

Student Reports of Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination

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1.0 Purpose

Griffith University is committed to providing a safe, respectful and inclusive environment where Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination are unacceptable.

This Procedure details the processes for a student to Disclose and make Formal Reports about incidents of Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination.

The Procedure provides the procedural implementation of key principles in the University's *Student Conduct, Safety and Wellbeing Policy*, *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*, *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy* and *Student Charter Framework*.

2.0 Scope

This Procedure applies to:

- All students of the University in all career levels, modes of study and locations, physical or digital, participating in activities organised by or under the control or direction of the University. For the purpose of this Procedure, the term "student" includes:
 - all enrolled students and HDR candidates at the University
 - students with 'active' enrolment status, including those who are not 'carrying load' and students on approved leave, including leave of absence, deferment or between enrolment periods.
- Disclosures and Formal Reports by a student of incidents of Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination when engaged in University Activities or on University Premises that occur in-person, online or through digital technology.

The Procedure does not apply to:

- Disclosures and Formal Reports by Employees, Leaders and Workers, which are managed under the relevant complaints procedures and terms of engagement.
- Incidents of Gender-based Violence or Sexual Harm and incidents of Bullying, Harassment or Discrimination that are based on, or include elements of gender or sex, which are managed under the *Student Reports of Gender-based Violence and Sexual Harm Procedure*.

3.0 Procedure

The University supports individuals who have been affected by Bullying, Harassment, or Discrimination to choose whichever course of action is best for them at the time, depending on the severity of the incident, the type of incident, their own circumstances, and whether they feel safe and confident to make a Disclosure or Formal Report.

There are several options for students to notify the University about incidents of Bullying, Harassment, or Discrimination.

3.1 Support options

The University makes the following options available to students to seek assistance:

- a. **Crisis Support** is available for students who require immediate wellbeing assistance.
- b. **Student Safety and Wellbeing** provides confidential, impartial support to students reporting Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination, and to Employees concerned about student behaviours. The team can guide students through available support and reporting options and liaise with other areas of the University on their behalf to support wellbeing and academic progress.
- c. **Student Counselling** and **Chaplaincy** provide counselling, wellbeing and pastoral care services.
- d. **Respect Officers** can assist students and Employees when Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination has occurred by providing information about University policies and processes, support services and reporting options.
- e. **Student associations** (Griffith University Gold Coast Student Guild, Griffith Student Representative Council (SRC), Griffith University Postgraduate Student Association (GUPSA), Gold Coast Association of Postgraduate students (GCAP) can provide assistance and information to students.
- f. The University's **Safe Campuses** website provides information about nurturing a respectful, inclusive and safe University community, including supports and information about responding to Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination.

3.2 Self-guided resolution

Before submitting a Formal Report for further intervention by the University, self-guided resolution can be considered. Self-guided resolution is only suitable when a student feels safe and confident to do so.

Self-guided resolution involves contacting the other person and telling them that the behaviour is unwelcome and requesting that it cease. This may be done in person or in writing. The other person may recognise and cease the behaviour to your satisfaction.

If the behaviour/s restarts, continues or escalates, you can seek further information and support through Disclosure or lodge a Formal Report.

3.3 Disclosure to the University

A Disclosure is informing the University about an incident or witnessing of Bullying, Harassment, or Discrimination without requesting the University take action towards resolution. Disclosures will not automatically result in an investigative process or referral of a Respondent under the *Student Conduct, Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Student General Conduct Procedure*, or Employee misconduct process. The University may, however, be obligated to report incidents as described in section 3.10.

3.3.1 How to make a Disclosure

Submit a Disclosure online:

- A student may choose to submit a Disclosure online, providing relevant details about the incident via the Report a Concern form. The form provides the option to select 'Disclosure'.
- Disclosures can be made anonymously (see section 3.6) by a student or an individual on behalf of the student.

Request assistance to make an online Disclosure:

- A student may request that another individual submit an online Disclosure on their behalf via [Report a Concern](#).

Make a Disclosure to another person:

- A student may discuss a Disclosure with an individual listed in 3.1, noting that these individuals have received training or formal education in responding to Disclosures.

3.3.2 Record of a Disclosure

When a [Report a Concern](#) is made, a unique identifying number is provided. This number can be used to escalate a Disclosure to a Formal Report at any time that the respondent remains a student, Employee, Leader or Worker at the University.

3.4 Formal Report to the University

A Formal Report is a request for the University to undertake an investigative process. The scope of any investigation may be limited when Respondents cannot be identified, when reports are submitted anonymously, or when the individuals involved are not students, Employees, or Leaders of the University. Where a Respondent is identified and connected to the University, they will be provided an opportunity to respond to the allegations in accordance with procedural fairness.

3.4.1 How to lodge a Formal Report:

Submit a Formal Report online:

- Students can lodge a Formal Report via the online [Report a Concern](#) form at any time.
- Formal Reports can be made anonymously (see section 3.6) by a student or an individual on behalf of the student.

Request assistance to lodge a Formal Report:

- A student may request another individual submit a Formal Report on their behalf, using the Report a Concern form.
- Student Safety and Wellbeing provides information about University processes and can submit a Report a Concern on behalf of a student.

Escalate a Disclosure:

- If a student has previously submitted a Disclosure online about the same incident or behaviour, they can use the unique identifying number provided by the University to escalate the Disclosure to a Formal Report.
- Additional details can be provided to the University as part of the investigative process, if required.

3.4.2 What to include in a Formal Report:

When lodging a Formal Report, students are asked to provide as much information as possible about the incident or behaviour, including:

- a. specific details of the incident/s (what, when, where and any relevant background information)
- b. actions they have taken to resolve the issue (if appropriate)
- c. contact the individual has had with the other person
- d. contact the individual has had with University Employees regarding the incident or behaviour and any outcomes
- e. whether the matter has been reported to an external organisation, such as the Queensland Police Service
- f. confirm that they want the University to investigate the issue, bearing in mind procedural fairness considerations (the respondent will be given the opportunity to defend and respond to the allegation)
- g. outcome/s sought as a result of the concern.

3.4.3 Record of a Formal Report:

Following submission of a Formal Report, the student who has made the report will receive a unique identifying number for the report. This unique identifying number can be used in future communication with the University.

3.5 Reporting as a group

Where several students have the same concern, they may act as a group in making a Disclosure or Formal Report to the University via the online **Report a Concern** form, provided that each student is seeking the same outcome and has consented to being included in the report.

3.6 Anonymous reporting

Students may choose to make a Disclosure or Formal Report of an incident or behaviour anonymously online via the **Report a Concern** form. Anonymous reporting allows an individual to inform the University about an incident or behaviour without providing identifying information.

If an individual lodges a Report a Concern on behalf of a student, the student may choose to disclose their identity or remain anonymous. Where the student chooses anonymity, the individual should provide the student with the **Report a Concern** unique identifying number as a record of the submission.

Anonymous reports may still contribute to broader safety improvements, even when direct engagement with the reporting process is not possible or desired.

3.6.1 Anonymous Disclosures

An anonymous Disclosure may be appropriate if the individual does not wish the University to respond to the Disclosure but would like a record made of the incident or behaviour.

Students should be aware that the University's ability to assess safety risks, offer support or respond meaningfully may be limited if the Discloser's identity is not provided.

3.6.2 Anonymous Formal Reports

While the University treats all reports seriously, it may or may not be able to fully investigate, provide notice of a decision or take action to resolve the concern when the source of the report is unknown.

3.7 Reporting to external organisations

A student may choose to report an incident or behaviour to an external organisation. When an external investigative process is occurring, this may cause the University to pause or cease an internal process, pending the outcome and findings from the external body.

3.7.1 Reporting to the Human Rights Commission

A student may choose to lodge a complaint about discrimination, vilification or a breach of human rights with the Queensland Human Rights Commission or the Australian Human Rights Commission.

3.7.2 Reporting to the eSafety Commissioner

A student may choose to report cyberbullying (online behaviour impacting children under 18), adult cyber abuse (online behaviour impacting people 18+), image-based abuse and illegal and restricted content to the eSafety Commissioner at any time.

eSafety has powers relating to cyberbullying, image-based abuse, and illegal and harmful online content. They can investigate behaviours, provide support to victims and determine whether behaviours are in breach of the *Online Safety Act 2021 (Cth)*.

3.7.3 Reporting to police

In Queensland, behaviours that constitute Hate Crimes or Serious Vilification can be reported to the police.

3.7.4 Reporting to the National Student Ombudsman

A student who is dissatisfied with a Formal Report decision, or with the manner in which a Disclosure or Formal Report was handled by the University, may choose to lodge a complaint with the National Student Ombudsman (NSO). The NSO is a free and independent service to enable students to resolve complaints about their higher education provider. The NSO is not a decision-maker but may recommend to Griffith University how the decision process could be improved. Guidance on the types of complaints the NSO handles is available on the [NSO](#) website.

3.8 University response to Disclosures and Formal Reports

On receipt of a Disclosure of Formal Report via the [Report a Concern](#) form, the University will:

- provide a unique identifying number as record of the submission
- provide an acknowledgement to the individual who has made the Disclosure or Formal Report within 24 hours of lodgment (where contact details are provided).

The University's response to a Disclosure will be trauma-informed and, to the extent possible, be guided by the wishes of the individual. In this regard, the affected individual may request the University provide incident-related support and resources, referral to health and wellbeing support, facilitate reasonable academic adjustments, and/or implement precautionary actions.

Students may lodge a complaint with the National Student Ombudsman (NSO) if they do not feel safe reporting to the University.

3.8.1 University response to Disclosures

When an online Disclosure is made via the [Report a Concern](#) form, the University will provide general information to the student on:

- services and mechanisms which may aid in supporting the safety, security, health and wellbeing of affected individuals.
- options for lodging a Formal Report, or a report external to the University.

Unlike a Formal Report, a Disclosure does not trigger an investigation or action unless the University has an obligation or a duty of care to act.

Students may also access services provided by the University, listed at 3.1, where appropriate.

3.8.2 University response to Formal Reports

All Formal Reports will be handled in a procedurally fair manner. The health, wellbeing and academic progress of all parties will be supported in line with the University's duty of care.

The University will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the Formal Report investigation and resolution process is trauma-informed.

The University may decline to take action in respect of a Formal Report that is assessed as unreasonable, including Frivolous, Vexatious or Malicious Reports. Individuals who submit such reports may be subject to investigation under the University's *Student General Conduct Procedure*.

The University will nominate a coordinator to oversee the concern within three working days of receipt of a Formal Report. The nominated coordinator will:

- oversee the Formal Report
- act as a central contact point for the student who has made the report, establishing and maintaining a liaison relationship with relevant individuals to ensure support of the student's continued participation in their studies (this might include people from the Academic Group, Course or Program, Campus Life, Student Accommodation, Griffith International or Griffith Graduate Research School, to ensure support of the student's continued participation in their studies).

A student who has made a Formal Report may involve a support person of their choosing throughout the process and may withdraw from participating in the process at any time.

A preliminary investigation will be undertaken for the purpose of determining the action to be taken, in accordance with the *Student Conduct, Safety and Wellbeing Policy* and *Staff Code of Conduct*. The University may undertake interim measures and adjustments to support the student/s while an investigative process is underway.

Interim measures and adjustments are intended to provide access to a safe environment, minimising exposure to risk and risk to others. Student Safety and Wellbeing and/or the nominated coordinator can support students in liaising with relevant Employees to request such interventions.

The University may put measures in place to support affected individuals, minimising the impact on their wellbeing, learning and academic progress. This may include:

- referral to counselling, peer and learning support
- extending opportunities for special consideration in respect of course and assessment item/s
- providing opportunities for an extension of time to submit, or deferred assessment as specified in the *Assessment Procedure* for students
- limiting participation in, discontinuing or facilitating alternative arrangements for a professional practice activity
- facilitating changes to study schedules and arrangements to reduce contact between and enhance safety for affected students.

3.9 Formal Report outcomes

Written advice concerning the findings of a Formal Report and subsequent outcomes will normally be provided within 10 working days of receipt of a reported concern. A student who has made a report will be notified of any unforeseen delays.

3.9.1 Formal Report actions

Following an investigation, Formal Reports will:

- a. be referred to a conduct process such as the *Student General Conduct Procedure* or Employee, Leader or Worker misconduct processes (noting that these processes include additional steps, timelines and rights to review and appeal, as outlined in those processes) and/or
- b. result in a safety and support intervention(s) or
- c. result in no further action being taken where a conduct referral or safety and support interventions are not appropriate.

3.9.2 Safety and support interventions

Safety and support interventions will depend on the nature and seriousness of the alleged behaviour and may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Mediation or facilitated discussion.
- b. Further monitoring of the situation.
- c. Apology or statement of regret.
- d. Referral to support services.
- e. No-contact directives.
- f. Direction to develop an action plan in conjunction with Student Safety and Wellbeing team.
- g. Training or educational interventions.
- h. Academic support, such as special consideration.
- i. Requirement to change processes or procedures.
- j. Referral to external providers, such as the police.

3.10 Confidentiality, recordkeeping and mandatory reporting

The University will retain records of Disclosures and Formal Reports made online via **Report a Concern** in accordance with the University's *Information Management Policy*. This can include details provided by the student who has made the report, information gathered for the purpose of understanding the grounds upon which an outcome was determined, and the actions taken to address the concern.

The University respects privacy and confidentiality, the expectation of confidentiality extends to all correspondence, reports, findings and responses in relation to any investigation. However, the University may be required to share information to protect the safety of individuals or the community, meet legal or regulatory requirements, or to ensure procedural fairness.

De-identified data will be made publicly available and used to inform and improve the University's response and procedures.

4.0 Definitions

For the purposes of this procedure, the following definitions apply:

Bullying is repeated, unreasonable behaviour by an individual or group, directed towards an individual or group, either physical or psychological in nature, that intimidates, offends, degrades, humiliates, undermines or threatens.

Consent, in the context of making a Disclosure or Formal Report, is where an individual is not pressured and freely agrees to report allegations of Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination and Sexual Harm.

Disclosure means an individual letting the University know about their experience or witnessing of Bullying, Harassment or Discrimination, but not a request for the University to take formal action.

Discrimination occurs when a person is treated unfairly or disadvantaged because of a protected attribute under applicable Commonwealth or Queensland anti-discrimination legislation.

Discrimination may be direct or indirect. Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of a protected attribute they have, have had, are assumed to have, or because of their association with a person who has that attribute. Indirect discrimination occurs when an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice that applies to everyone has the effect of disadvantaging a particular person or group of people because of a protected attribute. Protected attributes are defined in Queensland and Commonwealth legislation, and include attributes such as:

- Sex, sex characteristics, gender identity, intersex status, sexuality
- Relationship status, pregnancy, parental status, breastfeeding, family responsibilities
- Age
- Race, colour, national extraction, nationality, social origin
- Impairment, medical record
- Religious belief or religious activity
- Political belief or activity
- Trade union activity
- Sex work activity
- Experiencing family or domestic violence
- Association with, or relation to, a person identified on the basis of any of the above attributes.

Employees means individuals employed by the University and whose conditions of employment are covered by a University Enterprise Agreement or relevant Award, including continuing, continuing contingent-funded, fixed term and casual staff, and senior employees whose conditions of employment are covered by a written agreement or contract with the University.

Formal Report means an individual making a complaint to the University about an incident or behaviour concerning Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination or Sexual Harm. A Formal Report will result in the University undertaking an investigation into the concern.

Frivolous Report is a complaint that is trivial in nature; or is sufficiently meritless that further action would be a waste of time or cost; or the extent of the complaint is out of proportion to the significance of the matter.

Gender-based Violence means any form of physical or non-physical violence, harassment, abuse or threats, based on gender, that results in, or is likely to result in, harm, coercion, control, fear or deprivation of liberty or autonomy. This includes behaviours that happen in-person, online and using digital technology.

Harassment is behaviour or conduct that is unwelcome and unsolicited, and that makes an individual feel offended, intimidated, or humiliated. Harassment may be sexual or non-sexual in nature. Harassment may take multiple forms and have a variety of motivations. It can be a single incident, a series of incidents or an ongoing pattern of behaviour and can be perpetrated by individuals or groups of people.

Hate crimes are specific criminal acts which are motivated by hate and based on prejudice or bias against an individual, or a group of individuals, because of attributes such as race, religion, sexuality, sex characteristics or gender identity.

Report a Concern is an online form for students and Employees to make either a Disclosure or Formal Report about an incident of behaviour concerning Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination or Sexual Harm. Disclosures and Formal Reports may be made anonymously.

Respect Officer is an identified Employee who has been trained to receive Disclosures of Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination, Gender-based Violence and Sexual Harm with empathy and compassion and provide information about the options available.

Serious Vilification is where the vilification involves a threat of harm to someone or their property, or an incitement for others to do so.

Student Accommodation means accommodation offered or provided to a student by the University directly or an affiliated student accommodation provider.

University Activities means:

- any activity using University equipment or resources (e.g. communication technologies, vehicles, facilities)
- any use of private communication methods to support or engage with University activities (e.g. setting up a Facebook group for students studying a particular unit to discuss their studies)
- being in attendance at a University event, function or activity
- participating in any activity as a representative or Student of the University (e.g. field trips, practicums, conferences, sporting trips, participation in a University affiliated club, community meetings etc.)
- carrying out functions in connection with a University-endorsed activity, including at places external to University premises (e.g. at licensed premises, private residence, in the street)
- activities outside of the University where there is a significant or substantial connection to the employment at the University
- other special circumstances relating to educational institutions, including participating in any activity or carrying out functions in connection with their position at the University where they come into contact with staff, students or other parties of a separate educational institution.

University Premises, for the purposes of this procedure, means any University-owned, operated or occupied property or facility.

Vexatious or Malicious Report means a complaint where the person:

- knows it to be false; and
- complains for the primary purpose of damaging the University or the person against whom the report is made.

5.0 Information

Title	Student Reports of Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Procedure
Document number	2026/0000428
Purpose	<p>Griffith University is committed to providing a safe, respectful and inclusive environment where Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination are unacceptable.</p> <p>This Procedure details the processes for a student to Disclose and make Formal Reports about incidents of Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination.</p> <p>The Procedure provides the procedural implementation of key principles in the University's <i>Student Conduct, Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy</i> and <i>Student Charter Framework</i>.</p>
Audience	Students

Category	Academic
Subcategory	Student Services
UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	This document aligns with Sustainable Development Goal/s: 10: Reduced Inequalities
Approval date	2 March 2026
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Policy advisor	Registrar
Approving authority	Provost

6.0 Related Policy Documents and Supporting Documents

Legislation	Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld) Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth) Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth) Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld) Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth) (protected attributes relating to employment) Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth) Sex Discrimination Act 1984 Universities Accord (National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence) Act 2025
Policy	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Resolution of Breaches of Residential Community Standards and other Grievances within the Griffith University Residential Colleges Policy Student Charter Framework Student Complaints Policy Student Conduct, Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Student Critical Incident Management Policy

Student Review and Appeals Policy

Procedure

Student Complaints Procedure

Student General Conduct Procedure

Student Reports of Gender-based Violence and Sexual Harm Procedure

Student Review and Appeals Procedure

Local Protocol

Complaints and Grievances

Form

Report a Concern Form

Report a Concern (anonymous)
