduate or postgraduate higher education courses in England. The aim of the interviews was to test the wording of the questions in the survey, to ensure they were phrased appropriately for the intended audience.

Overarching findings and recommendations

Overall, the survey questions were well understood by participants. The majority felt that the survey questions were well thought-out and sensitively phrased. While many participants felt that specific questions, and the survey as a whole, posed high emotional and cognitive loads, most did not think this was a significant issue. They felt that the topic of sexual misconduct warranted such rigorous questioning and that most students who volunteer to take part in the survey would be able to complete it.

The points below provide an overview of the high-priority recommendations resulting from the research. A full set of prioritised recommendations can be found in the conclusion.

Introductory text

- Clarify the timeframe and setting to be considered while responding to the survey. For example, the third paragraph could be amended to: 'This survey focuses on experiences you may have had during your current university degree. This includes experiences at a location (physical or digital) associated with your university or experiences in which the perpetrator was associated with your university.'
- Provide definitions for sexual misconduct, violence and harassment towards the start of the survey to clarify which acts or behaviours are included under each term.

Question 1.1

- Streamline the question so that it is not too taxing on students. This could be done by removing the first paragraph and changing the second paragraph to open with 'since being a student'.
- Additionally, the cognitive load could be lessened by question formatting. The question was presented in block text in the cognitive interviews, which looks overwhelming. Strategically adding bolding, colour and spacing could help the question be less visually heavy and imposing and therefore easier to read and answer.
- Add an 'unsure' response option to this question.
- Rephrase 'showing displeasure' in statement b to clarify what it means. This could be changed to 'getting annoyed' or 'getting irritated'.
- Rephrase statement c to 'taking advantage of me when I was asleep or affected by alcohol or drugs' to reflect the tone of the rest of the survey and be more sensitive.
- Similarly, remove 'simply' from statement f to avoid trivialising the experience.

Question 1.6

- Add 'without my consent' to the question, reflecting previous questions in the section.

Question 2

- Include a reference to sexual harassment in the opening statement to provide more context.
- Remove or replace the word 'leering' in statement b.
- Remove or replace the word 'loitering' in statement c.
- Combine options j and k.
- Clarify to whom the material was being displayed and who the content featured (i.e. is it referring specifically to material featuring the participant or material featuring celebrities, etc.).
- Replace the word 'electronically' with the word 'online' in option n.

Experiences of sexual misconduct question group

- Restructure the survey so that it opens with question 2 rather than question 1.1.

Question 5

- Replace the word 'thing(s)' to ensure the question reads respectfully.
- Clarify what is meant by 'university or college setting' by adding examples alongside the three bullet points.
- Make it clearer that the setting can be online as well.
- Reword the third bullet point to help clarify what is meant by 'Any event or occasion at which students / staff from your university or college were present'.
- Alternatively, consider removing the third bullet point.

Question 6.a

- Combine options c and k, or make a clear distinction between the different hospitality options.
- Include some examples to support the hospitality options.
- Include online options.
- Allow students to select multiple options that apply to them.

Question 6.b

- Add 'your hometown' as an option.
- Break down option c into more specific options.
- Alternatively, this question could be removed from the survey. If this change was made, participants who say that the experience did not occur in a university/college setting could be routed directly to questions about perpetrators and asked if the perpetrator was someone from the university/college. If this change was made along with removing bullet 3 in question 5, this could help reduce the confusion around how broad the settings to consider currently seem in both questions.

Question 10

- Change question wording to allow students to answer when more than one perpetrator is involved. This could be achieved through only using the second statement 'Was this person / were any of these people'.
- Add option for 'friend or close friend'.
- Change the option f wording to clarify that this is paid employment through the university, as opposed to simply any job held while at university, e.g. 'through the university'.

Question 11.a

- Make it clear that the question is focusing on only one experience, to avoid confusion in reporting across multiple experiences.
- Give some examples of other roles associated with a university in option j, or merge this with option i.
- Clearly define 'student representative' to differentiate from 'student leader' or consider merging them.

Question 12.a

- Reiterate in the question wording that this is focused on university-provided support to contextualise the responses and avoid confusion about why other support sources are not shown (such as friends and family).

Question 12.b

- Change the wording from 'how would you describe' to 'how would you rate' to reflect the scale being used.
- Add an 'unsure' option.

Question 12.c

- Clarify that this is a multi-choice question by adding the instruction 'Please select all that apply'.
- Add options for:
    - I was afraid for my own safety.
    - I did not personally think it was serious enough.
    - I did not feel prepared to deal with it at the time.

Question 12.e

- Clarify that this is multi-choice by adding 'Please select all that apply'.
- Reflect the list of roles given in question 11a and make them consistent in terms of wording/examples given.
- Change the wording of option i to be 'doctor, nurse or other healthcare professional'.

Question 14

- Clarify the timeframe that this question applies to, i.e. prior to making a complaint, or at the point of making a complaint.

Question 14.a

- Add an 'unsure' and 'prefer not to say' option.

Question 17

- Change to use a confidence scale as opposed to asking how 'sure' participants are.

Question 18

- Change to use a confidence scale as opposed to asking how 'sure' participants are.

Overarching questions

- The lack of consensus while interpreting sexual violence, assault and harassment reiterates the importance of providing clear definitions of key terminology in the survey introduction.
- Check that language is used consistently throughout the survey.
- Make it clear in the introduction that all experiences are valued.

Background and methodology

Background

The Office for Students (OfS) developed a survey to understand the prevalence of sexual misconduct across higher education institutions in the UK. The findings may help universities take action to prevent incidents, and in the future, could deepen understanding of whether activities are having an impact.

The OfS developed a bank of questions to be included in the new pilot prevalence survey on sexual misconduct, known in this report as the Sexual Misconduct Survey. Before piloting the survey, the OfS commissioned Shift Insight to cognitively test the bank of questions to ensure survey participants interpret the questions as intended, reducing the potential for measurement error.

This research provides cognitive testing on the Sexual Misconduct Survey questions in relation to students studying undergraduate or postgraduate higher education courses in England.

Methodology

Research approach

The research included the following approach:

- **Cognitive interviews:**
    - 39 interviews were conducted using a cognitive interviewing approach. These involved participants reading the questions and 'thinking aloud' as they considered the wording of each question, rather than actually answering the question and having to share their personal experiences. The interviews tested comprehension of the question wording and any difficulties with the language used. This approach helps to ensure survey participants interpret questions in the way they were intended, reducing the potential for measurement error.
    - The interviews were divided into two sets, with each set reviewing a different selection of the survey questions. Set A included 20 participants and Set B included 19 participants.
    - Due to the sensitive nature of the research, participants were given the list of questions under review and a detailed project information sheet prior to taking part in the interview. All participants then provided informed consent for taking part in the research.
    - Participants were offered £60 as an incentive for taking part.
    - Interviews lasted approximately one hour each and were conducted over Zoom or by phone.

Question list

This research tested a subset of the Sexual Misconduct Survey questions under development, as opposed to the whole survey. A full list of the question sets tested is given in Appendix 1: Question list. This details which questions were tested within Set A (with 20 participants) and which were tested in Set B (with 19 participants).

Approach to analysis

Interviews were analysed using the following steps:

- **Interviewer workshop:**
    - To develop key themes in relation to each question and the survey overall
    - To inform development of a code frame
- **Coding of transcripts in Atlas.ti by:**
    - Question
    - Question group
    - Top-line themes.
- **Secondary coding by question to specifically identify the nature of:**
    - Difficulties in answering the questions
    - Difficulties with specific language used in the questions

- Missing options
- Suggested ordering changes

To support and evidence future decision making, the OfS wanted to understand the frequency with which areas of difficulty or ambiguity arose during interviews. Code frequencies relating to any difficulties have been reported in brackets in the report commentary to allow the 'tracking back' of any future decisions to specific examples.

Recruitment of participants

We completed a total of 39 interviews during March and April 2023.

Participants were recruited through Shift Insight's research panel.

A sampling strategy was designed to ensure representation from student groups across the audience including course subject, delivery format, mode of study, provider type, provider location and participant demographic profile.

Quotes have been used throughout the report to illustrate the findings. These are referenced with an interview identification number.

Survey introduction

Introductory text

Wording tested

The following questions ask about sexual experiences you may have had that were unwanted.

These could include unwanted sexual acts or sexual contact. It can also include experiences that happened when you were asleep or affected by drugs or alcohol.

We're interested in your experiences both at university and in other places since you became a student.
Your answers to these questions are completely confidential.

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

Note: the introduction was shown to all participants, both Set A and Set B (39).

Participants' interpretation of text

Interview participants were shown the introductory text and asked about their initial impressions of it and what they assumed the survey would cover on reading this introduction.

Most participants felt the text was self-explanatory and that the survey would cover questions around any sexual experiences they might have had that were unwelcome or non-consensual. Some participants specifically mentioned that they would expect the survey to cover questions on experiencing sexual misconduct or sexual harassment. However, it is worth noting that what participants categorised under the terms of sexual misconduct and sexual harassment was variable.

Some participants also commented that they would expect the survey to focus particularly on the university context, i.e. experiences they may have while studying at university. However, one of these participants thought the survey was going to focus on sexual misconduct between university staff and students.

Issues with language used

Survey context

While reading the introductory text, the most common issue participants cited was a lack of clarity on the context of the survey. This included a lack of clarity on the timeframe and setting to be considered across the survey.

Many participants (8) felt that it was unclear what time period they should be thinking about.[1] For example, should they be thinking about term time only, or holidays as well? Some of these participants also highlighted that this may be particularly confusing for students who have undertaken multiple degrees, as they may wonder if they should only consider their current degree or if they should include previous degrees and any time in between. A small number of these participants even suggested that the introduction may lead some participants to consider their time as a school student.

Additionally, many participants (8) felt the introduction should clarify what settings the survey was focused on.[2] They wondered if they should be considering only experiences at their university, those within their university town/city, while they were visiting home or absolutely anything during the time that they were a student. Two of these participants (2) specified that it was the inclusion of 'and in other places' causing their confusion.[3]

[1] Code: Introduction_Difficulties with language_Timeframe (8)

[2] Code: Introduction_Difficulties with language_Setting (6) and Introduction_Difficulties with language_Setting_Other place (2)

[3] Code: Introduction_Difficulties with language_Setting_Other place (2)

Sensitivity of the survey

There were some issues with the introductory text surrounding the sensitive nature of the topic. Several participants felt that the introduction did not adequately prepare participants for the intensity of the survey questions.

Some of these participants (5) suggested that students taking part in the survey should be given more preparatory information and a chance to give informed consent.[4]

Others (4) commented that the tone of the introduction did not match the severity of the survey questions.[5] They felt the language was quite casual, particularly in comparison to the explicit language of questions 1.1 to 1.6. One participant (1) even suggested that the introduction should explicitly use the word 'rape' to prepare students for the intensity of the upcoming question.[6]

A few participants (3) also felt that students should be directed to support resources in the introduction.[7]

Note: the introduction was asked to both Set A and Set B participants (39).

Note: when disseminating the pilot and full survey, the OfS will provide participants with more information prior to taking part, including links to support resources. Consequently, no recommendations around these issues are suggested in this report.

Interpretation of 'unwanted sexual experiences'

Many participants (7) suggested that they would not be completely sure how to interpret the phrase 'unwanted sexual experience'.[8] Although participants were generally aware that the survey was about sexual misconduct, when discussing the introduction and across the interviews, participants commented that there could be more clarity about what this constitutes. Furthermore, across the survey the phrases 'sexual misconduct', 'sexual violence' and 'sexual harassment' were used, but participants were not always sure of the difference between them.

There were a couple of other suggestions made about clarifying the types of experiences to be considered:

- One participant (1) felt that the introduction should make it clearer that experiences in which students did not fully consent to, or had declined a sexual encounter, could also be considered sexual misconduct.[9]
- Another participant (1) suggested that the introduction should specifically include text explaining that experiences occurring when a student is feeling vulnerable could also be considered sexual misconduct.[10]

Other issues

There were a couple of other issues – each raised by one participant only:

- One participant (1) disliked the use of 'affected' in this text and suggested 'under the influence'.[11]
- Another participant (1) felt that the second paragraph should include 'otherwise impaired', in addition to being 'affected by drugs or alcohol', to cover all possible situations.[12]

[4] Code: Introduction_Difficulties with language_Consent and disclaimers (5)

[5] Code: Introduction_Difficulties with language_Tone (4)

[6] Code: Introduction_Difficulties with language_Rape (1)

[7] Code: Introduction_Difficulties with language_Support resources (3)

[8] Code: Introduction_Difficulties with language_Unwanted sexual experiences (7)

[9] Code: Introduction_Difficulties with language_Add text about ambiguous experiences (1)

[10] Code: Introduction_Difficulties with language_Vulnerable (1)

[11] Code: Introduction_Difficulties with language_Affected by (1)

[12] Code: Introduction_Difficulties with language_Otherwise impaired (1)

Recommendations

High priority

- Clarify the timeframe and setting to be considered while responding to the survey. For example, the third paragraph could be amended to: 'This survey focuses on experiences you may have had during your current university degree. This includes experiences at a location (physical or digital) associated with your university or experiences in which the perpetrator was associated with your university'.
- Provide definitions for sexual misconduct, violence and harassment towards the start of the survey to clarify which acts or behaviours are included under each term.

Low priority

- Consider amending the text in the second paragraph to read: 'when you were asleep, under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or otherwise impaired'.

Experiences of sexual misconduct

Question 1.1

Wording tested

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.

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 without my consent (but did not attempt sexual penetration) by:

a) *Telling lies, threatening to end the relationship, threatening to spread rumours about me, making promises I knew were untrue, or continually verbally pressuring me.*
   - *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

b) *Showing displeasure, criticising my sexuality or attractiveness, or getting angry but not using physical force.*
   - *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

c) *Taking advantage of me when I was too drunk or out of it.*
   - *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

d) *Threatening to physically harm me or someone close to me.*
   - *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

e) *Using force, such as holding me down with their body weight, pinning my arms, or having a weapon.*
   - *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

f) *Simply engaging in the behaviour without any indication from me that it was welcome.*
   - *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

Note: question 1.1 was asked to Set A participants only (20).

Reasons for any difficulties answering and issues with language used

When responding to this question, several participants commented that the question was quite long. This was particularly in contrast with the other questions about experiencing sexual violence (Q1.2 to Q1.6), as it has an additional introductory paragraph. However, most of these participants (7) acknowledged that the topic of sexual violence requires this level of nuanced detail.[13] While they mentioned that the question could be taxing, they were all right responding to the question in its current form. Only one (1) of the participants who found the question too long felt that the length of the question impacted their ability to respond.[14]

Some participants (3) felt that the question should include an overall opt-out option.[15] They felt it would be useful to have the option to indicate they had not experienced sexual violence of this nature, or that they prefer not to say, using a single response – rather than having to indicate this for statements a-f individually.

A couple of participants (2) suggested that this question could include an 'unsure' option.[16] One of these participants highlighted that having this option is particularly crucial for statement c, as it is possible that students may not be fully aware of something they experience while 'drunk or out of it'.

There were a few other issues raised with the wording of question 1.1:

[13] Code: 1.1_Difficulties with language_Too long_Alright (7)

[14] Code: 1.1_Difficulties with language_Too long_Not alright (1)

[15] Code: 1.1_Difficulties answering_Overall opt-out (3)

[16] Code: 1.1_Difficulties answering_Unsure option (2)

- One participant (1) felt that there was too much overlap between this question and the introductory text.[17] Particularly, they said the text 'this could have been anywhere, not just at university, and includes when you were asleep or affected by alcohol or drugs' seemed too repetitive. This participant also felt that the repetition of this text could be triggering for some participants.
- One participant (1) disliked the use of 'did not' within the question.[18] They felt that this phrasing was too formal and would have preferred the use of 'didn't'.
- One participant (1) thought the question could be difficult to answer because 'private areas' was a subjective term.[19] They noted that a private area for one person would not necessarily be for others. This could lead to people interpreting the question in different ways and considering different experiences while responding.
- Another participant (1) suggested that 'private areas' may not be understood by students, as they felt it was an uncommon phrase.[20]
- One participant (1) felt that 'crotch' could be confusing, as they were not fully sure what it meant.[21]
- One participant (1) commented that 'this could be anywhere' was too vague – underscoring the introductory text issue of the setting and timeframe under consideration not currently being clear across the survey.[22]

Participants also had several comments about the clarity of the statements related to this question. Note, as statement a-f are repeated across questions 1.1 to 1.6, the following findings are applicable to questions 1.2 to 1.6 as well.

Statement a

- Two participants (2) felt that 'verbal pressure' would fit better in statement b.[23]
- Two participants (2) were unsure what was meant by 'making promises they knew were untrue'.[24] They were not sure who was making the promises in this scenario and who knew that the promises were untrue.
- Similarly, one participant (1) was confused about the use of 'rumours' in this statement.[25] They were not sure who was spreading the rumours or what the rumours were about.
- Another participant (1) found the inclusion of 'threatening to end the relationship' confusing, as they were unsure how that connected to the main question.[26]
- One participant (1) suggested that 'verbally pressuring me' could be changed to 'pressuring me'.[27]
- One participant (1) felt that statement a was attempting to cover too many different situations.[28] They felt this may be confusing or off-putting for some students. For example, those who have only experienced one of the things listed in statement a might be unsure if they should still select 'yes' for the whole statement. Hence, this participant felt it could be useful to split statement a into two statements.

[17] Code: 1.1_Difficulties answering_Overlap with introduction (1)

[18] Code: 1,1_Difficulties with language_Did not (1)

[19] Code: 1.1_Difficulties answering_Private areas_Subjective concept (1)

[20] Code: 1.1_Difficulties with language_Private areas_Uncommon phrase (1)

[21] Code: 1.1_Difficulties with language_Crotch (1)

[22] Code: 1.1_Difficulties with language_This could be anywhere_Too vague (1)

[23] Code: 1 a)_Difficulties with language_Overlap with b (2)

[24] Code: 1 a)_Difficulties with language_Making promises they knew were untrue (2)

[25] Code: 1 a)_Difficulties with language_Rumours (1)

[26] Code: 1 a)_Difficulties with language_Threatening to end the relationship (1)

[27] Code: 1 a)_Difficulties with language_Verbal pressure (1)

[28] Code: 1 a)_Difficulties with language_Split into 2 (1)

Statement b

- Some participants (6) did not understand the phrase 'showing displeasure'.[29] They suggested that this was an uncommon phrase and it was also not clear who was showing displeasure.
- Similarly, a few participants (3) were not sure what 'criticising my sexuality' meant.[30] One of these participants commented that it might mean criticising or questioning their sexual orientation, but they could not be certain what it meant.
- One participant (1) felt that this statement could be split in two.[31] Specifically, they felt that 'getting angry but not using physical force' could be a separate statement.

Statement c

- Several participants (9) disliked the use of 'out of it' within this statement.[32] They felt the phrase was insensitive, trivialising and that it did not match the tone of the survey. A few of these participants suggested that the statement could be changed to 'taking advantage of me when I was asleep or affected by alcohol or drugs' to reflect the text used in the introduction and question.

Statement d

- One participant (1) felt the statement could clarify when the perpetrator threatened to physically harm the person.[33]
- Another participant (1) felt that there was some overlap between statements d and e.[34] In particular, they felt 'having a weapon' could be moved from statement e to statement d.

Statement e

- One participant (1) felt that statement e could include some examples of weapons.[35]
- Another participant (1) felt that the inclusion of 'holding me down with their body weight' was too visceral and potentially triggering.[36]
- One participant (1) felt the statement could be split in two, with 'using force, such as having a weapon' being a separate statement.[37]

Statement f

- Some participants (5) disliked the use of 'simply' in this statement.[38] They felt it was trivialising and that the meaning of the statement would be unchanged if it were removed.
- Similarly, one participant (1) suggested that the meaning would be unchanged if 'from me' was removed.[39]
- One participant (1) was not sure what 'engaging' meant in this context.[40]

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[29] Code: 1 b)_Difficulties with language_Showing displeasure (6)

[30] Code: 1 b)_Difficulties with language_Criticising (3)

[31] Code: 1 b)_Difficulties with language_Split into 2 (1)

[32] Code: 1 c)_Difficulties with language_Out of it (9)

[33] Code: 1 d)_Difficulties with language_Timing (1)

[34] Code: 1 d)_Difficulties with language_Overlap with E (1)

[35] Code: 1 e)_Difficulties with language_Example of weapon (1)

[36] Code: 1 e)_Difficulties with language_Body weight (1)

[37] Code: 1 e)_Difficulties with language_Split into 2 (1)

[38] Code: 1 f)_Difficulties with language_Simply (5)

[39] Code: 1 f)_Difficulties with language_Remove from me (1)

[40] Code: 1 f)_Difficulties with language_Engaging (1)

- One participant (1) felt that the statement could be made clearer by rephrasing to 'simply engaging in behaviour that made me uncomfortable'.[41]
- One participant (1) felt that the question was too broad, which made it unclear.[42]
- Another participant (1) felt that the statement could be split in two,[43] with one statement referring to experiences in which someone explicitly said they did not want to engage in the behaviour yet the perpetrator proceeded, and another statement for experiences in which the person did not explicitly say no or yes to engaging in the behaviour.

Missing statements

When asked if there were any statements currently missing from the question, participants suggested some that more explicitly referred to the following:

- **Coercion** (1).[44]
- **Gaslighting** (1).[45]
- Threatening to spread **revenge porn** (1).[46]
- Threatening to cause **reputational harm** to the student (1).[47]
- **Exploiting power imbalances** between the student and the perpetrator (1).[48]
- The **perpetrator threatening self-harm** (1).[49] This was suggested to be particularly important in situations where the student has a pre-existing relationship with the perpetrator.
- The perpetrator playing off sexual misconduct as **humour** (1).[50]
- The perpetrator **withholding help**, e.g. with university work (1).[51]

Suggested ordering changes

One participant (1) suggested that statements c and f could be placed near each other, as they both concerned situations in which the perpetrator proceeded with the behaviour regardless of the student's reaction.[52]

Recommendations

High priority

- Streamline the question so it is not too taxing on students. This could be done by removing the first paragraph and changing the second paragraph to open with 'Since being a student'.
- Additionally, the cognitive load could be lessened by question formatting. The question was presented in block text in the cognitive interviews, which looks overwhelming. Strategically adding bolding, colour and spacing could help the question be less visually heavy and imposing and therefore easier to read and answer.

[41] Code: 1 f)_Difficulties with language_Uncomfortable (1)

[42] Code: 1 f)_Difficulties with language_Too broad (1)

[43] Code: 1 f)_Difficulties with language_Split into 2 (1)

[44] Code: 1.1_Missing statements_Coercion (1)

[45] Code: 1.1_Missing statements_Gaslighting (1)

[46] Code: 1.1_Missing statements_Revenge porn (1)

[47] Code: 1.1_Missing statements_Other forms of harm (1)

[48] Code: 1.1_Missing statements_Exploiting vulnerability (1)

[49] Code: 1.1_Missing statements_Threatening self-harm (1)

[50] Code: 1.1_Missing statements_Using humour (1).

[51] Code: 1.1_Missing statements_Withholding help (1).

[52] Code: 1.1_Order_C&F_Placed together (1)

- Add an ‘unsure’ response option to this question.
- Rephrase ‘showing displeasure’ in statement b to clarify what it means. This could be changed to ‘getting annoyed’ or ‘getting irritated’.
- Rephrase statement c to ‘taking advantage of me when I was asleep or affected by alcohol or drugs’ to reflect the tone of the rest of the survey and be more sensitive.
- Similarly, remove ‘simply’ from statement f to avoid trivialising the experience.

Mid priority

- Consider rephrasing ‘criticising my sexuality’ or clarifying what this means.

Low priority

- Consider clarifying the meaning of ‘making promises I knew were untrue’.
- Consider moving ‘verbally pressuring me’ to statement b.

Question 1.2

Wording tested

Someone had oral sex with me or made me have oral sex with them without my consent by:

a) *Telling lies, threatening to end the relationship, threatening to spread rumours about me, making promises I knew were untrue, or continually verbally pressuring me.*
   - *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

b) *Showing displeasure, criticising my sexuality or attractiveness, or getting angry but not using physical force.*
   - *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

c) *Taking advantage of me when I was too drunk or out of it*
   - *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

d) *Threatening to physically harm me or someone close to me.*
   - *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

e) *Using force, such as holding me down with their body weight, pinning my arms, or having a weapon.*
   - *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

f) *Simply engaging in the behaviour without any indication from me that it was welcome.*
   - *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

Note: question 1.2 was asked to Set A participants only (20).

Reasons for any difficulties answering and issues with language used

A couple of participants (2) felt that the wording of this question did not make the non-consensual nature of the experience clear enough.[53] One of these participants felt that having ‘without my consent’ at the end of the statement meant the non-consensual nature of the experience was deprioritised. The other participant felt that the use of ‘had’ and ‘have’ in the statement was the reason it seemed consensual.

Additionally, two participants (2) also disliked the use of ‘have’ in the statement.[54] Both participants suggested using ‘perform’ instead, with one even highlighting that it would fit better in the statement as the act is supposed to be non-consensual.

[53] Code: 1.2_Difficulties with language_Non-consensual nature unclear (2)

[54] Code: 1.2_Difficulties with language_Have (2)

Two participants (2) felt that it was worth including 'since being a student' at the start of this statement, to reiterate the timeframe students should be thinking about.[55]

One participant (1) suggested that some students might not understand what was meant by oral sex.[56] While the participant did not struggle to understand the term themselves, they felt it may be useful to have a definition.

Recommendations

Mid priority

- Consider changing the statement to 'someone performed oral sex on me or made me perform oral sex…', to make the non-consensual nature of the oral sex clearer.
- Additionally, consider moving 'without my consent' to the start of the statement to further emphasise the non-consensual nature.

Question 1.3

Wording tested

Someone put their penis, fingers, other body parts, or objects into my vagina or anus without my consent by:

a) *Telling lies, threatening to end the relationship, threatening to spread rumours about me, making promises I knew were untrue, or continually verbally pressuring me.*
   - *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

b) *Showing displeasure, criticising my sexuality or attractiveness, or getting angry but not using physical force.*
   - *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

c) *Taking advantage of me when I was too drunk or out of it*
   - *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

d) *Threatening to physically harm me or someone close to me.*
   - *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

e) *Using force, such as holding me down with their body weight, pinning my arms, or having a weapon.*
   - *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

f) *Simply engaging in the behaviour without any indication from me that it was welcome.*
   - *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

Note: question 1.3 was asked to Set A participants only (20).

Reasons for any difficulties answering and issues with language used

This question was largely well understood, with only a few suggested issues.

A few participants (3) felt that the phrasing of this question implied it was targeted more towards women.[57] These participants questioned whether men would feel that it does not apply to them, making them more likely to skip or not consider their responses adequately.

Similarly, one participant (1) felt the question might not be fully applicable to intersex people.[58] While they were not themselves intersex, they felt this might be an issue.

[55] Code: 1.2_Difficulties with language_Since being a student (2)

[56] Code: 1.2_Difficulties with language_Oral sex (1)

[57] Code: 1.3_Difficulties with language_Applicability to men (3)

[58] Code: 1.3_Difficulties with language_Intersex students (1)

As was the case with question 1.2, one participant (1) felt that the statement could start with 'since being a student', to reiterate the time frame under consideration.[59]

Recommendations

Mid priority

- Consider adapting the question to make its relevance to men clearer – this could potentially be achieved by including the word 'my' before 'anus' to give them equal importance.
- Additionally, 'my anus' could be moved before 'my vagina' to avoid biasing participants towards thinking about female genitalia.

Question 1.4

Wording tested

Someone made me perform anal or vaginal sex (putting my penis or fingers or other body parts or objects into their anus or vagina) without my consent by:

a) Telling lies, threatening to end the relationship, threatening to spread rumours about me, making promises I knew were untrue, or continually verbally pressuring me.
- *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

b) Showing displeasure, criticising my sexuality or attractiveness, or getting angry but not using physical force.
- *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

c) Taking advantage of me when I was too drunk or out of it
- *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

d) Threatening to physically harm me or someone close to me.
- *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

e) Using force, such as holding me down with their body weight, pinning my arms, or having a weapon.
- *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

f) Simply engaging in the behaviour without any indication from me that it was welcome.
- *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

Note: question 1.4 was asked to Set A participants only (20).

Reasons for any difficulties answering and issues with language used

Four participants (4) suggested that it was not immediately clear how this question was different from question 1.3.[60] While they all eventually recognised the difference, they had to re-read the questions to do so. They felt that if this were presented in a survey, rather than an interview, participants who do not immediately identify the difference would not make further efforts to distinguish between the two questions.

In contrast to question 1.3, a couple of participants (2) felt that this question was targeted more towards men.[61] They suggested that women might skip past the question as they may feel it does not apply to them.

Two other participants (2) disliked the use of 'made me' in this question. One of them suggested that 'forced' or 'threatened' might be better words to use.[62]

[59] Code: 1.3_Difficulties with language_Since being a student (1)

[60] Code: 1.4_Difficulties with language_Overlap with 1.3 (3)

[61] Code: 1.4_Difficulties with language_Applicability to women (2)

[62] Code: 1.4_Difficulties with language_Made me (2)

Recommendations

Mid priority

- Consider using formatting cues to make the difference between questions 1.3 and 1.4 clearer. For example, 'put their' in question 1.3. and 'made me perform' in question 1.4 could be underlined.

Low priority

- Consider changing the text within the brackets to 'putting my fingers or penis…' so that the applicability of this question to women is clearer.

Question 1.5

Wording tested

Even though it did not happen, someone TRIED to put their penis, fingers, other body parts, or objects into my vagina or anus without my consent by:

a) *Telling lies, threatening to end the relationship, threatening to spread rumours about me, making promises I knew were untrue, or continually verbally pressuring me.*
   - *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

b) *Showing displeasure, criticising my sexuality or attractiveness, or getting angry but not using physical force.*
   - *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

c) *Taking advantage of me when I was too drunk or out of it*
   - *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

d) *Threatening to physically harm me or someone close to me.*
   - *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

e) *Using force, such as holding me down with their body weight, pinning my arms, or having a weapon.*
   - *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

f) *Simply engaging in the behaviour without any indication from me that it was welcome.*
   - *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

Note, question 1.5 was asked to Set A participants only (20).

Reasons for any difficulties answering and issues with language used

Participants experienced a few issues associated with the use of 'TRIED' within this question.

- Four participants (4) disliked the use of the word, as it seemed too casual and did not match the tone of the survey. Some of them suggested that 'attempted' might be a more appropriate word to use.[63]
- A couple of participants (2) disliked having the word in capitals,[64] Again, they commented that this did not match the tone of the survey and was perhaps excessive.
- One participant (1) suggested that this question may be difficult to answer as it is not always possible to be certain what someone else has tried.[65] Due to this ambiguity, students may be unsure if certain experiences should or should not be considered while responding to this question.

[63] Code: 1.5_Difficulties with language_Tried_Use in question (4)

[64] Code: 1.5_Difficulties with language_Tried_Capitalisation (2)

[65] Code: 1.5_Difficulties with language_Tried_Ambiguous (1)

"I suppose… the person would have to be clear that they did try… I'm just thinking of an example, say someone is on a train and someone rubs up against them and they think, 'was that deliberate or was it not?'... You know, there can be ambiguity in a situation as to whether or not something was tried or if it wasn't tried… I think… It could be broadened out a little bit, you know, because otherwise you're trying to put yourself in the mind of somebody else."

Set A, Postgraduate, HSS, Distance learner, Interview #11

There were a couple of other issues with this question, raised by one participant each.

- The use of 'even though it did not happen' within the question could potentially be seen as insensitive and trivialising (1).[66]
- Students who had experienced sexual violence may be unsure how to respond to this question, as the perpetrator's actions could still be considered as trying to enact violence (1).[67]

Recommendations

Mid priority

- Consider using 'attempted' instead of 'TRIED' in this question.
- Rather than having 'TRIED' (or 'attempted') capitalised, it could be underlined.

Low priority

- Consider replacing the phrase 'even though it did not happen' with something potentially more sensitive, such as 'even though they did not manage to'. Alternatively, the question can be rephrased to 'someone attempted, but failed to, put their penis, fingers, other body parts, or objects into my vagina or anus without my consent by:'.

Question 1.6

Wording tested

Even though it did not happen, someone TRIED to have oral sex with me or TRIED to make me perform oral sex on them by:

a) *Telling lies, threatening to end the relationship, threatening to spread rumours about me, making promises I knew were untrue, or continually verbally pressuring me.*
   - *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

b) *Showing displeasure, criticising my sexuality or attractiveness, or getting angry but not using physical force.*
   - *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

c) *Taking advantage of me when I was too drunk or out of it*
   - *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

d) *Threatening to physically harm me or someone close to me.*
   - *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

e) *Using force, such as holding me down with their body weight, pinning my arms, or having a weapon.*
   - *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

f) *Simply engaging in the behaviour without any indication from me that it was welcome.*
   - *Yes, No, Prefer not to say*

Note: question 1.6 was asked to Set A participants only (20).

[66] Code: 1.5_Difficulties with language_Even though it did not happen (1)

[67] Code: 1.5_Difficulties answering_Experiences (1)

Reasons for any difficulties answering and issues with language used

While responding to this question, participants raised some of the same issues as in question 1.5. Note that the same participants mentioned these issues for both questions.

- Four participants (4) disliked the use of 'TRIED', as it felt too casual.[68]
- A couple of participants (2) felt having 'TRIED' in capital letters was excessive.[69]
- One participant (1) felt the inclusion of 'even though it did not happen' was insensitive.[70]

There were some additional issues experienced with this question.

- A couple of participants (2) questioned whether all students responding to the survey would understand the meaning of 'oral sex'.[71] While they personally did not struggle to understand the question, they suggested that a definition could be included. One of these participants felt that mature students or students from strong religious backgrounds might not be familiar with the phrase. It is worth noting that one of these participants was the same participant who raised this issue in question 1.2.
- One participant (1) did not like the use of 'have' in this question and suggested that 'attempted' might be more tonally appropriate.[72]
- Another student (1) felt that the non-consensual nature of the experience was not clear enough because it did not include the text 'without my consent' like previous questions.

Recommendations

High priority

- Add 'without my consent' to the question, reflecting previous questions in the section.

Mid priority

- Consider using 'attempted' instead of 'TRIED' in this question.
- Rather than having 'TRIED' (or 'attempted') capitalised, it could be underlined.

Low priority

- Consider replacing the phrase 'even though it did not happen' with something potentially more sensitive, for example 'even though they did not manage to'. Alternatively, the question could be rephrased to 'someone attempted, but failed to, to have oral sex with me or TRIED to make me perform oral sex on them without my consent by:'.

Question 2

Wording tested

Since being a student, has anyone ever made you feel intimidated, harassed, humiliated or degraded in the following ways?

For each of these, please answer: Yes, No, Don't know or Prefer not to say

[68] Code: 1.6_Difficulties with language_Tried_Use in question (4)

[69] Code: 1.6_Difficulties with language_Tried_Capitalisation (2)

[70] Code: 1.6_Difficulties with language_Even though it did not happen (1)

[71] Code: 1.6_Difficulties with language_Oral sex (2)

[72] Code: 1.6_Difficulties with language_Have (1)

a) *Touching you, hugging you, or invading your personal space*
b) *Leering or staring at you*
c) *Following you or loitering nearby*
d) *Treating you "differently" because of your gender (for example, mistreated, slighted, ignored you or made sexist or condescending remarks*
e) *Making sexual gestures or used body language of a sexual nature which embarrassed or offended you*
f) *Deliberately exposed their intimate body parts (flashing)*
g) *Asked, hinted or made unwelcome requested that you have sex with them*
h) *Persisted with suggestions that you establish a sexual or romantic relationship with them*
i) *Making unwelcome comments or asking intrusive questions about your private life, sex life, body or physical appearance*
j) *Taking a nude or sexual photo/video of you without your permission*
k) *Posting a nude or sexual photo/video of you online, or sending it to others, without your permission*
l) *Spreading unwelcome sexual rumours about you, either in person, or by text, email, social media, or other electronic means*
m) *Displayed, used, or distributed sexualised materials (e.g., pictures, stories, jokes, or pornography)*
n) *Privately sent you sexualised messages electronically, via text message, email, social media, etc.*
o) *Other*

Note: question 2 was asked to Set B participants only (19). However, they were able to read questions 1.1 to 1.6 for reference.

Reasons for any difficulties answering and issues with language used

When responding to this question, several participants (6) felt it was not clear that the opening statement specifically related to sexual harassment.[73] They thought the statement was too broad and that it referred to being made to feel 'intimidated, harassed, humiliated or degraded' in any form, rather than in a sexual way.

One participant (1) did not associate the words 'degraded' or 'humiliated' with sexual misconduct.[74] Another (1) felt these words were too similar and that potentially the word 'humiliated' could be removed.[75]

Some participants (4) were confused by the phrase 'since being a student', as they were unsure what acts of sexual harassment would be included.[76] Two of these participants associated this with only educational settings and would be unsure whether this included incidents that happened at home, or not during the term time. The others were wondering about incidents that might have happened before becoming a student. One of them also thought it was important to recognise that incidents could happen both in person and online.

Two participants (2) recommended replacing 'don't know' with an 'unsure' option, as they felt this was more accurate, as people might be hesitant to discuss certain incidents.[77]

Participants also had several comments about the clarity of the statements related to this question.

[73] Code: 2_Difficulties with language_Sexual harassment_Unclear (6)

[74] Code: 2_Difficulties with language_Degraded (1)

[75] Code: 2_Difficulties with language_Humiliated (1)

[76] Code: 2_Difficulties with language_Setting (5)

[77] Code: 2_Difficulties answering_Unsure option (2)

Statement b

- Some participants (4) struggled with the word 'leering'.[78] Two of them did not fully understand the word and were not confident using it. Others were unsure what counts as 'leering or staring', as people's perceptions and experiences might vary.

Statement c

- A number of participants (4) had issues with the word 'loitering'.[79] One of them questioned whether students would understand this word. Another thought that loitering was difficult to prove and, as a result, students might not be sure what is considered loitering and as a result struggle to answer the question. Two participants felt that 'following' and 'loitering' are very different experiences and should be separated. One of these also suggested including the word 'stalking' alongside 'following'.

Statement d

- One participant (1) thought this option was too vague and that it was hard to know when you had experienced one of these actions, especially when people interpret scenarios differently.[80] They wanted examples to help illustrate what counts in this context.
- Although they were unsure why, one participant (1) felt 'differently' was not the right word to use.[81]
- Two participants (2) had issues with the word 'slighted'.[82] One read this option as slightly ignored, while the other did not understand the word.

Statement m

- Some participants (3) were confused about who and what material this statement was referring to.[83] Two of them were unsure about who was displaying or distributing the content and what this really meant. One participant wondered whether the content had to be about themselves, or a friend or even a celebrity.
- One participant (1) also felt that this should include both online and offline sexualised materials.[84]

Statement n

- Some participants (3) thought the word 'electronically' should be replaced by 'online'.[85] One of them felt this would read better and is a more familiar term that they would use. Another thought that sending nude photos should be included as an example. One participant felt that there should be a distinction made between someone messaging you via dating apps, and those by social media or text message.

[78] Code: 2_Difficulties with language_Option b_Leering (4)

[79] Code: 2_Difficulties with language_Option c_Loitering (4)

[80] Code: 2_Difficulties with language_Option d_Too vague (1)

[81] Code: 2_Difficulties with language_Option d_Different (1)

[82] Code: 2_Difficulties with language_Option d_Slighted (2)

[83] Code: 2_Difficulties with language_Option m_Unsure who it is talking about (3)

[84] Code: 2_Difficulties with language_Option m_Online and offline (1)

[85] Code: 2_Difficulties with language_Option n_Electronically (3)

Missing options

In the opening statement, one participant (1) thought it was important to include 'scared' in the list of emotions.[86]

For statement e, one participant (1) suggested including 'uncomfortable' alongside 'embarrassed or offended'.[87]

When asked if there were any options missing, one participant each suggested the following options be included.[88]

- **Harassing you over text message** by constantly texting with the purpose of making you feel intimidated (1).
- Encouraging you to **drink and take drugs** when you don't want to, or being spiked (1).
- **Pressurising you into doing something** when you didn't want to (1).
- **Rating sexual experiences** and exposing them to a wider group (1).
- Giving **unwanted compliments** (1).
- **Masturbating** near you (1).

At the end of the list, one participant (1) recommended including an open textbox for people to expand on any of their experiences.[89]

Suggested ordering changes

Several students (8) thought that the list was quite long, with a bit of repetition within this question, and suggested where options could be combined.[90]

- Six of these participants thought j and k could be combined, as they both focused on nude photos.
- Two felt g and h were similar in focusing on someone suggesting you have a sexual relationship with them.
- One thought l and m were similar and could be combined.
- One thought b and c covered similar unwelcome behaviour and could be combined.
- Another considered m and n to both be online and therefore could be combined.
- One thought k and l were similar and could be combined.
- However, two participants felt that if options were merged with one another, there would need to be an open textbox to give participants the option to expand on any of their experiences.

Recommendations

High priority

- Include a reference to sexual harassment in the opening statement to provide more context.
- Remove or replace the word 'leering' in statement b.
- Remove or replace the word 'loitering' in statement c.
- Combine options j and k.
- Clarify to whom the material was being displayed and who the content featured (i.e. is it referring specifically to material featuring the participant or material featuring celebrities etc.).
- Replace the word 'electronically' with the word 'online' in option n.

[86] Code: 2_Difficulties with language_Add afraid to main text (1)

[87] Code: 2_Difficulties with language_Option e_Include uncomfortable (1)

[88] Code: 2_Suggested questions (6)

[89] Code: 2_Option to expand (1)

[90] Code: 2_Repetition (8)

Mid priority

- Consider replacing 'don't know' with an 'unsure' option.
- Consider providing examples for option d to help participants understand what this might include.
- Consider removing the word 'slighted' in option d.
- Consider replacing the word 'differently' in option d.
- Consider including an option about someone encouraging you to drink and take drugs when you don't want to, or being spiked.

Low priority

- Consider replacing the words 'degraded' and 'humiliated' in the opening statement.
- Consider including 'scared' in the opening statement.
- Consider including 'uncomfortable' within statement e.
- Consider referencing both online and offline sexualised materials in option m.
- Consider combining g and h.
- Consider combining b and c.
- Consider combining k and l.
- Consider combining l and m.
- Consider combining m and n.
- Consider adding 'harassing you over text message, by constantly texting with the purpose of making you feel intimidated'.
- Consider adding 'pressurising you into doing something when you didn't want to'.
- Consider adding 'rating sexual experiences and exposing them to a wider group'.
- Consider adding 'giving unwanted compliments'.
- Consider adding 'masturbating near you'.

Question group

Suggested ordering changes

The first question in the survey

During the interviews, participants from Set A (20 students) were asked how they felt about question 1.1 being the first question in the survey. Most participants (12) felt that it was an emotionally and cognitively heavy question with which to start the survey, but that this was fine.[91] They felt that, due to the research topic, having a question like 1.1 is necessary and anyone volunteering to complete the survey would expect to see such questions. Six participants (6) agreed question 1.1 was a challenging question to start with and that it was perhaps too challenging.[92] They felt question 1.1 might be too triggering for some students and its intensity may bias people towards 'prefer not to say'.

Meanwhile, participants from Set B (19 students) were asked how they felt about question 2 being first in the survey. The majority (15) felt it would be all right for the survey to open with this question.[93] Six of these participants (6) specifically mentioned that it would be better to open the survey with question 2 than question 1.1.[94] This was mainly because they felt question 2 was less intrusive. It was also suggested that students are more likely to have experienced the situations covered in question 2 than 1.1. They felt that, by opening the survey with question 2, more students would be able to identify how the survey is relevant to them, thereby increasing their engagement.

[91] Code: 1.1_Difficult first question_Alright (12)

[92] Code: 1.1_Difficult first question_Not alright (6)

[93] Code: 2_Alright as 1st question (9) and 2_Better 1st question than 1.1 (6)

[94] Code: 2_Better 1st question than 1.1 (6)

Questions 1.5. and 1.6

A couple of participants (2) suggested that the questions on sexual violence should be reordered so that questions 1.5 and 1.6 appear earlier.[95] They felt the structure would be improved if it began by asking about attempted sexual violence and then moved on to experiences of sexual violence. One of these participants felt that this order would present a clearer escalation of intensity and thus be less triggering for participants. The other participant felt that students who had experienced attempts of sexual violence may be unsure how to respond to questions 1.1 to 1.4, and that placing questions 1.5 and 1.6 earlier would clarify that the survey provided the chance to indicate that they had experienced attempts of sexual violence separately.

Format of sexual violence questions

Participants from Set A (20 students) were also asked what they thought about the format of questions 1.1 to 1.6. They were asked how easy or difficult they found the format of answering each question using statements a-f.

- The majority of participants (14) said they had no issues responding to the question in this format.[96]
- Four participants (4) commented that the format was cognitively taxing, but they would be all right responding to the question group.[97]
- A couple of participants (2) felt that the format was too taxing and suggested the survey would benefit from changing the format.[98] However, they did not have suggestions for how the format could be changed and acknowledged the nuance the survey requires.

Recommendations

High priority

- Restructure the survey so that it opens with question 2 rather than question 1.1.

Low priority

- Consider reordering the questions on sexual violence by showing questions 1.5 and 1.6 earlier.

[95] Code: 1.5_Move to start (2) and 1.6_Move nearer to start (2)

[96] Code: 1.x_Format_Fine (14)

[97] Code: 1.x_Format_Difficult _Alright (4)

[98] Code: 1.x_Format_Difficult _Not alright (2)

Settings

Question 5

Wording tested

Did the thing(s) you mentioned happen in a university or college setting?

By this, we mean:

- *Any place on or off campus associated with your university or college.*
- *Any event or occasion that was arranged by your university or college.*
- *Any event or occasion at which students / staff from your university or college were present.*

a) Yes
b) No
c) Prefer not to say

Note: question 5 was asked to 19 out of 20 Set A participants (19)

Interpretation of university or college setting

Participants had different interpretations of what is meant by university or college setting.

- The majority of participants thought this referred to anything on the university campus, including buildings, streets and student events.
- A large number of them considered this to be anything that was attached to the university name, so either specific locations or something that was arranged by the university. For example, anything from the students' union bar to locations when you are on placement.
- Some participants thought it would include halls of residences and student accommodation.
- A few participants thought this referred to any situations involving students, including in a lecture, a café, their accommodation and at a house party.
- Some thought it referred to settings where university staff are present, so in a lecture or a university event.
- One participant specifically thought it would include the library.
- One participant thought it included events organised or promoted by the university, such as freshers' fairs or events organised by societies.

Reasons for any difficulties answering and issues with language used

A couple of participants (2) thought the word 'thing' conveyed the wrong tone and felt it was slightly confusing and too casual.[99] They were unsure what to replace the word with, but wanted to see a more respectful word used.

Many participants (5) were unsure what was meant by 'university or college setting'.[100] Three of them questioned whether this included student or private accommodation, while two mentioned whether house parties would also be included. One participant suggested providing a more detail description with examples to make it clearer.

Some participants (4) specifically had issues with the third bullet point.[101] They felt this was too broad and that the presence of a student somewhere does not make it a university setting. Two of these participants thought it was confusing and there was an exhaustive list of scenarios. One suggested including examples to make it clearer. Another suggested rewording to 'an occasion or event outside of university that included people from university'.

[99] Code: 5_Difficulties with language_Thing (2)

[100] Code: 5_Difficulties with language_Unsure what to count (5)

[101] Code: 5_Difficulties with language_3rd bullet (4)

Two participants (2) felt there should be reference to online settings, especially as their interactions are increasingly moving online.[102] One of these discussed Zoom or virtual classrooms, while the other spoke about CCTV cameras around campus.

A couple of participants (2) were unclear exactly what 'setting' referred to in this context.[103] One of them was unsure if this survey was about the experience of sexual violence amongst students, or of sexual violence at university. The same participant thought it was important to offer the chance to say it happened somewhere else. The other participant was initially unsure whether you were expected to select one or multiple options, explaining that if someone has experienced more than one incident, they could have occurred in different locations. They thought the wording could be clearer, as it was only when they saw the 'yes', 'no', 'prefer not to say' options that they realised they did not have to select one of the bullet points.

One participant (1) thought that question 5 was not reflective of what is to come in question 6a.[104] They thought that some of the options in 6a would not be considered a university setting and, as a result, question 5 should be more inclusive of those broader options.

One participant (1), as they thought this was for university settings, felt the inclusion of 'college' was confusing.[105]

Recommendations

High priority

- Replace the word 'thing(s)' to 'incident(s)' or 'experience(s)' to ensure the question reads respectfully.
- Clarify what is meant by 'university or college setting' by adding examples alongside the three bullet points.
- Make it clearer that the setting can be online as well.
- Consider rewording the third bullet point to help clarify what is meant by 'any event or occasion at which students / staff from your university or college were present'.
- Alternatively, consider removing the third bullet point.

Mid priority

- Consider rewording to clarify they are answering a yes / no / prefer not to say question, rather than having to select one of the bullet points.

Low priority

- Consider removing the reference to 'college'.

Question 6.a

Wording tested

Where in a university setting did it occur?

a) University/college library
b) Lecture theatres, computer labs

[102] Code: 5_Areas considered_Online settings (2)

[103] Code: 5_Difficulties with language_Setting (2)

[104] Code: 5_Difficulties with language_Not reflective of 6.a (1)

[105] Code: 5_Difficulties with language_College (1)

c) *University or college hospitality or retail areas (e.g. bar, shops, canteen)*
d) *University or college sports and recreational areas (e.g. gym, sports fields, galleries)*
e) *Other general university or college areas (e.g. university or college car park, walkways, gardens, bathrooms)*
f) *The Students' Union, clubs and societies, events and spaces*
g) *On work experience or professional placement*
h) *At a private home or residence*
i) *At halls of residence or other type of student accommodation*
j) *Academic or administrative staff office*
k) *Some other hospitality (e.g. bar) or retail (e.g. shopping) areas not associated with the university or college*
l) *Somewhere else (please specify)*
m) *Prefer not to say*

Note: question 6.a was asked to 19 out of 20 Set A participants (19)

Reasons for any difficulties answering and issues with language used

Participants had several comments about the relevance and clarity of these options.

- **Option e:** Some participants (2) were unsure about the word 'bathrooms'.[106] One of them associated this with just accommodation and instead thought 'public toilets' was a more inclusive term to use. The other thought it was odd to include bathrooms and walkways in the same list.
- **Option g:** Several participants (4) did not connect work experience or professional placements with university settings, and instead regarded these as work settings.[107]
- **Option h:** A couple of participants (2) felt that a private home or residence was also out of place in this list, as they did not associate these places with university.[108]
- **Option k:** Some participants (3) felt that 'hospitality' was quite a broad term and were not sure which places to associate with the university.[109] One of them thought it would be helpful to include more examples.

Many participants (4) were confused by the similarity between options c and k.[110] They weren't sure there was an obvious difference between the two, and one of them pointed out that there was a Costa coffee shop on their campus. Two of them thought that further explanation and examples were needed to make the points different from each other. One thought that these hospitality points could be combined with the recreational areas, as they considered places like the gym to be hospitality areas.

Multiple participants (4) questioned whether they would be able to select multiple options.[111] They thought it was important to be able to select all options that applied to them.

Missing options

When asked if they thought any options were missing, participants suggested the following:

- One participant (1) suggested adding **seminar rooms and study rooms** to option b.[112]
- Another participant (1) recommended including **online settings**.[113]

[106] Code: 6.a_Difficulties with language_Option e_Bathrooms (2)

[107] Code: 6.a_Difficulties with language_Option g_Out of place (4)

[108] Code: 6.a_Difficulties with language_Option h_Out of place (2)

[109] Code: 6.a_Difficulties with language_Option k_Out of place (3)

[110] Code: 6.a_Difficulties with language_Overlap between c and k (4)

[111] Code: 6.a_Difficulties with language_Multi choice (4)

[112] Code: 6.a_Missing options_Option b_Add seminar rooms (1)

[113] Code: 6.a_Missing options_Online settings (1)

- One (1) thought the list needed to include more **off-campus settings**, such as study spaces around the city.[114]
- Another participant (1) mentioned **hallways**.[115]
- One participant suggesting having a separate option for **clubs**, rather than including it within hospitality.[116]

Recommendations

High priority

- Combine options c and k, or make a clear distinction between the different hospitality options.
- Include some examples to support the hospitality options.
- Include online options.
- Allow students to select multiple options that apply to them.

Mid priority

- Consider replacing the word 'bathroom' with 'public toilet'.

Low priority

- Consider amending or removing option g – work experience or professional placement.
- Consider amending or removing option h – private home or residence.

Question 6.b

Wording tested

Where did this occur?

a) *At a private home or residence*
b) *Some other hospitality (e.g. bar) or retail (e.g. shopping) areas not associated with the university or college*
c) *The town or city where your university/college is located*
d) *Somewhere else*
e) *Prefer not to say*

Note: question 6.b was asked to 18 out of 20 Set A participants (18).

Reasons for any difficulties answering and issues with language used

Multiple participants (5) struggled with distinguishing between questions 6a and 6b, as they thought the overlap was too significant.[117] They all emphasised that if an incident had happened in a private home or residence, they wouldn't know whether to select that as a university setting or not. Three of the participants also mentioned this would be the same for the hospitality options.

One participant (1) felt that, in option a, 'private home or residence' should be separated into two options.[118] They felt that both options were very different from one another, as they interpreted 'residence' as halls of residence, and felt that the two should not be included together.

[114] Code: 6.a_Missing options_Off-campus university spaces (1)

[115] Code: 6.a_Missing options_Hallways (1)

[116] Code: 6.a_Missing options_Club (1)

[117] Code: 6.b_Difficulties answering_Overlap with 6.a (5)

[118] Code: 6.b_Difficulties answering_Separate a (1)

Some participants (2) thought that option c was too broad, especially compared to the other options, which are more specific.[119] One suggested either having more specific options, or keeping them all fairly broad – not a mixture.

Missing options

When asked if they thought any options were missing, participants suggested the following:

- Two participants (2) recommended including your **hometown** as an option.[120]
- One participant (1) suggested **public bathrooms**.[121]
- One participant (1) suggested **public transport**.[122]
- One participant (1) suggested **workplace**.[123]
- One participant (1) suggested **gym or sports facilities**.[124]

Recommendations

High priority

- Add 'your hometown' as an option.
- Break down option c into more specific options.
- Alternatively, this question could be removed from the survey. If this change was made, participants who say that the experience did not occur in a university/college setting could be routed directly to questions about perpetrators and asked if the perpetrator was someone from the university/college. If this change was made along with removing bullet 3 in question 5, this could help reduce the confusion around how broad the settings to consider currently seem in both questions.

Mid priority

- Consider including 'public transport' as an option.

Low priority

- Consider clarifying that option a is referring to private residence and not halls of residence. Alternately, 'or residence could be removed from the option to avoid confusion.
- Consider including 'public toilet' as an option.
- Consider including 'gym or sport facilities' as an option.
- Consider including 'workplace' as an option.

[119] Code: 6.b_Difficulties with language_Option c_Too broad (2)

[120] Code: 6.b_Missing options_Hometown (2)

[121] Code: 6.b_Missing options_Public bathrooms (1)

[122] Code: 6.b_Missing options_Public transport (1)

[123] Code: 6.b_Missing options_Workplace (1)

[124] Code: 6.b_Missing options_Gym (1)

Perpetrators

Question 10

Wording tested

Which best describes the person?

Was this person / were any of these people…

a) A student from your university
b) A tutor or lecturer from your university
c) A non-academic (administrative) university staff member
d) Your research or academic supervisor at the university
e) Your supervisor, employer or co-worker at your professional placement or internship
f) A supervisor, employer or co-worker in your paid employment at university
g) A supervisor, employer or co-worker in your paid employment outside of the university
h) A partner, hook-up, or date
i) A family member
j) A stranger / no one I knew
k) Someone else (please specify)
l) Prefer not to say

Note: question 10 was asked to 36 out of 39 participants (36).

Reasons for any difficulties answering and issues with language used

The purpose of this question was well understood, with students aware that this was asking them to identify what role or relationship the perpetrator had to them.

When answering this question, a few participants (3) pointed out that there may be more than one perpetrator involved in the reported case of sexual harassment or violence and that, with the current question wording, it was unclear if this question was intended to be single or multi choice.[125]

It could be more than one person they're referring to because there could be a group of people. So one could be a student, one could be, it could be their partner. So just again, maybe making it clear that they can select multiple options. It's not just literally one to select.

Set A, Undergraduate, STEM, Distance learner, Interview #14

A few participants (3) also commented on the word 'person' in this question.[126]

- One felt that the perpetrator should be depersonalised by using a more neutral term, such as 'individual'.
- The other two participants felt a more explicit term should be used, such as 'the person responsible for the sexual violence'.

Most comments and suggestions for changes to this question were focused on the response option wording. A couple of participants (2) commented on the list generally being quite long and cumbersome to read, suggesting that this should be condensed to make it easier to answer.[127]

Other specific comments on response options included:

[125] Code: 10_Difficulties answering_Multi choice (3)

[126] Code: 10_Difficulties with language_Person (3)

[127] Code: 10_Difficulties answering_Too many options (2)

Option a:

- Two participants (2) flagged that they may not know what university the student attended and whether it was their university.[128]

Option b:

- One participant (1) felt it may be better to change this to 'academic staff' to be a more all-encompassing term and avoid any difficulties that may arise in students defining different academic staff roles.[129]
- Quite a few participants (8) felt that options b and d overlapped with each other and could be merged into one option, as often these are the same person.[130]
- Conversely, one participant (1) felt that tutors and lecturers were very different roles and therefore could be split out into separate options.[131]

Option c:

- A couple of participants (2) were unclear what roles would be covered by 'a non-academic (administrative) university staff member' and felt as though this needed some examples.[132]

Options e, f and g:

- One participant (1) felt that these options were all too wordy and difficult to skim read. They suggested simplifying the wording to 'someone you work with at [your placement or internship / in your paid employment at the university / paid employment outside of the university]'.[133]
- Quite a few participants (10) felt that options f and g overlapped with each other, largely stemming from the phrase 'at university' being associated with any job a student may have while studying, as opposed to being directly employed by the university.[134]
- Another participant (1) felt that e, f and g all overlapped with each other.[135]

Option g:

- One participant (1) felt that this option should be removed completely, as the person is not linked in any way to the university and so they could not see the relevance to this in the survey.[136]

Option h:

- A few participants (5) had issues with the informality of the term 'hook-up', as they felt this was too colloquial and casual for this type of survey.[137]
- Many other participants (10) felt that this needed splitting into two distinct options, as a romantic partner and a hook-up describe two very different relationships.[138]

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[128] Code: 10_Difficulties answering_Option a (2)

[129] Code: 10_Difficulties with language_Option b_Academic staff (1)

[130] Code: 10_Difficulties with language_Overlap between b and d (8)

[131] Code: 10_Difficulties with language_Option b_Split in 2 (1)

[132] Code: 10_Difficulties with language_Option c_Unclear (1)

[133] Code: 10_Difficulties with language_Option e, f and g_Simplify language (1)

[134] Code: 10_Difficulties with language_Overlap between f and g (10)

[135] Code: 10_Difficulties with language_Overlap between e, f and g (1)

[136] Code: 10_Difficulties with language_Remove option g (1)

[137] Code: 10_Difficulties with language_Option h_hook-up (5)

[138] Code: 10_Difficulties with language_Option h_Split in 2 (10)

I think the word that stuck out most is 'hook-up'. It's quite a colloquial term… I don't know about the use of 'hook-up'. It describes what the relationship is with that person, but I think it might [be] just a little bit… trivial, I think, for the situation. I don't know what you could replace it with… sort of a partner or a sexual partner.

Set B, Undergraduate, HSS, Blended learner, Interview #30

Option j

- One participant (1) suggested removing 'no one I knew' from this option, as the term 'stranger' did not need any further clarification.[139]
- One participant (1) commented on how options h and j may overlap depending on the definition of 'a stranger' – for example, a person someone had hooked up with could also be defined as a stranger.[140]

Missing options

There were several roles and categories of people that participants felt were missing from this list, including:

- **A friend** (8).[141] These participants felt that other close relationships, such as partners and family were listed, but close friends were not accounted for in the current list.
- **Sports staff** (2).[142]
- **Flatmates** (2)[143] or people from their accommodation (2)[144] – whether university-controlled or private.
- **Any other university staff** or those contracted by the university, including administrative staff, caretakers, builders, etc. (2)[145]
- **Friends of friends,** or those that might be visiting their university (1).[146]
- **People on their course** (1) to be more specific than simply a student at their university.[147]
- **Hospitality staff**, such as bar or restaurant staff (1).[148]
- **People in authority positions**, such as police or government officials (1).[149]
- **Religious leaders**, such as pastors (1).[150]
- **Doctors or healthcare professionals** (1).[151]
- **Students at different levels** to them, such as PhD (1).[152]
- **Those at their place of volunteering** (1).[153]

[139] Code: 10_Difficulties with language_Option j_A stranger (1)

[140] Code: 10_difficulties with language_Overlap between h and j (1)

[141] Code: 10_Missing options_Friend (8)

[142] Code: 10_Missing options_Sports staff (2)

[143] Code: 10_Missing options_Flatmate (2)

[144] Code: 10_Missing options_Person from accommodation (2)

[145] Code: 10_Missing options_Other university worker (2)

[146] Code: 10_Missing options_Friend of a friend (1)

[147] Code: 10_Missing options_Coursemate (1)

[148] Code: 10_Missing options_Bar staff (1)

[149] Code: 10_Missing options_Police / Government officials (1)

[150] Code: 10_Missing options_Religious leader (1)

[151] Code 10_Missing options_Doctor / Medical worker (1)

[152] Code: 10_Missing options_PhD student (1)

[153] Code: 10_Missing options_Volunteer (1)

Suggested ordering changes

One participant (1) suggested moving the 'prefer not to say' option to the beginning of the list to make it easier for a participant to opt out of the question.[154]

Recommendations

High priority

- Change question wording to allow students to answer when more than one perpetrator is involved, this could be achieved through only using the second statement 'Was this person / were any of these people'.
- Add option for 'friend or close friend'.
- Change the option f wording to clarify that this is paid employment through the university, as opposed to simply any job held while at university, e.g. 'through the university'.

Mid priority

- Consider merging options b and d into one option titled 'academic staff, e.g. tutor, lecturer or research supervisor' to be a more all-encompassing term.
- For option c, consider giving some examples in brackets of roles that could be included.

Low priority

- Option j – remove 'no one I knew' from this option. Alternately, this could be change to 'someone I barely know'. This change could help account for acquaintances or friend of friends.

[154] Code: 10_Order_Prefer not to say (1)

Support

Question 11.a

Wording tested

Who did you tell about your experience(s)?

Please select all that apply.

a) *Close friend*
b) *Partner*
c) *Friends*
d) *Family*
e) *Health or social care professional*
f) *Charity representative*
g) *Police*
h) *A university lecturer or other teaching staff*
i) *University administrative (non-academic) staff*
j) *Someone else associated with the university*
k) *Student representative*
l) *Student leader (e.g. Women's Officer or President of a Students' Union, Association or Guild)*
m) *Someone else (other)*
n) *Prefer not to say*

Note: question 11.a was asked to 36 out of 39 participants (36).

Reasons for any difficulties answering and issues with language used

Two participants (2) felt that the term 'experience' was quite broad and could be made even more explicit by saying 'sexual experience' to avoid any confusion.[155]

A few participants (3) stated that if they had multiple experiences, they may have told different people about each, which the question currently does not account for.[156]

One participant (1) commented on the response list being too long and that they would skim over the options. They assumed that the question intended to understand whether individuals told anyone at all, and broadly what category of person this might be. As such, they felt that many of the options could be combined, e.g. having grouped options for a friend, family member or partner, university staff, police.[157]

Other participants raised issues around individual response options, including specific wording difficulties, as well as suggestions for merging options together:

Option b:

- Some participants (2) felt the term 'partner' was very broad and could be clarified as 'romantic partner'.[158]

Option c:

- Two participants (2) suggested a subtle wording change of 'friends' to 'friend(s)', in case they had only told one friend and felt unable to answer with the current wording.[159]

[155] Code: 11.a_Difficulties with language_Experience (2)

[156] Code: 11.a_Difficulties answering _Multi choice (3)

[157] Code: 11.a_Difficulties answering _Too many options (1)

[158] Code: 11.a_Difficulties with language_Option b_Unclear (2)

[159] Code: 11.a_Difficulties with language_Option c (2)

- A few participants (4) suggested merging options a and c into one called 'friend or close friend', with this level of detail not seen as necessary.[160]
- One participant (1) also felt that options c and d could be combined into 'friend or family member'.[161]

Option e:

- One participant (1) thought this option should be split to separate social from healthcare professionals.[162]

Option f:

- Some participants (5) felt that this option needed clarifying with some examples of charities or specifying 'a charity that supports survivors of sexual violence'.[163]

Options h, i and j:

- A couple of participants (2) felt that there was overlap between options h, i and j, and were not completely clear which roles would fall into each category.[164] Another (1) suggested removing option j completely, as they felt these individuals would already be captured within option i.[165]
- Two participants (2) were unclear what would fall into option j and wanted to see some examples listed.[166]
- One participant (1) felt that option j referred to other organisations or groups associated with the university and thought this could be clarified in the wording.[167]

Options k and l:

- Many participants (7) were unclear on the definitions of 'student representative' and 'student leader' and considered these to be similar, if not the same, people.[168]

Missing options

While many were keen to keep response option lists short, various additional options were suggested, including:

- **University wellbeing, welfare services or pastoral support** from the university (5).[169]
- **Helplines** (4) such as the Samaritans, whether via phone, email or social media.[170]
- **Therapist or counsellor** (3).[171]
- **Social media** (3), including posting on blogs and online forums.[172]
- **Housemates** (2), whom they might not otherwise categorise as a friend.[173]

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[160] Code: 11.a_Difficulties with language_Overlap between a and c (4)

[161] Code: 11.a_Difficulties with language_Combine c and d (1)

[162] Code: 11.a_Difficulties with language_Option e_Split in 2 (1)

[163] Code: 11.a_Difficulties with language_Option f_Add examples (5)

[164] Code: 11.a_Difficulties with language_Overlap between h, i and j (2)

[165] Code: 11.a_Difficulties with language_Remove option j (1)

[166] Code: 11.a_Difficulties with language_Option j_Add examples (2)

[167] Code: 11.a_Difficulties with language_Change option j (1)

[168] Code: 11.a_Difficulties with language_Overlap between k and l (7)

[169] Code: 11.a_Missing options_University wellbeing services (5)

[170] Code: 11.a_Missing options_Helplines (4)

[171] Code: 11.a_Missing options_Therapist / Counsellor (3)

[172] Code: 11.a_Missing options_Social media / online (3)

[173] Code: 11.a_Missing options_Housemate (2)

- **Religious leader** (2).[174]
- **University society members or leaders** (2).[175]
- **A stranger** (2).[176]
- **Sexual health clinic or hospital** (1).[177]
- **Colleagues** or co-workers (1).[178]
- **Another student** who isn't necessarily their friend (1).[179]

Suggested ordering changes

Only two suggestions were made to the ordering of this response list:

- Swapping options a and b (1) so the list goes in order of strength of relationships – from partner, to close friend and then friend.[180]
- Moving 'police' to the top or bottom of the list (1) as this was felt to be more official and should therefore be at one end of the scale when reading through the list.[181]

Recommendations

High priority

- Make it clear that the question is focusing on only one experience, to avoid confusion in reporting across multiple experiences.
- Give some examples of other roles associated with a university in option j, or merge this with option i.
- Clearly define 'student representative' to differentiate from 'student leader' or consider merging them.

Mid priority

- Add options for:
  - University welfare or wellbeing services.
  - A therapist or counsellor.
  - A religious leader.
  - A helpline (e.g. phone, email or online).
- Merge options a and c into one named 'friend or close friend'.
- Change 'partner' to 'romantic partner'.
- Option f – add examples of what charities this could include, or specify 'sexual violence charities'.

Question 12.a

Wording tested

Who did you seek support or assistance from?

Please select all that apply.

[174] Code: 11.a_Missing options_Religious leader (2)

[175] Code: 11.a_Missing options_Society member (2)

[176] Code: 11.a_Missing options_Stranger (2)

[177] Code: 11.a_Missing options_Sexual health clinic (1)

[178] Code: 11.a_Missing options_Co-worker (1)

[179] Code: 11.a_Missing options_Student (1)

[180] Code: 11.a_Order_Move b to top (1)

[181] Code: 11.a_Order_Move g to bottom of the list (1)

a) *Counselling services*
b) *Specialist trauma-informed support services*
c) *Campus security*
d) *Someone in my faculty or school (lecturer or tutor)*
e) *Someone from my residential college/dorm/house*
f) *Student leader (e.g. Women's Officer or President of a Students' Union, Association or Guild)*
g) *Someone else associated with the university*
h) *Prefer not to say*

Note: question 12.a was asked to 36 out of 39 participants (36).

Reasons for any difficulties answering and issues with language used

Most issues with this question arose from what support should be considered in scope. Some participants (4) were unclear whether this only referred to professional support channels, or if informal support should be included.[182] Similarly, one participant (1) felt the term 'support' was too broad and was unsure if this included informally talking with someone, or only referred to support that resulted in reporting or helping them take action.[183]

One participant (1) also felt that the question wording needed to more explicitly address that this was focusing on support sought from the university.[184]

It's not including friends and family and things like that. The question may be looking at more professional support or assistance, but it maybe would be good to make that clear in the actual question.

Set A, Undergraduate, STEM, Distance learner, Interview #14

Two participants (2) felt that this support should be linked to their experience of sexual violence by directly refencing this in the question wording.[185]

Beyond this, some students raised issues with specific response options, including:

Option a

- Some participants (3) wanted clarity around whether these 'counselling services' are offered through their university or externally, and that the term 'welfare services' could also be added to reflect how universities often refer to these services.[186]

Option b

- A few participants (4) felt the term 'trauma informed services' was unclear and not a well-known phrase.[187]
- One participant (1) also stated that the term 'trauma' was quite a strong word that some participants may not associate with or could feel uncomfortable selecting.[188]
- A few participants (3) also felt that this option overlapped with option a and they could be combined.[189]

[182] Code: 12.a_Difficulties with language_Support vs professional support (4)

[183] Code: 12.a_Difficulties with language_Support and assistance_Too broad (1)

[184] Code: 12.a_Difficulties with language_University support_Unclear (1)

[185] Code: 12.a_Difficulties with language_Connection to experiences (2)

[186] Code: 12.a_Difficulties with language_Option a_More clear (3)

[187] Code: 12.a_Difficulties with language_Option b_Unclear (4)

[188] Code 12.a_Difficulties with language_Option b_Trauma (1)

[189] Code: 12.a_Difficulties with language_Overlap between a and b (3)

Option d

- One participant (1) found the term 'school' confusing.[190]

Option e

- One participant (1) found this wording confusing and suggested 'university accommodation' instead. Or to use the term 'student accommodation support' if this was not intended to include housemates.[191]
- Similarly, another participant (1) thought that this could be split out into housemates and university accommodation support staff.[192]

Option g

- A couple of participants (2) were unsure what other roles would fall into this definition.[193]

Missing options

A number of additional response options were suggested by participants, including some who felt there was a need to give participants the option to give their own answer if not included in the existing list.

- **Other, specify** (3).[194]
- **Student reps or advisers** (2).[195]
- **Therapist** (1).[196]
- **Classmates/peers** (1).[197]
- **Pastoral staff or personal tutors** who offer non-academic support (1)[198].
- **Academic advisers** (1).[199]
- **University clubs or societies** (1).[200]
- **Religious leader** (1) or a place of worship of faith.[201]
- **University social media or online channels** (1).[202]
- **Nightclub managers/security** (1) to whom they may report the incident, such as at a students' union bar.[203]
- **Healthcare or social services** (1).[204]
- **Sports coaches or staff** (1).[205]

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[190] Code: 12.a_Difficulties with language_Option d_Schools (1)

[191] Code: 12.a_Difficulties with language_Option e_University accommodation (1)

[192] Code: 12.a_Difficulties with language_Option e_Split in 2 (1)

[193] Code: 12.a_Difficulties with language_Option g_Unclear (2)

[194] Code: 12.a_Missing options_Other please specify (3)

[195] Code: 12.a_Missing options_Student reps/advisers (2)

[196] Code: 12.a_Missing options_Therapist (1)

[197] Code: 12.a_Missing options_Classmates/peers (1)

[198] Code: 12.a_Missing options_Pastoral staff (1)

[199] Code: 12.a_Missing options_Academic adviser (1)

[200] Code: 12.a_Missing options_Clubs/societies (1)

[201] Code: 12.a_Missing options_Religious leader (1)

[202] Code: 12.a_Missing options_Social media / online (1)

[203] Code: 12.a_Missing options_Nightclub managers/security (1)

[204] Code: 12.a_Missing options_Healthcare or social care services (1)

[205] Code: 12.a_Missing options_Sports staff (1)

- **Friends** (1).[206] This is not a support service offered by a university, which is likely stemming from issues with defining the scope of the question, outlined above.

One participant (1) felt it would also be useful to ask why individuals chose to use the support channels they did, exploring how this was advertised to them and how they became aware of the support.[207]

Recommendations

High priority

- Reiterate in the question wording that this is focused on university-provided support to contextualise the responses and avoid confusion about why other support sources are not shown (such as friends and family).

Mid priority

- Consider changing 'counselling services' to 'counselling or welfare services'.
- Consider replacing the term 'trauma-informed services' with a better-known term, such as 'specialist sexual violence support services' – or combine this with option a.

Question 12.b

Wording tested

Overall, how would you describe the support provided from within the university or college?

a) Very good
b) Good
c) Neither good nor poor
d) Poor
e) Very poor
f) I sought support but did not receive any
g) *Prefer not to say*

Note: question 12.b was asked to 35 out of 39 participants (35).

Reasons for any difficulties answering and issues with language used

This question wording was largely well understood, with only a few comments made.

Two participants (2) suggested changing the word 'describe', as they felt it implied that they could give a fuller description through an open response, as opposed to rating on a scale.[208]

Two participants (2) felt the question should reiterate that this is focusing on support they sought in relation to their experience of sexual violence.[209]

[206] Code: 12.a_Missing options_Friends (1)

[207] Code: 12.a_Missing options_Follow-up 'why' (1)

[208] Code: 12.b_Difficulties with language_Describe (2)

[209] Code: 12.b_Difficulties with language_Connection to experiences (2)

One participant (1) struggled to answer this question, as they felt that someone's interpretation of the quality of the support would conflate with their personal interactions with people. Additionally, they felt that someone may have received some quality support, but it may not have been sufficient.[210]

Appropriateness of response scale

Participants were asked to comment on the appropriateness of the response scale in this question.

Scale wording:

- Several participants (6) felt that the scale wording was too vague and subjective – what one person deemed as 'very good' may only be 'good' to another.[211]
- A few participants (3) suggested changing option c to 'neutral' or 'satisfactory', as these were simpler terms to understand as the midpoint.[212]
- One participant (1) did not like the use of 'poor' and would instead use the term 'bad'.[213]

Overlapping responses and missing points:

- One participant (1) felt that there could be overlap between responses e and f, as if someone has not received the support they sought, this could also be classified as 'very poor'.[214]
- One participant (1) wanted an option added for 'I did not seek any support'.[215]
- One participant (1) wanted to see an option added for 'unsure' to cover those who have not yet been able to evaluate whether the support has been useful.[216]

I would say maybe another option for 'unsure'. Because I feel like... 'neither good nor poor' is more of like it was all right... Whereas… people just don't really know at this point whether it's had an impact, etc.

Set B, Undergraduate, HSS, On-campus learner, Interview #37

Question type:

- A few participants (3) suggested using a numeric scale instead of a Likert, to allow for more nuance and the ability to quantify responses.[217]
- Two participants (2) suggested having an open question instead of the scale, to allow students to give more detail on the quality of support received.[218]

Differences by participant groups:

One participant (1) felt that the term 'sought' may not be as well understood by students for whom English is not their first language, and suggested changing option f to 'I was seeking support but didn't receive any'.[219]

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[210] Code: 12.b_Scale_Add option_Insufficient (1)

[211] Code 12.b_Scale_Good_Too subjective (6)

[212] Code: 12.b_Scale_Option c_Neutral (3)

[213] Code: 12.b_Scale_Poor (1)

[214] Code: 12.b_Scale_Overlap between e and f (1)

[215] Code: 12.b_Scale_Add option_I did not seek support or assistance (1)

[216] Code: 12.b_Scale_Add option_Unsure (1)

[217] Code: 12.b_Scale_Numeric scale (3)

[218] Code: 12.b_Scale_Prefer an open question (2)

[219] Code: 12.b_Difficulties with language_Sought (1)

Recommendations

High priority

- Change the wording from 'how would you describe' to 'how would you rate' to reflect the scale being used.
- Add an 'unsure' option.

Mid priority

- Consider changing 'poor' to 'bad'.

Low priority

- Consider changing option f to 'I was seeking support but didn't receive any'.

Question 12.c

Wording tested

Many people do not seek support or assistance for unwelcome sexual behaviour for a variety of entirely understandable reasons.

Which of the following, if any, were reasons you did not seek support or assistance from within the university?

a) I was worried I might not be believed
b) I did not know who could provide me with support or assistance
c) I did not know where to go to get support or assistance
d) I felt embarrassed or ashamed
e) I did not think the incident would be kept confidential
f) I did not think I needed help
g) I did not think others would think it was serious enough
h) *I did not want to get anyone into trouble*
i) I thought it would be too hard to prove
j) I was too scared or frightened
k) I did not want anyone to know
l) I did not want to involve the police
m) I was worried it would affect my studies or career opportunities
n) Other reasons (please specify)
o) Prefer not to say

Note: question 12.c was asked to 34 out of 39 participants (34).

Interpretation of support and assistance

Students largely understood the phrase 'support and assistance' to be a broad term encompassing any and all support they may seek – including formal channels, as well as general support and comfort that their university may offer, including but not limited to:

- Counselling.
- Deadline extensions.
- Signposting to charities and other support resources.
- Emotional support.
- Reporting and complaints procedures.
- Support and guidance in reporting to the police.

They were less likely to include friends, family and those not directly associated with the university when answering this question.

Reasons for any difficulties answering and issues with language used

Some participants (5) commented on the phrase 'for entirely understandable reasons' being unnecessary.[220] While some assumed this was included to help make people feel more at ease in answering, they felt this was too casual and appearing to try and comfort survey participants, which they did not think fit with the overall survey tone. For others, it also made the sentence too wordy, with this phrase felt to be superfluous.

Is that kind of just a bit too casual again, like 'entirely understandable reasons' it's like maybe trying to… suddenly trying to do something else, like it's trying to maybe comfort you or like, assure you that, it's like 'we get it'.

Set A, Undergraduate, Arts, Blended learner, Interview #1

Some participants (4) did not like the term 'unwelcome sexual behaviour', with one stating that this phrase had not been used in previous questions and suggesting that terminology should be kept consistent throughout.[221]

Some participants flagged overlaps between different response options:

- **Options b and c**: Some participants (4) felt that these two options ('I did not know who could provide me with support or assistance' and 'I did not know where to go to get support or assistance') were very similar and should be merged.[222]
- **Options d and j**: A few participants (3) felt that 'I felt embarrassed or ashamed' and 'I was too scared or frightened' could be merged into something like 'I felt embarrassed, ashamed, scared or frightened'.[223]
- **Options a and g:** One participant (1) felt there was overlap between 'I was worried I might not be believed' and 'I did not think others would think it was serious enough', which could be merged into 'I was worried that I would not be taken seriously or may not be believed'.[224]

Some participants (3) also made general comments about the list being too long to read through and would like to see this condensed down to avoid survey fatigue.[225]

Maybe get rid of a few just to shorten the list. All of them, I believe, are really good, but I think people won't read them all. So it might not bring back the best answers or the correct answers… they might get halfway through and stop reading, so just pick the first one or something.

Set B, Undergraduate, HSS, On-campus learner, Interview #23

A couple of participants (2) did not find it immediately clear that this was a multiple-choice question and felt this could be clarified.[226]

Missing options

While some wanted the list to be condensed, others suggested options that could be added:

[220] Code: 12.c_Difficulties with language_Entirely understandable reasons (5)

[221] Code: 12.c_Difficulties with language_Unwelcome sexual behaviour (4)

[222] Code: 12.c_Difficulties with language_Overlap between b and c (4)

[223] Code: 12.c_Difficulties with language_Overlap between d and j (3)

[224] Code: 12.c_Difficulties with language_Overlap between a and g (1)

[225] Code: 12.c_Difficulties with language_Option list too long (3)

[226] Code: 12.c_Difficulties answering_Multi choice (2)

- Being **afraid for their own safety** (3) if they were to seek support.[227]
- **Not personally thinking it was serious enough** (2), as opposed to just whether they felt others would take it seriously in the existing option g.[228]
- The **time and emotional burden** preventing them from seeking support (1).[229]

Suggested ordering changes

Options d and j were felt to be similar by some participants, with one (1) suggesting that they could be placed next to each other to help participants scan through the list.[230]

Recommendations

High priority

- Clarify that this is a multi-choice question by adding the instruction 'Please select all that apply'.
- Add options for:
    - I was afraid for my own safety.
    - I did not personally think it was serious enough.
    - I did not feel prepared to deal with it at the time.

Mid priority

- Consider removing the phrase 'for entirely understandable reasons'.
- Consider merging options a and b into one about not knowing where to find support or who could offer this.

Question 12.e

Wording tested

Did you seek support or assistance from any of the following sources outside the university?

a) Friend
b) Partner
c) Family
d) Support provided in the workplace
e) Local sexual assault service / rape crisis centre
f) Telephone or online counselling service
g) Police
h) Mental health professional
i) Doctor
j) Religious or spiritual leader
k) Someone else
l) Prefer not to say

Note: question 12.e was asked to 30 out of 39 participants (30).

[227] Code: 12.c_Missing options_Afraid for my own safety (3)

[228] Code: 12.c_Missing options_I did not think it was serious enough (2)

[229] Code: 12.c_Missing options_Timing and emotional burden (1)

[230] Code: 12.c_Order_D and j placed together (1)

Interpretation of support and assistance

As with question 12.c, participants were considering the term 'support and assistance' in a broad sense to encompass any formal or informal support they had sought, whether this was direct help or simply someone to listen and give comfort. They were aware of the difference in that this question referred to support offered from somewhere other than their university.

Reasons for any difficulties answering and issues with language used

Some participants (2) did not like the term 'sources' in the question, as they felt it was too clinical to describe people such as their friends and family.[231] One suggested changing this to say 'people/organisations'.

"I think 'sources' is an interesting word because in some contexts… the support provided in the workplace, the sexual assault service, counselling services, police… these are all resources you can draw from. And it feels a little bit strange to refer to a friend, a partner or a family as a source of support."

Set B, Undergraduate, Arts, On-campus learner, Interview #26

One participant (1) felt it would be helpful to more clearly show this was a multiple-choice question by adding the instruction 'select all that apply.[232]

When looking at the specific response option wording, the following comments were shared:

- Some participants (6) felt option i should be expanded to include nurses or other medical professionals.[233]
- Some (5) felt options f and h overlapped with each other and could be merged.[234]
- A few (4) were not clear on what a 'local sexual assault service / rape crisis centre' was in option e.[235]

One student (1) commented on how there was a **lack of consistency in this list** compared with other questions, for example Question 11a where close friend is also included.[236]

Missing options

A few additional options were suggested by participants:

- **Club or society members** (3).[237]
- **Charities** (2).[238]
- **Religious leaders** (2).[239]

Recommendations

High priority

- Clarify that this is multi-choice by adding 'Please select all that apply'.

[231] Code: 12.e_Difficulties with language_Sources (2)

[232] Code: 12.e_Difficulties answering_Multi choice (1)

[233] Code: 12.e_Difficulties with language_Option i_Add nurse or other healthcare professional (6)

[234] Code: 12.e_Difficulties with language_Overlap between f and h (5)

[235] Code: 12.e_Difficulties with language_Option e_Unclear (4)

[236] Code: 12.e_Difficulties with language_Mirror previous lists (1)

[237] Code: 12.e_Missing options_Clubs/societies members (3)

[238] Code: 12.e_Missing options_Charities (2)

[239] Code: 12.e_Missing options_Religious leader (2)

- Reflect the list of roles given in question 11a and make them consistent in terms of wording/examples given.
- Change the wording of option i to be ‘doctor, nurse or other healthcare professional’.

Low priority

- Consider merging options f and h.

Reporting

Question 13

Wording tested

Did you formally report or make a formal complaint about the incident to anyone within the university?

a) Yes
b) No
c) Don't know
d) Prefer not to say

Note: question 13 was asked to 33 out of 39 participants (33).

Interpretation of formally reporting

When answering this question, participants assumed this referred to any cases in which they told someone directly employed by the university (such as a course leader or academic tutor) about an incident.

The majority interpreted the phrase 'formally report' as meaning any form of reporting that would be:

- Recorded, written down or able to be referred back to.
- Conducted through an official channel or process.
- Escalated through a reporting process, e.g. being documented or passed onto the police.

Reasons for any difficulties answering and issues with language used

However, several participants (9) found the phrase 'formally report' unclear.[240] Issues here were caused by:

- Participants not knowing what their university's formal reporting procedures were, in order to know what constituted a 'formal' complaint.
- Not being clear on who the word 'formal' would refer to – whether this would be anyone in a position of authority, or specifically having the police involved.

Similarly a couple of participants (2) found the phrase 'anyone within the university' to be unclear, not knowing if this meant anyone affiliated with the university or specific roles.[241]

One participant (1) stated that this question would be difficult to answer if they had experienced multiple incidents and not reported all of them.[242]

Appropriateness of response scale

Some participants (4) described instances in which they may have raised a complaint but not heard anything from the university on the processing of this.[243] In such cases they would not be able to respond 'yes' to this question, as the report was not complete and they could not respond 'no', as they had tried to report it. They therefore felt an option needed to be added to capture when a student has made a complaint but is not sure what the university has done with this information, or to add this to the 'don't know' option.

[240] Code: 13_Difficulty with language_Formal report_Unclear (9)

[241] Code: 13_Difficulties with language_Anyone within the university_Unclear (2)

[242] Code: 13_Difficulties answering_Multiple experience (1)

[243] Code: 13_Difficulties with language_Add option for unsure if it has been processed (4)

Maybe 'don't know' could be extended to 'don't know or unsure if processed'. I think the main problem that would come in with 'don't know' is perhaps you went through the motions of potentially making a complaint, but you haven't heard anything about it potentially. Or maybe you sent off one email, which is in writing and could be a formal complaint, but potentially nothing has been done about it.

Set B, Undergraduate, STEM, Blended learner, (27)

All other students felt the options worked well for this question.

Recommendations

Low priority

- Consider changing 'Don't know' to 'Don't know, or unsure if this has been processed'.

Question 14

Wording tested

Did the university explain its formal reporting or complaint processes to you, including any involvement with or processes for reporting to the police?

a) Yes
b) No
c) Don't know
d) Prefer not to say

Note: question 14 was asked to 32 out of 39 participants (32).

Interpretation of formal reporting

As with question 13, participants were considering the formal reporting or complaint process as encompassing anything that is:

- Recorded.
- Through official university channels.
- Escalated, where appropriate, to police.

Reasons for any difficulties answering and issues with language used

Again, some participants (5) found the term 'formal reporting' too vague,[244] being unsure if simply telling a member of staff would constitute formal reporting or if police involvement was required.

Some participants (4) were unsure how to answer, as they were unclear on the timeframe,[245] whether it meant the process being explained at the point of making a report/complaint, or prior to any incident taking place (e.g. being informed as part of wider university induction).

[244] Code: 14_Difficulties with language_Formal report_Too vague (5)

[245] Code: 14_Difficulties with language_Timing of explanation is unclear (4)

A few participants (4) felt this question was too long and wordy, which slowed down their reading and understanding of the question.[246] However, they were unsure how to shorten it.

Appropriateness of response scale

No issues were raised with the options used in this question.

Recommendations

High priority

- Clarify the timeframe that this question applies to, i.e. prior to making a complaint, or at the point of making a complaint.

Question 14.a

Wording tested

Overall, how would you describe your university or college's formal reporting or complaint process?

- ***a)*** *Very good*
- ***b)*** *Good*
- ***c)*** *Neither good nor poor*
- ***d)*** *Poor*
- ***e)*** *Very poor*

Note: question 14.a was asked to 33 out of 39 participants (33).

Reasons for any difficulties answering and issues with language used

A few participants (3) felt this question needed splitting out to address two different factors:[247]

- Whether they were happy with their experience of the reporting process.
- Whether they were happy with the outcome of the reporting process.

I feel like that question is almost two parts to it, because is it like my experience with it was good or like actually the outcome of it… because I think those are two different things… I think it would make sense to split them up.

Set A, Undergraduate, STEM, On-campus learner, Interview #9

As with question 12.b, a few participants (2) felt the word 'describe' should be changed to 'rate' to better reflect the scale being used.[248]

One participant (1) did not like the use of the word 'complaint', as they associated this more with customer service and suggested removing this to simply use the word 'reporting'.[249]

[246] Code: 14_Difficulties with language_Too long (4)

[247] Code: 14.a_Difficulties with language_Split question (3)

[248] Code: 14.a_Difficulties with language_Describe (2)

[249] Code: 14.a_Difficulties with language_Complaint (1)

One participant (1) said that this was the first point in the survey in which the term 'college' had been used.[250] While this didn't impact their ability to answer, it was raised as a point of inconsistency in the survey wording.

Appropriateness of response scale

Some participants suggested additional scale points of:

- Unsure (4): for those who are not aware.[251]
- Prefer not to say (4): to allow students to opt out of responding if they don't feel comfortable rating this.[252]

Other participants suggested rewording some of the scale points in similar ways to question 12.b:

- Some (4) suggested changing 'neither good nor poor' to 'neutral' as a clearer term.[253]
- Some (4) suggested changing the word 'poor' to 'bad'.[254]

Some participants felt this scale lacked nuance and could be quite subjective in terms of how individuals defined 'good'.[255] As with question 12.b, some (6) suggested having an open textbox instead, to allow students to give more detail on their experiences.[256] One (1) suggested changing to a numeric scale to be able to capture more nuance.[257]

Some (3) students felt that the scale could be better worded to ask about the adequacy or sufficiency of the reporting and complaints procedures.[258]

Recommendations

High priority

- Add an unsure and prefer not to say option.

[250] Code: 14.a_Difficulties with language_College (1)

[251] Code: 14.a_Scale_Add unsure option (4)

[252] Code: 14.a_Scale_Add prefer not to say (4)

[253] Code: 14.a_Scale_Option c_Neutral (4)

[254] Code: 14.a_Scale_Poor (4)

[255] Code: 14.a_Scale_Lack nuance (2)

[256] Code: 14.a_Scale_Add open textbox (6)

[257] Code: 14.a_Scale_Numeric scale (1)

[258] Code: 14.a_Scale_sufficient/adequate (3)

Impact

Question 16

Wording tested

Thinking about the experience(s) you mentioned, were you impacted in any of the following ways?

For each of these, please answer: Yes, No, Don't know or Prefer not to say

a) *Mental health or emotional problems*
b) *Stopped trusting people or experienced difficulty in other relationships*
c) *Stopped going out so much*
d) *Considered or attempted suicide*
e) *Not doing as well on your course as you would have done otherwise*
f) *Turned down work roles at the university or college*
g) *Turned down professional development opportunities*
h) *Skipped lecture, seminars, supervision meetings*
i) *Chose not to take a particular module*
j) *Changed supervisors*
k) *Changed career*
l) *Changed university or college*
m) *Suspended your studies*
n) *Other (e.g. moving house / loss of friends / dropped clubs or societies)*

Note: question 16 was asked to 16 out of 20 Set A participants (16).

Reasons for any difficulties answering and issues with language used

One participant (1) felt that the word 'impacted' implied someone's life had changed as a result and could perhaps be changed to 'affected'.[259]

Many felt that the list of responses was comprehensive, but a few suggested changes to specific response options:

Option e:

- One participant (1) felt it was unclear whether this referred specifically to grades or whether this would also include the time put into your studies or any other personal indicators of how well they were performing.[260]

Option f:

- One participant (1) suggested removing 'university or college' from this to account for any job roles an individual may have turned down as a result.[261]
- Another (1) was unclear on what it meant to 'turn down' work – whether this referred to reducing hours, not taking a job to begin with, or quitting an existing role.[262]

Option m:

- One participant (1) suggested changing 'suspended your studies' to 'dropped out', as they felt this was a more commonly used phrase amongst students.[263]

[259] Code: 16_Difficulties with language_Impacted (1)

[260] Code 16_Difficulties with language_e unclear (1)

[261] Code: 16_Difficulties with language_Option f_Remove university / college (1)

[262] Code: 16_Difficulties with language_Option f turn down (1)

[263] Code: 16_Difficulties with language_Option m Suspended studies (1)

Missing options

While many commented on the list being comprehensive, various additional options were suggested by participants as ways in which people could have been impacted, including:

- **Physical impacts (2):** whether becoming ill, pregnant, contracting a sexually transmitted disease or physical self-neglect.[264]
- **Developed an eating disorder** or stopped eating (1).[265]
- **Self-harm** (1).[266]
- **Difficulty in other sexual relationships** (1), as a separate kind of relationship to those listed in option B.[267]
- International students **returning to their home country** (1).[268]
- **Avoiding the location** in which it occurred (1).[269]
- **Anxiety** (1): either as its own option or directly referenced in option a.[270]

One participant (1) suggested having an open text box alongside option n (Other) to allow participants to specify, as long as this also had a 'prefer not to say' option.[271]

Suggested ordering changes

Some participants suggested changing the order of options to aid readability:

- Grouping options related to mental health (4).[272]
- Grouping options related to university life (3).[273]

Comparison to alternative question

Alternative question wording

Overall, how much has your quality of life been affected by each of these experiences?

a) Very affected
b) Fairly affected
c) Not very affected
d) Not at all affected
e) Prefer not to say.

The above alternative wording was tested for question 16. Both question versions were well received, with no clear preference among students for one or the other.

[264] Code: 16_Missing options_Physical impact (2)

[265] Code: 16_Missing options_Eating disorders (1)

[266] Code 16_Missing options_Self-harm (1)

[267] Code: 16_Missing options_Difficulty in other sexual relationships (1)

[268] Code: 16_Missing options_Returning to home country (1)

[269] Code: 16_Missing options_Avoid location experience occurred in (1)

[270] Code: 16_Missing options_Anxiety (1)

[271] Code: 16_Scale_Add open text box (1)

[272] Code: 16_Order_Group options related to mental health together (4)

[273] Code: 16_Order_Group option related to university impact together (3)

Some participants (3) gave specific reasons for preferring this alternative wording, as it allowed the scale of impact to be established.[274]

Others (4) preferred the original wording, as it revealed the exact ways in which people were impacted, with the alternative wording considered too vague.[275]

Recommendations

Mid priority

- Consider grouping university life impacts (e, f, h, i, j, l, m).
- Consider grouping mental health impacts (a, d).
- Consider grouping other life impacts (b, c, g, k).
- Consider adding an option for physical impacts, such as illness, pregnancy, STDs.
- Both question wordings were well received and understood so, depending on the level of detail needed in the survey data, either question on impact could be used.

[274] Code: 16_Prefer alternative scale (3)

[275] Code: 16_Prefer current scale (4)

Knowledge of university or college's reporting process

Question 17

Wording tested

How sure are you about where to seek support or assistance within the university about an experience of sexual misconduct?

a) *Very sure*
b) *Sure*
c) *Neither sure nor unsure*
d) *Unsure*
e) *Very unsure*
f) *Prefer not to say*

Note: question 17 was asked to 31 out of 39 participants (31).

Interpretation of sexual misconduct

Participants were asked what they considered to fall within this term 'sexual misconduct'.

Many explained how they would consider all the experiences that had been previously covered in the survey prior to reaching this question (e.g. those listed in question 1). By the time they reached this question, many felt that they had a good understanding of the various actions this could entail. Some went on to describe how this included any actions of a sexual nature that were unwanted or unwelcome, including harassment and physical and verbal abuse.

Reasons for any difficulties answering and issues with language used

A few participants (3) felt that this question would sit better in the previous section about university support.[276]

No other issues with language or difficulties in answering this question were raised.

Appropriateness of response scale

A couple of participants (2) felt that this was too granular a scale and that a simple 'yes, no, prefer not to say' would be sufficient to understand whether students did or did not know where to seek support.[277]

Comparison to alternative question

Alternative question wording

How confident are you about where to seek support or assistance within the university about an experience of sexual misconduct?

This alternative wording was tested with students. Over half (21) of our participants had a preference for this new confidence scale.[278] For many, rating based on confidence was more familiar than on 'sureness'.

[276] Code: 17_Move to previous section (3)

[277] Code: 17_Scale_Prefer yes/no scale (2)

[278] Code 17_Difficulties with language_Prefer confidence (21)

'How confident are you that you know where to go?' would make a bit more sense than how sure you are. Just saying the 'sure' scale looked very strange to me, it's quite unfamiliar. Whereas the 'How confident are you of where to go? Confident, very confident' makes it a bit more familiar.

Set A, Undergraduate, STEM, On-campus learner, Interview #9

Recommendations

High priority

- Change to use a confidence scale as opposed to asking how 'sure' participants are.

Mid priority

- Consider moving this question to sit within the university support section.

Question 18

Wording tested

How sure are you about where you can go in your university or college to formally report or make a complaint about an experience of sexual misconduct?

a) Very sure
b) Sure
c) Neither sure nor unsure
d) Unsure
e) Very unsure
f) Prefer not to say

Note: question 18 was asked to 31 out of 39 participants (31).

Reasons for any difficulties answering and issues with language used

A few participants (3) felt that this question overlapped with question 17 and took a moment to see the difference between these questions.[279]

One participant (1) felt that the 'sure' scale was quite vague and subjective,[280] with difficulty in deciding between what would constitute being 'very sure', as opposed to just 'sure'.

Appropriateness of response scale

As with question 17, many (8) suggested that using a confidence scale could work better than 'sureness'.[281]

Other participants (4) felt that this question could be simplified into a 'yes/no' response format, as students would either know or not know where to go to make a complaint.[282]

[279] Code 18_Difficulties with language_Overlap with Q17 (3)

[280] Code: 18_Difficulties with language_Vague (1)

[281] Code: 18_Difficulties with language_Overlap with Q17 (8)

[282] Code: 18_Scale_Prefer yes/no scale (4)

Recommendations

High priority

- Change to use a confidence scale as opposed to asking how ‘sure’ participants are.

Overall perceptions of the survey questions

Overall thoughts and comfort with the survey questions

After reviewing the survey questions, participants were asked about their overall thoughts and how comfortable they would be answering such questions within a survey.

Question wording

Overall, participants felt that the questions in the survey were appropriate and well written. Participants generally felt that the questions were detailed and thorough. They thought that the options covered a wide range of people and situations, which helped them to understand what constitutes sexual misconduct and reflect on their own experiences.

A small number of participants thought there was a lack of consistency with the questions in the survey. They mentioned that there was often an inconsistent use of language, with one observing that language is included in some questions and not in others, such as 'rape'. They felt that the sudden inclusion of this word was quite jarring, and could potentially be triggering to some people. Alongside a consistent approach to terminology, they thought it was necessary to have a warning about what will be discussed in the survey.

One participant said they did not think the questions in this survey were written sensitively or appropriately enough. They questioned whether organisations that work with victims of sexual violence had been consulted in the design of the survey, as they felt the wrong language was used to describe sexual acts and misconduct.

Comfort with responding to the survey

Generally, participants were comfortable responding to the survey questions. While they mentioned that the questions could be difficult to answer, they recognised the importance of asking such sensitive questions in order for positive change to happen. One participant suggested that highlighting the importance of completing the survey and explaining how the insights will be used could help students feel more comfortable in answering the questions.

Participants highlighted that for students to be fully comfortable taking part, the survey must include:

- Reassurance that the survey is anonymous and confidential.
- Links to further support.
- Warnings about sensitive topics and language used.
- Information on the use of data and their data rights.
- Information on what the survey entails and how these insights will be used.

Note that when disseminating the pilot and full survey, the OfS will provide participants with more information prior to taking part in the survey (including links to support resources). Subsequently, no recommendations around these issues are suggested in this report.

Furthermore, one participant felt that students who had not experienced sexual misconduct might not be fully comfortable taking part in the survey, as they may feel the survey is not for them.

Survey length

Many students felt that the survey was too long. They commented on the high number of questions and options and that some of them were too wordy. Some felt that this might prevent people from completing the survey, with one mentioning this was especially the case with a lack of incentive for them. Another thought that those for whom English is not their first language, or who have experienced trauma, might be put off by the length of the survey.

Sexual violence and sexual assault

Participants were asked if the term 'sexual assault' made them think of anything different to the term 'sexual violence'. Many (11) felt the meaning of both was similar.[283] Four of them explained that both terms made them think of similar acts. Two specifically said both terms had similarly 'negative connotations'. One participant was unsure what the difference would be and that it might be helpful to include definitions of both terms.

A lot of participants (11) thought the term 'sexual assault' was broader.[284] Many of these thought that sexual assault was a much more inclusive term that included both physical and online sexual misconduct, as well as varying degrees. Some of these participants also felt that 'sexual assault' was a much more commonly used term and therefore more appropriate to use for the survey. One felt that the word 'assault' feels more sexual than 'violence'.

Conversely, many students (9) thought the term 'violence' was broader.[285] They thought the term 'sexual violence' was more inclusive, with one student pointing out that sexual assault could be considered sexual violence, but not necessarily vice versa.

When asked if they had a preference for either word, nine participants (9) commented that they preferred the use of 'sexual assault'.[286] They felt it was more commonly used, more relatable or less confusing.

Meanwhile, only three participants (3) specifically preferred the use of 'sexual violence'.[287] Two of these felt this term was much more inclusive and appropriate to use within the survey. The other thought 'sexual assault' carried strong negative connotations and as a result 'sexual violence' might be a better term to use.

Sexual violence and harassment

Participants were asked if they expected to see questions on sexual violence and sexual harassment combined or addressed separately in the survey.

The majority of participants (19) thought these questions should be separated.[288] Many of these students thought that 'sexual violence' and 'sexual harassment' were two very different terms and therefore should be kept separate. Three participants explained that it was important to split these questions up as they expected there would be different responses to each of these terms.

Some of these participants suggested splitting them into discrete sections, covering sexual violence in one half of the survey and then sexual harassment in the other half. They explained that switching between the questions could be confusing for those taking the survey. However, one participant thought that some of the questions could be a combination of both terms and, where relevant, the terms could be divided into separate questions.

However, many participants (14) thought the questions could be combined.[289] Some students felt that, as both terms fall under the larger bracket of 'sexual misconduct', they could be discussed together. One participant explained that

[283] Code: Violence/assault _Mean the same (11)

[284] Code: Violence/assault _Different meaning_Assault is broader (11)

[285] Code: Violence/assault _Different meaning_Violence is broader (9)

[286] Code: Violence/assault _Prefer use of assault (9)

[287] Code: Violence/assault _Prefer use of violence (3)

[288] Code: Harassment/violence_Separate questions (19)

[289] Code: Harassment/violence_Combine questions (14)

many students might be unfamiliar with the different terms, so it is easier to combine the terms under one bracket to make it more inclusive.

Recommendations

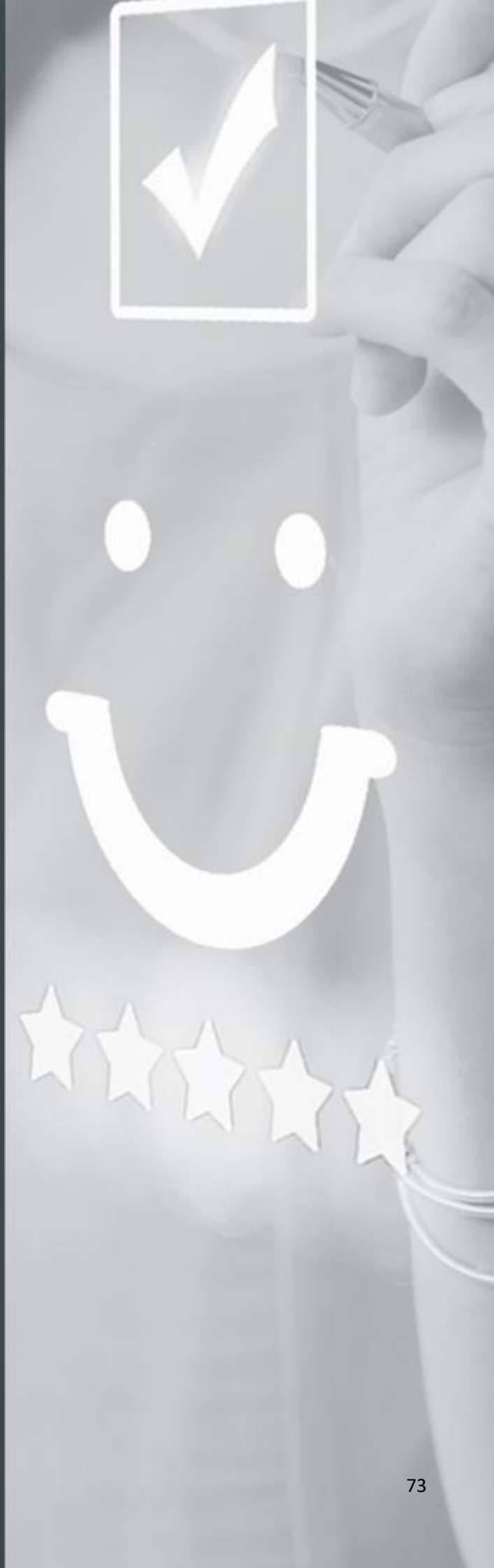
High priority

- The lack of consensus while interpreting sexual violence, assault and harassment reiterates the importance of providing clear definitions of key terminology in the survey introduction.
- Check that language is used consistently throughout the survey.
- Make it clear in the introduction that all experiences are valued.

Mid priority

- Consider gaining further consultation from organisations who work with victims of sexual violence.

Conclusions and recommendations



Conclusion

On the whole, participants thought that the survey questions were well thought-out and designed. They largely felt confident in their ability to answer the survey questions. While the questions were felt to be quite sensitive and heavy, participants generally acknowledged – and often appreciated – the need for such questions. The majority of participants felt that, given sufficient preparatory information, they would have no issues responding to the survey.

While most of the questions tested within this research were relevant and understandable, the interviews did uncover questions in which the wording could lead to confusion or disparity in interpretation if used on a wider scale. We have suggested the following recommendations, grouped by priority level. Note, the recommendations are prioritised on a combined basis of how frequently issues were raised and researcher judgment.

Recommendations

High priority

Introductory text

- Clarify the timeframe and setting to be considered while responding to the survey. For example, the third paragraph could be amended to: 'This survey focuses on experiences you may have had during your current university degree. This includes experiences at a location (physical or digital) associated with your university or experiences in which the perpetrator was associated with your university.'
- Provide definitions for sexual misconduct, violence and harassment towards the start of the survey to clarify which acts or behaviours are included under each term.

Question 1.1

- Streamline the question so that it is not too taxing on students. This could be done by removing the first paragraph and changing the second paragraph to open with 'since being a student'.
- Additionally, the cognitive load could be lessened by question formatting. The question was presented in block text in the cognitive interviews, which looks overwhelming. Strategically adding bolding, colour and spacing could help the question be less visually heavy and imposing and therefore easier to read and answer.
- Add an 'unsure' response option to this question.
- Rephrase 'showing displeasure' in statement b to clarify what it means. This could be changed to 'getting annoyed' or 'getting irritated'.
- Rephrase statement c to 'taking advantage of me when I was asleep or affected by alcohol or drugs' to reflect the tone of the rest of the survey and be more sensitive.
- Similarly, remove 'simply' from statement f to avoid trivialising the experience.

Question 1.6

- Add 'without my consent' to the question, reflecting previous questions in the section.

Question 2

- Include a reference to sexual harassment in the opening statement to provide more context.
- Remove or replace the word 'leering' in statement b.
- Remove or replace the word 'loitering' in statement c.
- Combine options j and k.
- Clarify to whom the material was being displayed and who the content featured (i.e. is it referring specifically to material featuring the participant or material featuring celebrities etc.).
- Replace the word 'electronically' with the word 'online' in option n.

Experiences of sexual misconduct question group

- Restructure the survey so that it opens with question 2 rather than question 1.1.

Question 5

- Replace the word 'thing(s)' to ensure the question reads respectfully.
- Clarify what is meant by 'university or college setting' by adding examples alongside the three bullet points.
- Make it clearer that the setting can be online as well.
- Reword the third bullet point to help clarify what is meant by 'Any event or occasion at which students / staff from your university or college were present'.
- Alternatively, consider removing the third bullet point.

Question 6.a

- Combine options c and k, or make a clear distinction between the different hospitality options.
- Include some examples to support the hospitality options.
- Include online options.
- Allow students to select multiple options that apply to them.

Question 6.b

- Add 'your hometown' as an option.
- Break down option c into more specific options.
- Alternatively, this question could be removed from the survey. If this change was made, participants who say that the experience did not occur in a university/college setting could be routed directly to questions about perpetrators and asked if the perpetrator was someone from the university/college. If this change was made along with removing bullet 3 in question 5, this could help reduce the confusion around how broad the settings to consider currently seem in both questions.

Question 10

- Change question wording to allow students to answer when more than one perpetrator is involved, this could be achieved through only using the second statement 'Was this person / were any of these people'.
- Add option for 'friend or close friend'.
- Change the option f wording to clarify that this is paid employment through the university, as opposed to simply any job held while at university, e.g. 'through the university'.

Question 11.a

- Make it clear that the question is focusing on only one experience, to avoid confusion in reporting across multiple experiences.
- Give some examples of other roles associated with a university in option j, or merge this with option i.
- Clearly define 'student representative' to differentiate from 'student leader' or consider merging them.

Question 12.a

- Reiterate in the question wording that this is focused on university-provided support to contextualise the responses and avoid confusion about why other support sources are not shown (such as friends and family).

Question 12.b

- Change the wording from 'how would you describe' to 'how would you rate' to reflect the scale being used.
- Add an 'unsure' option.

Question 12.c

- Clarify that this is a multi-choice question by adding the instruction 'Please select all that apply'.
- Add options for:

- I was afraid for my own safety.
- I did not personally think it was serious enough.
- I did not feel prepared to deal with it at the time.

Question 12.e

- Clarify that this is multi-choice by adding 'Please select all that apply'.
- Reflect the list of roles given in question 11a and make them consistent in terms of wording/examples given.
- Change the wording of option i to be 'doctor, nurse or other healthcare professional'.

Question 14

- Clarify the timeframe that this question applies to, i.e. prior to making a complaint, or at the point of making a complaint.

Question 14.a

- Add an unsure and prefer not to say option.

Question 17

- Change to use a confidence scale as opposed to asking how 'sure' participants are.

Question 18

- Change to use a confidence scale as opposed to asking how 'sure' participants are.

Overarching questions

- The lack of consensus while interpreting sexual violence, assault and harassment reiterates the importance of providing clear definitions of key terminology in the survey introduction.
- Check that language is used consistently throughout the survey.
- Make it clear in the introduction that all experiences are valued.

Mid priority

Question 1.1

- Consider rephrasing 'criticising my sexuality' or clarifying what this means.

Question 1.2

- Consider changing the statement to 'someone performed oral sex on me or made me perform oral sex…', to make the non-consensual nature of the oral sex clearer.
- Additionally, consider moving 'without my consent' to the start of the statement to further emphasise the non-consensual nature.

Question 1.3

- Consider adapting the question to make its relevance to men clearer – this could potentially be achieved by including the word 'my' before 'anus' to give this equal importance.
- Additionally, 'my anus' could be moved before 'my vagina' to avoid biasing participants towards thinking about female genitalia.

Question 1.4

- Consider using formatting cues to make the difference between questions 1.3 and 1.4 clearer. For example, 'put their' in question 1.3. and 'made me perform' in question 1.4 could be underlined.

Question 1.5

- Consider using ‘attempted’ instead of ‘TRIED’ in this question.
- Rather than having ‘TRIED’ (or ‘attempted’) capitalised, it could be underlined.

Question 1.6

- Consider using ‘attempted’ instead of ‘TRIED’ in this question.
- Rather than having ‘TRIED’ (or ‘attempted’) capitalised, it could be underlined.

Question 2

- Consider replacing ‘don’t know’ with an ‘unsure’ option.
- Consider providing examples for option d to help participants know what this might include.
- Consider removing the word ‘slighted’ in option d.
- Consider replacing the word ‘differently’ in option d.
- Consider removing the question mark in option l.
- Consider including an option about someone encouraging you to drink and take drugs when you don’t want to, or being spiked.

Question 5

- Consider rewording to clarify they are answering a ‘yes / no / prefer not to say’ question, rather than having to select one of the bullet points.

Question 6.a

- Consider replacing the word ‘bathroom’ with ‘public toilet’.

Question 6.b

- Consider including ‘public transport’ as an option.

Question 10

- Consider merging options b and d into one option titled ‘academic staff, e.g. tutor, lecturer or research supervisor’ to be a more all-encompassing term.
- For option c, consider giving some examples in brackets of roles that could be included.

Question 11.a

- Add options for:
    - University welfare or wellbeing services.
    - A therapist or counsellor.
    - A religious leader.
    - A helpline (e.g. phone, email or online).
- Merge options a and c into one named ‘friend or close friend’.
- Change ‘partner’ to ‘romantic partner’.
- Option f – add examples of what charities this could include, or specify ‘sexual violence charities’.

Question 12.a

- Consider changing ‘Counselling services’ to ‘counselling or welfare services’.
- Consider replacing the term ‘trauma-informed services’ with a better-known term, such as ‘specialist sexual violence support services’ – or combine this with option A.

Question 12.b

- Consider changing ‘poor’ to ‘bad’.

Question 12.c

- Consider the phrase 'for entirely understandable reasons'.
- Consider merging options a and b into one about not knowing where to find support or who could offer this.

Question 16

- Consider grouping university life impacts (e, f, h, i, j, l, m).
- Consider grouping mental health impacts (a, d).
- Consider grouping other life impacts (b, c, g, k).
- Consider adding an option for physical impacts, such as illness, pregnancy, STDs.
  Both question wordings were well received and understood so, depending on the level of detail needed in the survey data, either question on impact could be used.

Question 17

- Consider moving this question to sit within the university support section.

Low priority

Introductory text

- Consider amending the text in the second paragraph to read: 'when you were asleep, under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or otherwise impaired'.

Question 1.1

- Consider clarifying the meaning of 'making promises I knew were untrue'.
- Consider moving 'verbally pressuring me' to statement b.

Question 1.4

- Consider changing the text within the brackets to 'putting my fingers or penis…' so that the applicability of this question to women is clearer.

Question 1.5

- Consider replacing the phrase 'even though it did not happen' with something potentially more sensitive, such as 'even though they did not manage to'. Alternatively, the question can be rephrased to 'someone attempted, but failed to, put their penis, fingers, other body parts, or objects into my vagina or anus without my consent by:'.

Question 1.6

- Consider replacing the phrase 'even though it did not happen' to something potentially more sensitive, for example 'even though they did not manage to'. Alternatively, the question could be rephrased to 'someone attempted, but failed to, to have oral sex with me or TRIED to make me perform oral sex on them without my consent by:'.

Question 2

- Consider replacing the words 'degraded' and 'humiliated' in the opening statement.
- Consider including 'scared' in the opening statement.
- Consider including 'uncomfortable' within statement e.
- Consider referencing both online and offline sexualised materials in option m.
- Consider combining g and h.
- Consider combining b and c.
- Consider combining k and l.
- Consider combining l and m.

- Consider combining m and n.
- Consider adding ‘harassing you over text message, by constantly texting with the purpose of making you feel intimidated’.
- Consider adding ‘pressurising you into doing something when you didn’t want to’.
- Consider adding ‘rating sexual experiences and exposing them to a wider group’.
- Consider adding ‘giving unwanted compliments’.
- Consider adding ‘masturbating near you’.

Experiences of sexual misconduct question group

- Consider reordering the questions on sexual violence by showing questions 1.5 and 1.6 earlier.

Question 5

- Consider removing the reference to ‘college’.

Question 6.a

- Consider amending or removing option g – work experience or professional placement.
- Consider amending or removing option h – private home or residence.

Question 6.b

- Consider clarifying that option a is referring to private residence and not halls of residence. Alternately, ‘or residence could be removed from the option to avoid confusion.
- Consider including ‘public toilets’ as an option.
- Consider including ‘gym or sports facilities’ as an option.
- Consider including ‘workplace’ as an option.

Question 10

- Option j – remove ‘no one I knew’ from this option. Alternately, this could be change to ‘someone I barely know’. This change could help account for acquaintances or friend of friends.

Question 12.b

- Consider changing option f to ‘I was seeking support but didn’t receive any’.

Question 12.e

- Consider merging options f and h.

Question 13

- Consider changing ‘Don’t know’ to ‘Don’t know, or unsure if this has been processed’.

Overarching recommendations

- When using the terms ‘sexual violence and sexual harassment’, consider gaining further consultation from organisations that work with victims of sexual violence.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Question list

Question number	Question	Set A	Set B
Introduction	The following questions ask about sexual experiences you may have had that were unwanted. These could include unwanted sexual acts or sexual contact. It can also include experiences that happened when you were asleep or affected by drugs or alcohol. We're interested in your experiences both at university and in other places since you became a student. Your answers to these questions are completely confidential. If you would prefer not to answer a particular question, you can select "Prefer not to say" and move on to the next question.	Asked (20/20)	Asked (19/19)
Experiences of sexual misconduct			
Q1.1	**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.** **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 without my consent (but did not attempt sexual penetration) by:** a) Telling lies, threatening to end the relationship, threatening to spread rumours about me, making promises I knew were untrue, or continually verbally pressuring me. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say b) Showing displeasure, criticising my sexuality or attractiveness, or getting angry but not using physical force. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say c) Taking advantage of me when I was too drunk or out of it. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say d) Threatening to physically harm me or someone close to me. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say	Asked (20/20)	Not asked

Question number	Question	Set A	Set B
	e) Using force, such as holding me down with their body weight, pinning my arms, or having a weapon. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say f) Simply engaging in the behaviour without any indication from me that it was welcome. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say		
Q1.2	**Someone had oral sex with me or made me have oral sex with them without my consent by:** a) Telling lies, threatening to end the relationship, threatening to spread rumours about me, making promises I knew were untrue, or continually verbally pressuring me. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say b) Showing displeasure, criticising my sexuality or attractiveness, or getting angry but not using physical force. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say c) Taking advantage of me when I was too drunk or out of it. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say d) Threatening to physically harm me or someone close to me. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say e) Using force, such as holding me down with their body weight, pinning my arms, or having a weapon. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say f) Simply engaging in the behaviour without any indication from me that it was welcome. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say	Asked (20/20)	Not asked
Q1.3	**Someone put their penis, fingers, other body parts, or objects into my vagina or anus without my consent by:** a) Telling lies, threatening to end the relationship, threatening to spread rumours about me, making promises I knew were untrue, or continually verbally pressuring me. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say	Asked (20/20)	Not asked

Question number	Question	Set A	Set B
	b) Showing displeasure, criticising my sexuality or attractiveness, or getting angry but not using physical force. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say c) Taking advantage of me when I was too drunk or out of it. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say d) Threatening to physically harm me or someone close to me. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say e) Using force, such as holding me down with their body weight, pinning my arms, or having a weapon. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say f) Simply engaging in the behaviour without any indication from me that it was welcome. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say		
Q1.4	**Someone made me perform anal or vaginal sex (putting my penis or fingers or other body parts or objects into their anus or vagina) without my consent by:** a) Telling lies, threatening to end the relationship, threatening to spread rumours about me, making promises I knew were untrue, or continually verbally pressuring me. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say b) Showing displeasure, criticising my sexuality or attractiveness, or getting angry but not using physical force. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say c) Taking advantage of me when I was too drunk or out of it. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say d) Threatening to physically harm me or someone close to me. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say e) Using force, such as holding me down with their body weight, pinning my arms, or having a weapon.	Asked (20/20)	Not asked

Question number	Question	Set A	Set B
	• Yes, No, Prefer not to say f) Simply engaging in the behaviour without any indication from me that it was welcome. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say		
Q1.5	**Even though it did not happen, someone TRIED to put their penis, fingers, other body parts, or objects into my vagina or anus without my consent by:** a) Telling lies, threatening to end the relationship, threatening to spread rumours about me, making promises I knew were untrue, or continually verbally pressuring me. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say b) Showing displeasure, criticising my sexuality or attractiveness, or getting angry but not using physical force. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say c) Taking advantage of me when I was too drunk or out of it. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say d) Threatening to physically harm me or someone close to me. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say e) Using force, such as holding me down with their body weight, pinning my arms, or having a weapon. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say f) Simply engaging in the behaviour without any indication from me that it was welcome. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say	Asked (20/20)	Not asked
Q1.6	**Even though it did not happen, someone TRIED to have oral sex with me or TRIED to make me perform oral sex on them by:** a) Telling lies, threatening to end the relationship, threatening to spread rumours about me, making promises I knew were untrue, or continually verbally pressuring me. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say	Asked (20/20)	Not asked

Question number	Question	Set A	Set B
	b) Showing displeasure, criticising my sexuality or attractiveness, or getting angry but not using physical force. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say c) Taking advantage of me when I was too drunk or out of it. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say d) Threatening to physically harm me or someone close to me. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say e) Using force, such as holding me down with their body weight, pinning my arms, or having a weapon. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say f) Simply engaging in the behaviour without any indication from me that it was welcome. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say		
Q2	**Since being a student, has anyone ever made you feel intimidated, harassed, humiliated or degraded in the following ways?** For each of these, please answer: Yes, No, Don't know or Prefer not to say a) Touching you, hugging you, or invading your personal space b) Leering or staring at you c) Following you or loitering nearby d) Treating you "differently" because of your gender (for example, mistreated, slighted, ignored you or made sexist or condescending remarks e) Making sexual gestures or used body language of a sexual nature which embarrassed or offended you f) Deliberately exposed their intimate body parts (flashing) g) Asked, hinted or made unwelcome requested that you have sex with them h) Persisted with suggestions that you establish a sexual or romantic relationship with them	Not asked	Asked (19/19)

Question number	Question	Set A	Set B
	i) Making unwelcome comments or asking intrusive questions about your private life, sex life, body or physical appearance j) Taking a nude or sexual photo/video of you without your permission k) Posting a nude or sexual photo/video of you online, or sending it to others, without your permission l) Spreading unwelcome sexual rumours about you, either in person, or by text, email, social media, or other electronic means m) Displayed, used, or distributed sexualised materials (e.g. pictures, stories, jokes, or pornography) n) Privately sent you sexualised messages electronically, via text message, email, social media, etc. o) Other		
Settings			
Q3	**Did the thing(s) you mentioned occur in the last 12 months?** • Yes, No, Prefer not to say	Not asked	Not asked
Q4	**How many times in the past 12 months has the thing(s) you mentioned happened?**	Not asked	Not asked
Q5	**Did the thing(s) you mentioned happen in a university or college setting?** By this, we mean: • Any place on or off campus associated with your university or college. • Any event or occasion that was arranged by your university or college. • Any event or occasion at which students / staff from your university or college were present. • Yes, No, Prefer not to say	Asked (19/20)	Not asked
Q6.a	**Where in a university setting did it occur?** a) University/college library b) Lecture theatres, computer labs	Asked (19/20)	Not asked

Question number	Question	Set A	Set B
	c) University or college hospitality or retail areas (e.g. bar, shops, canteen) d) University or college sports and recreational areas (e.g. gym, sports fields, galleries) e) Other general university or college areas (e.g. university or college car park, walkways, gardens, bathrooms) f) The Students' Union, clubs and societies, events and spaces g) On work experience or professional placement h) At a private home or residence i) At halls of residence or other type of student accommodation j) Academic or administrative staff office k) Some other hospitality (e.g. bar) or retail (e.g. shopping) areas not associated with the university or college l) Somewhere else (please specify) m) Prefer not to say		
Q6.b	**Where did this occur?** a) At a private home or residence b) Some other hospitality (e.g. bar) or retail (e.g. shopping) areas not associated with the university or college c) The town or city where your university/college is located d) Somewhere else e) Prefer not to say	Asked (18/20)	Not asked
Perpetrators			
Q7	**Excluding you, how many people were involved?** • 1, 2, 3, 4, 5+, Prefer not to say	Not asked	Not asked
Q8	**What was/were the sex(es) of the other people (select all that apply)** • Male, Female, Don't know, Prefer not to say	Not asked	Not asked

Question number	Question	Set A	Set B
Q9	**Prior to the incident, how many of the other individuals involved did you know?** • All, Some, None, Prefer not to say	Not asked	Not asked
Q10	**Which best describes the person?** **Was this person / were any of these people…** a) A student from your university b) A tutor or lecturer from your university c) A non-academic (administrative) university staff member d) Your research or academic supervisor at the university e) Your supervisor, employer or co-worker at your professional placement or internship f) A supervisor, employer or co-worker in your paid employment at university g) A supervisor, employer or co-worker in your paid employment outside of the university h) A partner, hook-up, or date i) A family member j) A stranger / no one I knew k) Someone else (please specify) l) Prefer not to say	Asked (17/20)	Asked (19/19)
Q11	**Prior to completing this survey, had you told anyone about your experience(s)?** • Yes, No, Prefer not to say	Not asked	Not asked
Q11.a	**Who did you tell about your experience(s)?** *Please select all that apply.* a) Close friend b) Partner c) Friends d) Family e) Health or social care professional f) Charity representative	Asked (17/20)	Asked (19/19)

Question number	Question	Set A	Set B
	g) Police h) A university lecturer or other teaching staff i) University administrative (non-academic) staff j) Someone else associated with the university k) Student representative l) Student leader (e.g. Women's Officer or President of a Students' Union, Association or Guild) m) Someone else (other) n) Prefer not to say		
Q12	**Prior to completing this survey, did you seek support or assistance from within the university in relation to your experience?** • Yes, No, Prefer not to say	Not asked	Not asked
Q12.a	**Who did you seek support or assistance from?** *Please select all that apply.* a) Counselling services b) Specialist trauma-informed support services c) Campus security d) Someone in my faculty or school (lecturer or tutor) e) Someone from my residential college/dorm/house f) Student leader (e.g. Women's Officer or President of a Students' Union, Association or Guild) g) Someone else associated with the university h) Prefer not to say	Asked (17/20)	Asked (19/19)
Q12.b	**Overall, how would you describe the support provided from within the university or college?** a) Very good b) Good c) Neither good nor poor d) Poor e) Very poor f) I sought support but did not receive any	Asked (16/20)	Asked (19/19)

Question number	Question	Set A	Set B
	g) Prefer not to say		
Q12.c	**Many people do not seek support or assistance for unwelcome sexual behaviour for a variety of entirely understandable reasons.** **Which of the following, if any, were reasons you did not seek support or assistance from within the university?** a) I was worried I might not be believed b) I did not know who could provide me with support or assistance c) I did not know where to go to get support or assistance d) I felt embarrassed or ashamed e) I did not think the incident would be kept confidential f) I did not think I needed help g) I did not think others would think it was serious enough h) I did not want to get anyone into trouble i) I thought it would be too hard to prove j) I was too scared or frightened k) I did not want anyone to know l) I did not want to involve the police m) I was worried it would affect my studies or career opportunities n) Other reasons (please specify) o) Prefer not to say	Asked (15/20)	Asked (19/19)
Q12.d	**Did you seek support or assistance from somewhere or someone outside the university?** • Yes, No, Prefer not to say	Not asked	Not asked
Q12.e	**Did you seek support or assistance from any of the following sources outside the university?** a) Friend b) Partner c) Family d) Support provided in the workplace	Asked (11/20)	Asked (19/19)

Question number	Question	Set A	Set B
	e) Local sexual assault service / rape crisis centre f) Telephone or online counselling service g) Police h) Mental health professional i) Doctor j) Religious or spiritual leader k) Someone else l) Prefer not to say		
Formal reporting			
Q13	**Did you formally report or make a formal complaint about the incident to anyone within the university?** • Yes, No, Don't know, Prefer not to say	Asked (14/20)	Asked (19/19)
Q14	**Did the university explain its formal reporting or complaint processes to you, including any involvement with or processes for reporting to the police?** • Yes, No, Don't know, Prefer not to say	Asked (13/20)	Asked 19/19)
Q14.a	**Overall, how would you describe your university or college's formal reporting or complaint process?** • Very good • Good • Neither good nor poor • Poor • Very poor	Asked (14/20)	Asked (19/19)
Q15	**Did you report the incident to the police?** • Yes, No, Don't know, Prefer not to say	Not asked	Not asked
Impact			
Q16	**Thinking about the experience(s) you mentioned, were you impacted in any of the following ways?** For each of these, please answer: Yes, No, Don't know or Prefer not to say a) Mental health or emotional problems	Asked (16/20)	Not asked

Question number	Question	Set A	Set B
	b) Stopped trusting people or experienced difficulty in other relationships c) Stopped going out so much d) Considered or attempted suicide e) Not doing as well on your course as you would have done otherwise f) Turned down work roles at the university or college g) Turned down professional development opportunities h) Skipped lecture, seminars, supervision meetings i) Chose not to take a particular module j) Changed supervisors k) Changed career l) Changed university or college m) Suspended your studies **n)** Other (e.g. moving house / loss of friends / dropped clubs or societies)		
Knowledge and use of university or college's reporting process			
Q17	**How sure are you about where to seek support or assistance within the university about an experience of sexual misconduct?** a) Very sure b) Sure c) Neither sure nor unsure d) Unsure e) Very unsure f) Prefer not to say	Asked (12/20)	Asked (18/19)
Q18	**How sure are you about where you can go in your university or college to formally report or make a complaint about an experience of sexual misconduct?** a) Very sure b) Sure c) Neither sure nor unsure	Asked (12/20)	Asked (18/19)

Question number	Question	Set A	Set B
	d) Unsure e) Very unsure f) Prefer not to say		