

Sexual misconduct survey 2025

Analysis of results report

Reference: OfS 2025.61

Enquiries to: smsurvey@officeforstudents.org.uk

Publication date: 25 September 2025

Contents

Summary	3
Main themes Survey results	3 5
Sexual harassment Sexual assault/violence Confidence in seeking support and reporting Intimate personal relationships between staff and students Methodology	12 18 21 24
Data quality Response rates and non-response bias Non-response weighting Student confidentiality Discussion – strengths and limitations Annex A	24 24 27 28 28 30
A Overall prevalence of experience of unwanted behaviours of a sexual nature since being a student Bi Prevalence of experience of unwanted behaviours of a sexual nature in the last 12 months Gi Experience of the university or college's format reporting process H Overall prevalence of experience of unwanted sexual contact since being a student li Prevalence of experience of unwanted sexual contact in the last 12 months Ni Experience of the university or college's format reporting process Oi Confidence in seeking support from the university or college	30 30 31 32 32 33 33
Figure 1: Prevalence of experience of sexual harassment behaviours since being a student for respondents and broken down by sex and disability status	6 s 7
Figure 4: Identity of person or people connected to the reported incident of sexual harassment all respondents	
Figure 5: Proportion of students making a formal report or complaint to their university or colleg Figure 6: Experience of reporting incidents of sexual harassment to the university or college Figure 7: Prevalence of experience of unwanted sexual contact (sexual assault/violence) since being a student for all respondents	12
Figure 8: Proportion of incidents involving someone connected with the student's university or college	
Figure 10: Identity of person or people connected to the reported incident(s) of sexual assault/violence by starting-age group	
college of incidents of sexual assault/violence by starting-age group	nt of
sexual assault/violenceFigure 13: Confidence in seeking support from the university or collegeFigure 14: Confidence in seeking support from the university or college by sexual orientation	19
Figure 15: Confidence in seeking support from the university or college by sex	

Figure 16: Confidence in seeking support from the university or college by whether there is a	
reported disability	. 20
Figure 17: Confidence in seeking support from the university or college by starting-age group	. 21
Figure 18: Proportion reporting the university or college staff member(s) had been involved with	the
students education or assessment	. 22
Figure 19: Proportion reporting the university or college staff member(s) had any non-academic	
professional responsibility for them	. 23
Figure 20: Response rates (%) by characteristic and split	. 26

Summary

- 1. This document presents results from the 2025 sexual misconduct survey. It also details the methods used to process the survey data.
- 2. There is currently limited data on sexual misconduct affecting students in higher education in England. The aim of the sexual misconduct survey was to understand whether university or college students have experienced sexual harassment/sexual violence since they became a student, either within or outside a university or college setting.
- 3. The sexual misconduct survey was asked as a follow-up set of questions following the 2025 National Student Survey (NSS), and was available to all students in England who completed the NSS that is, final-year undergraduates.
- 4. It asks a series of questions related first to sexual harassment, second to sexual assault and third about student-staff relationships. This includes detailed descriptions of the behaviours involved to ensure accurate measures of prevalence. Information about the questions can be found in the questionnaire document.¹

Main themes

- 5. The survey has two separate sections. The first considers the prevalence of sexual harassment, where we ask about experiences of unwanted behaviours of a sexual nature. The second considers sexual assault/violence where we ask about experiences of unwanted sexual contact.
- 6. Overall, 24.5 per cent of respondents experienced at least one form of sexual harassment since they became a student and 14.1 per cent of respondents experienced at least one form of sexual assault/violence.
- 7. The same groups of students reported a higher prevalence of both sexual harassment and sexual assault/violence:
 - Female respondents
 - Those who are lesbian, gay or bisexual or who have another sexual orientation
 - Under 21 at the start of their course
 - Disabled students
 - Jewish, No religion and Any other religion or belief
 - IMD quintile 5 (least deprived)
 - Not eligible for free school meals

¹ See the sexual misconduct survey questionnaire.

- 8. Note that while we collected information on different types of sexual harassment and sexual assault/violence, in the analysis here we have focussed on experience of any type. As such it may be that patterns are driven by the most common types of sexual harassment and sexual assault/violence.
- 9. The 2025 survey was presented as an optional set of questions following the 2025 NSS for students registered at English providers. The primary aims in using the NSS to survey students on a larger, national scale were:
 - a. to understand the prevalence of sexual misconduct experienced by students
 - b. to gain insight on how and where interventions might be targeted to tackle sexual misconduct
 - c. to test an approach to capturing prevalence data at a national level.
- 10. All students invited to take part in the survey were final-year, undergraduate students at registered English providers. Of these, we received 51,920 responses, giving a response rate of 12.1 per cent overall.
- 11. The survey questionnaire is a shorter version of the pilot survey run in 2023. This pilot survey surveyed students studying at a number of volunteer providers.² The shortened questionnaire was subject to some further testing, to ensure it was still coherent after the changes.
- 12. This report is published alongside a data csv file and data dashboard which present the results of the survey for each question with breakdowns by certain characteristics³. Information for the overall outcomes for different questions, as well as for those partitioned by certain characteristics, has been included in this report. For a fuller understanding of the responses by characteristic please refer to the accompanying data dashboard.⁴
- 13. We plan to do further work with this data and provide more detailed analysis of the survey.

² For more about the pilot, see Survey of sexual misconduct - 2023 pilot.

³ For example, the characteristic of sex containing the splits female and male.

⁴ See Sexual misconduct survey 2025 data.

Survey results

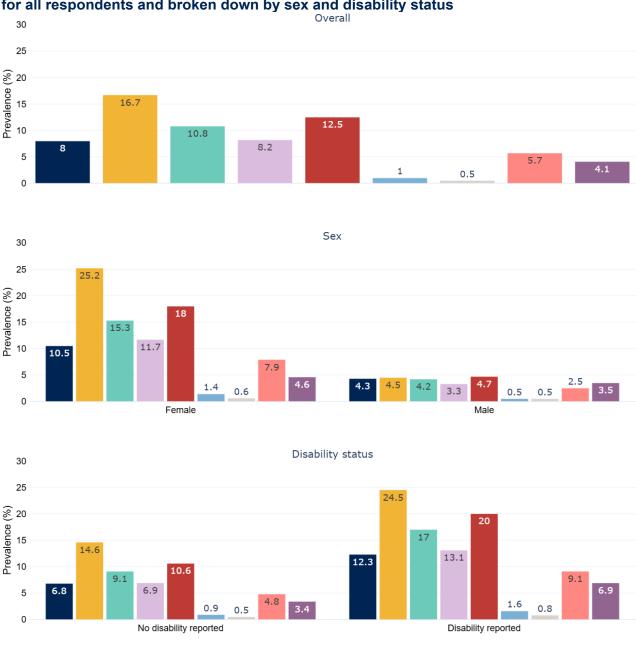
- 14. The results presented here are from the students who were eligible to take part in the sexual misconduct survey following the 2025 NSS. This was a similar population as used for the 2025 NSS, but excluded those who:
 - a. were registered at a non-English provider; or
 - b. were under 18 at the start of their course.
- 15. This report presents a selection of key findings that illustrate the most significant themes emerging from the survey responses. More detailed results, including breakdowns by student characteristics, are available in the accompanying data file and dashboard.
- 16. The results below are the outcomes of the weighted results which account for response bias using a number of characteristics. Please see the methodology section for more details.

Sexual harassment

- 17. Students were initially asked if they had ever experienced a range of unwanted behaviours of a sexual nature. Of these, 24.5 per cent selected one or more of the available options. The most selected individual behaviour was 'Making sexually suggestive looks or staring at your body', which was chosen by 16.7 per cent of respondents.
- 18. Students with the following characteristics were more likely to report experiencing at least one instance of sexual harassment:
 - a. Female 33 per cent
 - b. Mixed and white ethnicities 31.5 and 27.9 per cent
 - c. Under 21 at the start of their course 31.2 per cent
 - d. Lesbian, gay or bisexual and other sexual orientation 46.6 and 40.1 per cent
 - e. Disabled students- 34.7 per cent
 - f. Jewish, No religion and Any other religion or belief 29.8, 30.5 and 35.5 per cent
 - g. IMD quintile 5 (least deprived) 32.6 per cent
 - h. Not eligible for free school meals 32.9 per cent.
- 19. When looking at the different categories of sexual harassment, Most types of students follow a similar pattern to the overall output with the same types of behaviour being selected more than others. However there are exceptions; for example, male students did not follow this pattern (see Figure 1). The number of incidents for each behaviour among male students was roughly similar. Overall, men also reported experiencing fewer behaviours than women.
- 20. Students with a reported disability reported higher rates than those without a reported disability. Both, however, reported the same pattern of experiences. 'Making sexually suggestive looks or

staring at your body' was the most reported behaviour followed by 'Making unwelcome sexual comments or asking sexualised questions about your private life, body, or physical appearance'.

Figure 1: Prevalence of experience of sexual harassment behaviours since being a student for all respondents and broken down by sex and disability status



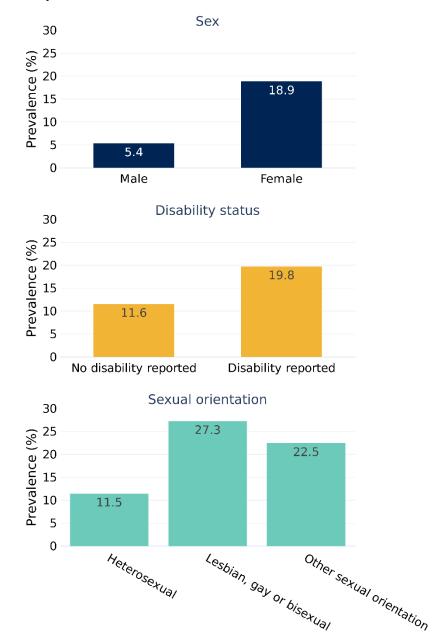
Since being a student, have you experienced any of the following behaviours? Someone...

- Making sexual gestures or exposing themselves to you
- Making sexually suggestive looks or staring at your body
- Asking, hinting, or making unwelcome requests that you have sex with them
- Persisting with suggestions that you establish a sexual or romantic relationship with them
- Making unwelcome sexual comments or asking sexualised questions about your private life, body, or physical appearance
- Taking a nude or sexual photo or video of you without your permission
- Posting a nude or sexual photo or video of you online, or sending it to others, without your permission
- Privately sending you sexualised messages electronically, via text message, email, social media, etc.
- Spreading unwelcome sexual rumours about you, either in person, or by text, email, social media, or other electronic means

Timing, location and people involved

21. The overall prevalence of experiences of sexual harassment for all final-year students in the last 12 months is 13.3 per cent. The groups that are more likely to report experiences of sexual harassment in the last 12 months are the same as the groups that are more likely to report sexual harassment since becoming a student. For example, as shown in Figure 2, female students, students with a reported disability and those who are lesbian, gay or bisexual or are another sexual orientation are more likely to have reported an incident of sexual harassment in the last 12 months.

Figure 2: Prevalence of experience of sexual harassment in the last 12 months, all respondents

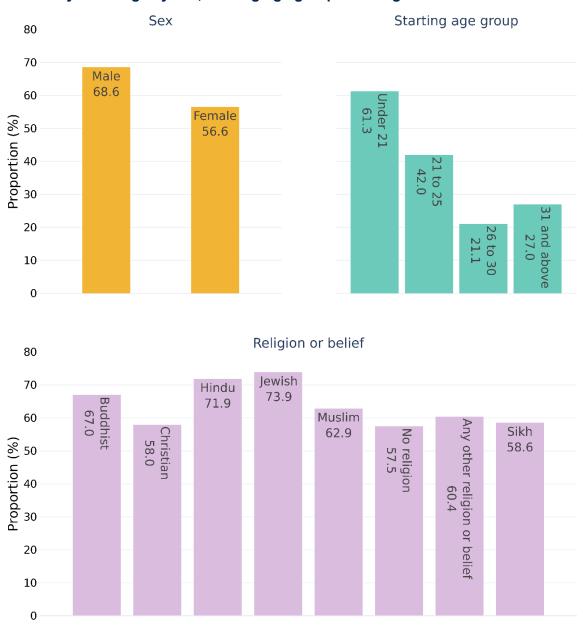


22. Of those who reported an experience of sexual harassment since being a student, 59.2 per cent reported that one or more of these experiences occurred in the 12 months prior to the survey. Of those students who reported at least one experience of sexual harassment in the

last 12 months, most reported that either the incident(s) did not occur in a university or college setting (39.7 per cent) or that some were in a university or college setting and some were not (45.1 per cent). By university or college setting we mean any place, event, or social occasion arranged by or associated with the student's university or college.

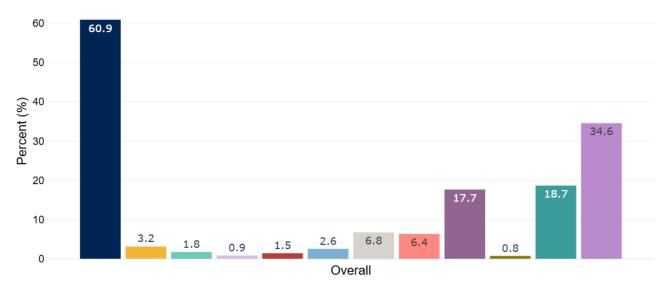
- 23. Out of those respondents who did not say that the incidents took place in a university setting, 58.4 per cent of respondents said that at least one of the incident(s) in the last 12 months involved someone connected with their university or college. For example, this might be another student or someone who works at the university or college.
- 24. This varied only a little across the different student characteristics. For most of the characteristics, more than 50 per cent of students reported that the incident(s) involved someone connected with their university. The only characteristic where this varied a lot was the respondent's age, where younger students reported more often that the incidents that did not occur in a university setting did involve someone connected with their university or college (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Proportion of incidents involving someone connected with the student's university or college by sex, starting-age group and religion or belief



25. If an incident happened within the last 12 months, students were asked about the identity of the those involved. The most frequently selected option was 'A student from my university/college' followed by 'Someone else' – see Figure 4.

Figure 4: Identity of person or people connected to the reported incident of sexual harassment for all respondents



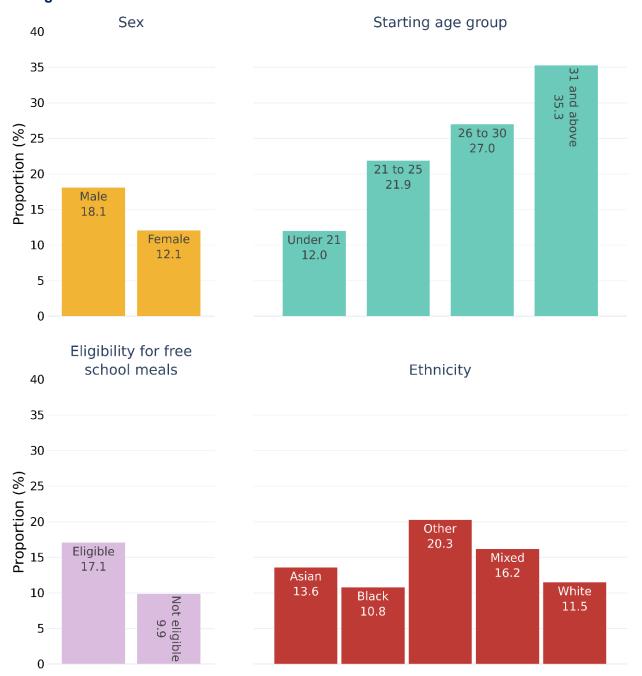
Were the people/was the person any of the following...?

- A student from your university/college
- A tutor, lecturer, research supervisor, or another member of academic staff from your university/college
- A non-academic (administrative) university/college staff member
- A sports coach
- Any other member of university/college staff
- Your supervisor or co-worker at your professional placement or internship
- An employer, manager, or co-worker at work
- A partner
- A hook-up, or date
- A family member
- A friend or acquaintance not from your university/college
- Someone else

Reporting and complaints

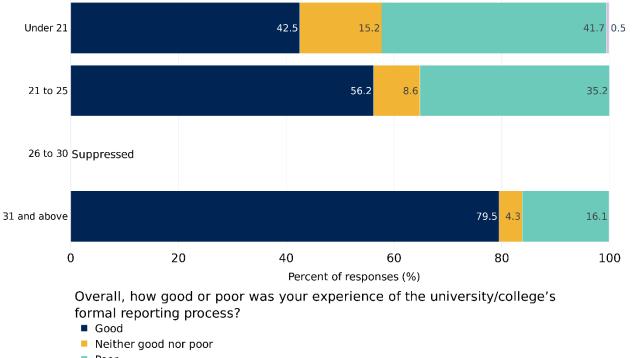
26. Only 13.2 per cent of students who experienced an incident in the last 12 months made a formal report or complaint about it to their university or college. Here, we also see a marked difference in the proportion of respondents who made a formal report or complaint when split by age. Figure 5 shows that of those aged under 21 at the start of their course, 12 per cent made a formal report or complaint compared with 35.3 per cent of those aged 31 and above. It also shows that other characteristics such as sex, eligibility for free school meals and ethnicity have different proportions of reporting depending on the characteristic split.

Figure 5: Proportion of students making a formal report or complaint to their university or college



- 27. Students who experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months, and had reported it to their university or college, were then asked whether their experience of the university or college's formal reporting process was good or poor. Of these students 46.7 per cent said their experience was good, 39.3 per cent said that it was poor and 13.6 per cent said neither good nor poor.
- 28. Within each characteristic there are differences between the splits. For example, Figure 6 shows the experience of reporting split by starting-age group. Students who were 31-years-old and above at the start of their course report a better experience compared with those under 21-years-old. Note: The values for those aged 26 to 30 are suppressed due to low volume.

Figure 6: Experience of reporting incidents of sexual harassment to the university or college

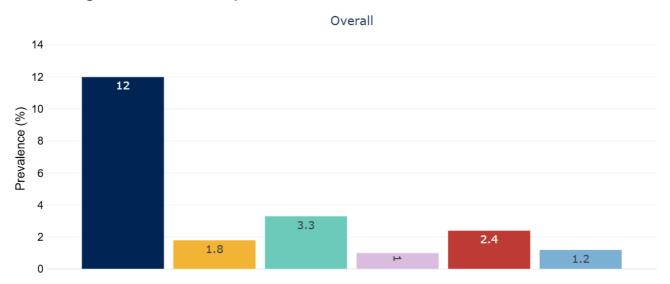


- Poor
- Don't know / Can't remember

Sexual assault/violence

- 29. In the second section of the survey, students were asked if they had experienced any unwanted sexual contact since being a student. Overall, 14.1 per cent of respondents reported experiencing at least one form of sexual assault/violence.
- 30. The most frequently selected category, chosen by 12 per cent of respondents, was 'Someone touched me in a sexual manner, kissed, pinched, or rubbed up against the private areas of my body (lips, breast/chest, crotch or bottom) or removed some of my clothes when I did not want them to (but did not attempt sexual penetration)'.
- 31. Students could select multiple options for this question and 14.1 per cent is the sum of respondents who chose one or more options. See Figure 7 for the percentage of respondents who selected each option.

Figure 7: Prevalence of experience of unwanted sexual contact (sexual assault/violence) since being a student for all respondents



Since being a student, has anyone ever done the following things to you when you did not want them to? Someone touched me in a sexual manner, kissed, pinched, or rubbed up against the private areas of my body

- (lips, breast/chest, crotch or bottom) or removed some of my clothes when I did not want them to (but did not attempt sexual penetration)
- Someone performed oral sex on me or made me perform oral sex with them when I did not want them to
- Someone put their penis, fingers, or other parts of their body, or objects into my anus or my vagina when I did not want them to
- Someone made ME perform anal or vaginal sex when I did not want them to (i.e., putting my penis or my fingers, or other body parts or objects, into their anus or vagina)
- Even though they were not successful, someone TRIED to put their penis, fingers, or other body parts, or objects into my vagina or my anus when I did not want them to
- Even though they were not successful, someone TRIED to have oral sex with me when I did not want them to, or TRIED to make me perform oral sex on them when I did not want to
- 32. Students with the following traits were more likely to report experiencing at least one instance of sexual assault/violence:
 - a. Female 19 per cent
 - b. Mixed or white ethnicities 20.1 and 16.4 per cent
 - c. Under 21-years-old at start of course 18.2 per cent
 - d. Lesbian, gay or bisexual and Other sexual orientations 29.8 and 23.3 per cent
 - e. Disabled students 22.1 per cent
 - f. Jewish, No religion and Any other religion or belief 17.4, 18.1, 21.4 per cent
 - g. IMD quintile 5 (least deprived) 19.5 per cent.
 - h. Not eligible for free school meals 19.3 per cent.

Timing, location and people involved

33. Of those who reported an experience of sexual assault/violence since being a student, 39.9 per cent reported that one or more of these experiences occurred in the 12 months prior to the survey. Out of all those who responded to the survey, 5.4 per cent reported an incident of

- sexual assault/violence in the last 12 months. The same groups as presented in paragraph 32 are more likely to report experiences of sexual assault/violence in the last 12 months.
- 34. Of those students who reported at least one experience in the last 12 months most reported that the incident(s) did not occur in a university setting (61.9 per cent). Those who reported that some incident(s) took place in a university or college setting and some took place outside of a university or college setting accounted for 21.1 per cent. Finally, those reporting that the incident(s) took place exclusively in a university or college setting were 15.2 per cent.
- 35. Respondents who experienced at least one incident outside of a university or college setting were then asked questions about the identity of those involved in the incident. 44.1 per cent said that the incident or incidents involved someone connected with their university or college. Of those who answered this question, those under 21-years-old at the start of their course were more likely to report that the incident(s) was connected to someone from their university (46.7 per cent) compared with those aged 26 to 30 (6.9 per cent) and those aged 31 and above (18.7 per cent) (see Figure 8).
- 36. Of the students who experienced an incident of sexual assault/violence in the last 12 months the most selected perpetrator was 'A student from your university/college' followed by 'Someone else' (see Figure 9). Broken down by age, those over 31 were more likely than those in other age groups to record that the perpetrator was a staff member or working at the university (see Figure 10). Whereas younger age groups were more likely than those in other age groups to report that the perpetrator was a student at the university or college.

Figure 8: Proportion of incidents involving someone connected with the student's university or college

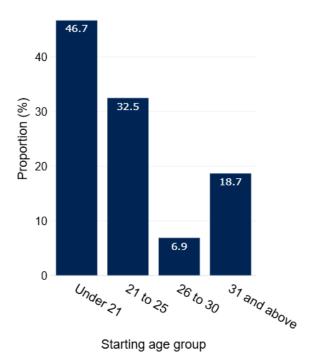
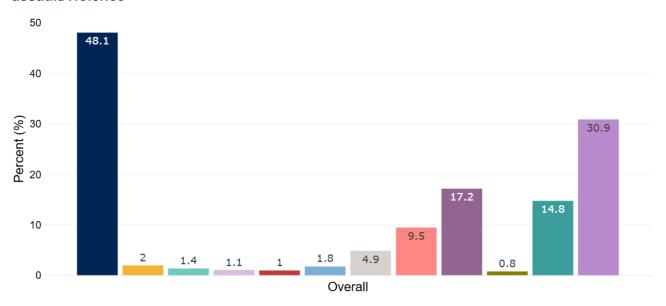


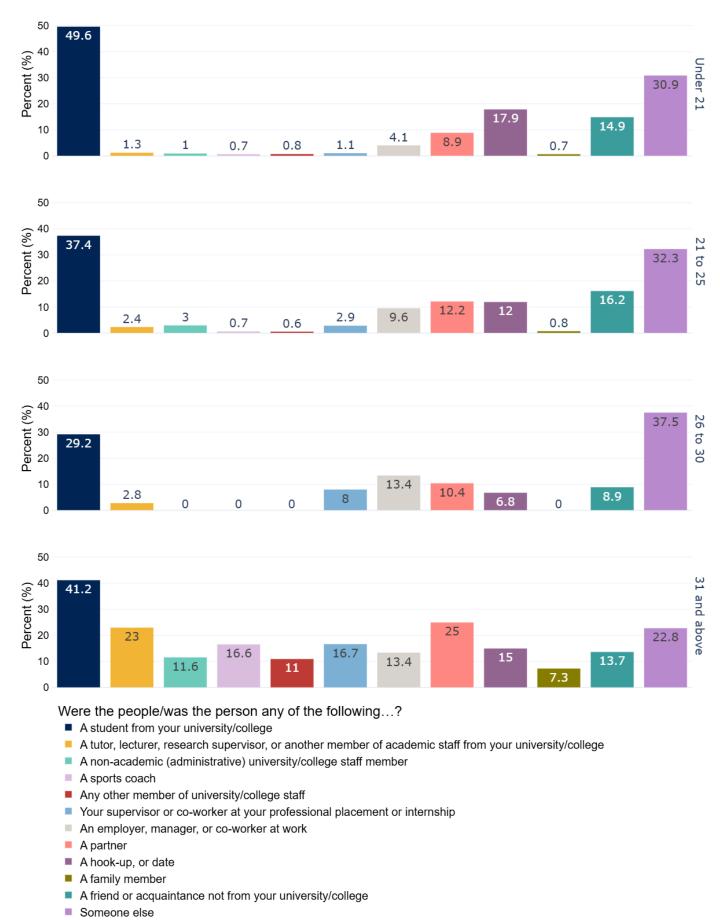
Figure 9: Identity of person or people connected to the reported incident(s) of sexual assault/violence



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

- A student from your university/college
- A tutor, lecturer, research supervisor, or another member of academic staff from your university/college
- A non-academic (administrative) university/college staff member
- A sports coach
- Any other member of university/college staff
- Your supervisor or co-worker at your professional placement or internship
- An employer, manager, or co-worker at work
- A partner
- A hook-up, or date
- A family member
- A friend or acquaintance not from your university/college
- Someone else

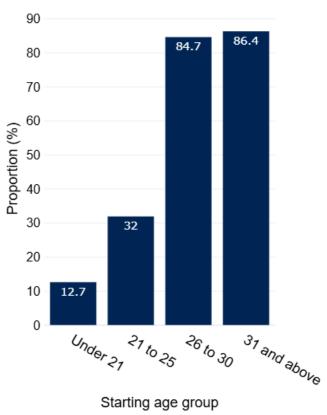




Reporting and complaints

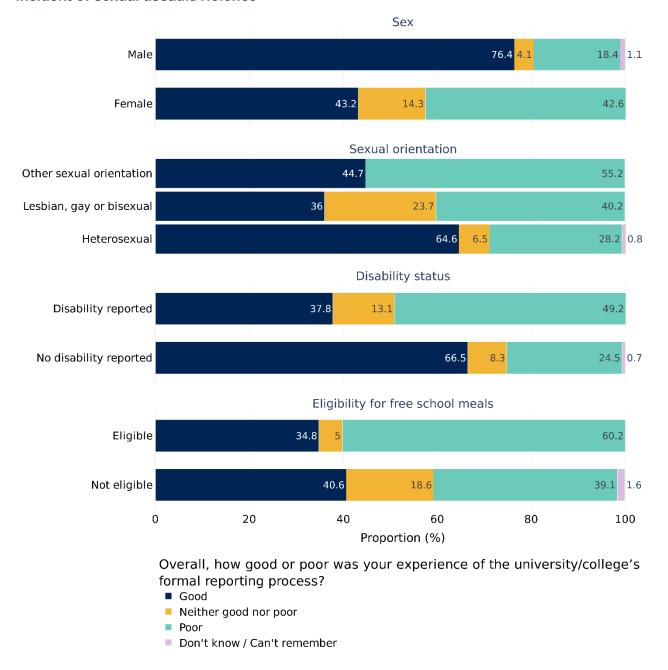
37. Incidents of sexual assault/violence were much more likely to be formally reported by those aged 26 to 30 (84.7 per cent) and 31 and above (86.4 per cent) than by those under 21 (12.7 per cent) (see Figure 11). Only students who experienced an incident in the last 12 months in a university setting or by someone connected to the university were asked if they had made a report.

Figure 11: Proportion of students who made a formal report or complaint to their university or college of incidents of sexual assault/violence by starting-age group



38. Students who had at least one experience of sexual assault/violence in the last 12 months and who reported the incident were then asked about their experience of the reporting process. Of these students 57.3 per cent said their experience was good, 32.4 per cent said that it was poor and 9.8 per cent said neither good nor poor. Some characteristics report a poorer experience of their university's and/or college's formal reporting process, for example, female students, students with a reported disability and students who are eligible for free school meals. In some cases, these are the students who report a higher prevalence of sexual assault/violence, such as female students and students with a reported disability.

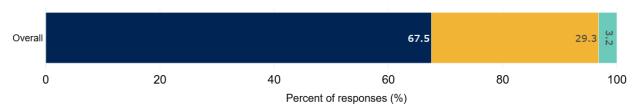
Figure 12: Experience of the university or college's reporting process when reporting an incident of sexual assault/violence



Confidence in seeking support and reporting

- 39. All respondents, regardless of whether they recorded an incident of sexual misconduct, were asked about their confidence in seeking support and reporting sexual harassment or misconduct.
- 40. Of those who responded, 67.5 per cent said that they felt confident about where to seek support and 29.3 per cent said they were not confident (see Figure 13). Some examples of characteristics where the splits have different levels of confidence are sexual orientation (Figure 14), sex (Figure 15), disability status (Figure 16) and starting-age group (Figure 17).

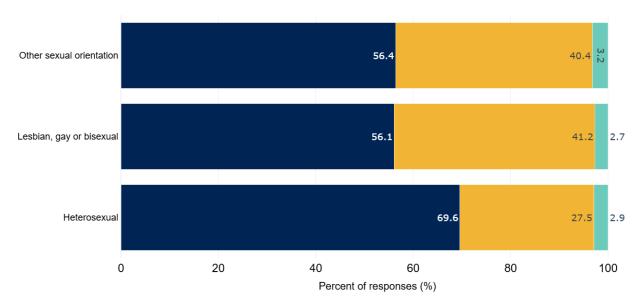
Figure 13: Confidence in seeking support from the university or college



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

- Confident
- Not confident
- Don't know / Can't remember

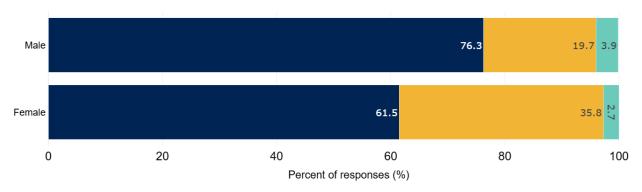
Figure 14: Confidence in seeking support from the university or college by sexual orientation



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

- Confident
- Not confident
- Don't know / Can't remember

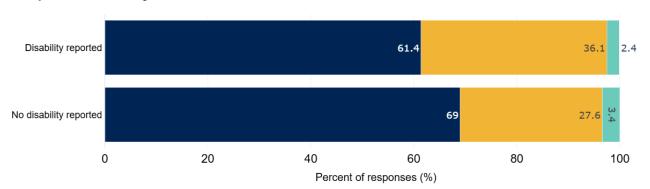
Figure 15: Confidence in seeking support from the university or college by sex



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

- Confident
- Not confident
- Don't know / Can't remember

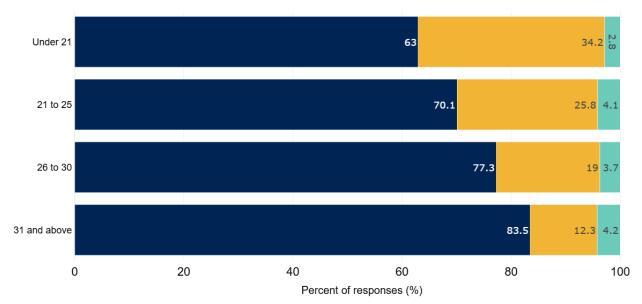
Figure 16: Confidence in seeking support from the university or college by whether there is a reported disability



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

- Confident
- Not confident
- Don't know / Can't remember

Figure 17: Confidence in seeking support from the university or college by starting-age group



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

- Confident
- Not confident
- Don't know / Can't remember

Intimate personal relationships between staff and students

- 41. Overall, 1.5 per cent of respondents reported being in a staff-student relationship in the last 12 months.
- 42. Of those who had been involved in a relationship, 68.8 per cent of respondents said that the university or college staff member(s) had been involved with their education or assessment.
- 43. Of those who had been involved in a relationship, 58.3 per cent said that the university or college staff member(s) had some kind of non-academic professional responsibility for them.
- 44. One characteristic with a marked difference in whether the staff member(s) had some kind of professional responsibility for the student is disability status. Students with no reported disability responded more often that the staff member was involved with their education or assessment (72.6 per cent compared with 45.5 per cent of students with a disability reported: see Figure 18). A similar pattern occurs when the staff member had some kind of non-professional responsibility. Students with no reported disability reported that the staff member had some kind of responsibility 62.5 per cent of the time compared with 32.3 per cent of students with a reported disability (see Figure 19).
- 45. Higher levels of male students, students aged 31 and over, and students from the most deprived areas (IMD Quintile 1) also reported that the staff member was either involved in their education or assessment, or had some non-academic professional responsibility for them (see Figures 18 and 19).

Figure 18: Proportion reporting the university or college staff member(s) had been involved with the students education or assessment

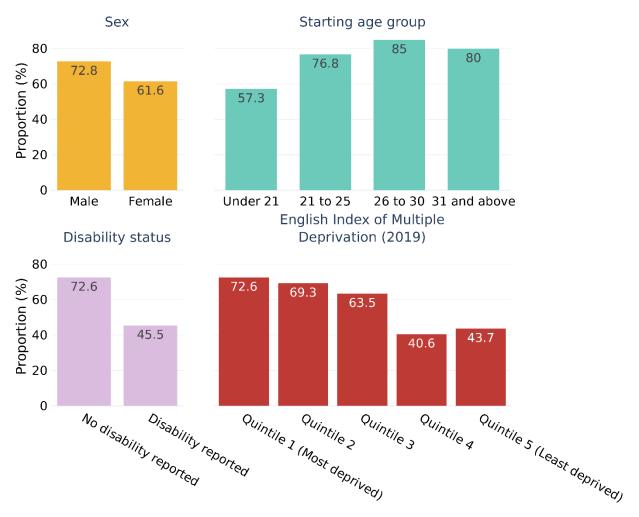
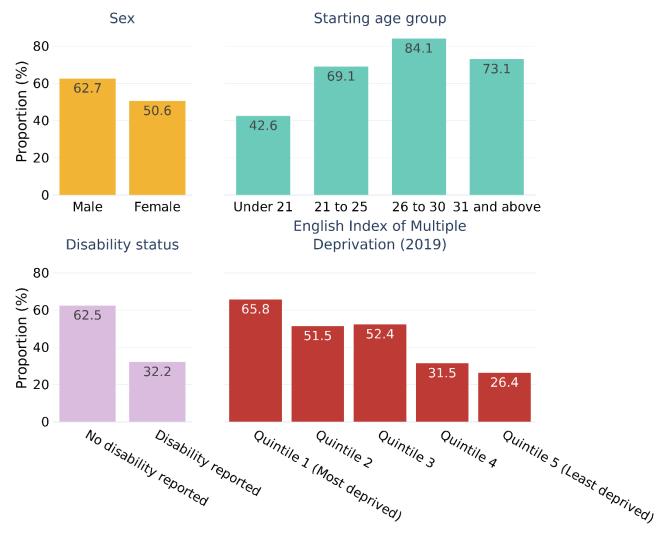


Figure 19: Proportion reporting the university or college staff member(s) had any non-academic professional responsibility for them



Methodology

- 46. For details concerning data collection and which providers were included in the survey, please refer to the NSS 2025 methods documentation.⁵ For specific details about the sexual misconduct survey, please see this section.
- 47. Students were considered eligible for the sexual misconduct section of the NSS if they were registered at an English provider and aged 18 or over upon starting their studies. Note that the survey includes only final-year students.
- 48. Any comparisons made with the 2023 pilot should keep in mind the differences in population.
- 49. Although the main NSS is a mixed-mode survey the sexual misconduct survey section was online only.
- 50. The questionnaire with details of the routing and question wording can be found on the OfS website.⁶
- 51. Details of any derived fields based on the survey questions can be found in Annex A.
- 52. Student characteristic fields are the same as those used as part of the NSS.

Data quality

- 53. The dropout rate is minimal across the survey. Most students who started the survey went on to complete all the questions they were routed to with only 1.6 per cent of those who responded to question A dropping out before question P.
- 54. Similarly to the NSS results, the sexual misconduct survey results published are sometimes based on very small populations (as low as 12.5 students). This means there is a high degree of uncertainty around some of these results. Estimates of uncertainty and benchmarks are not included in this release in order to facilitate its early publication, and users are encouraged to be careful using estimates based on small numbers.
- 55. Users should also be aware that this is the first release of sector-wide estimates, and care should be taken in interpreting results. Although the results show clear correlations between certain characteristics and prevalence figures, we need to determine which factors are most useful for identifying those most at risk; especially in case there are important characteristics we have not yet examined, or more complex patterns.

Response rates and non-response bias

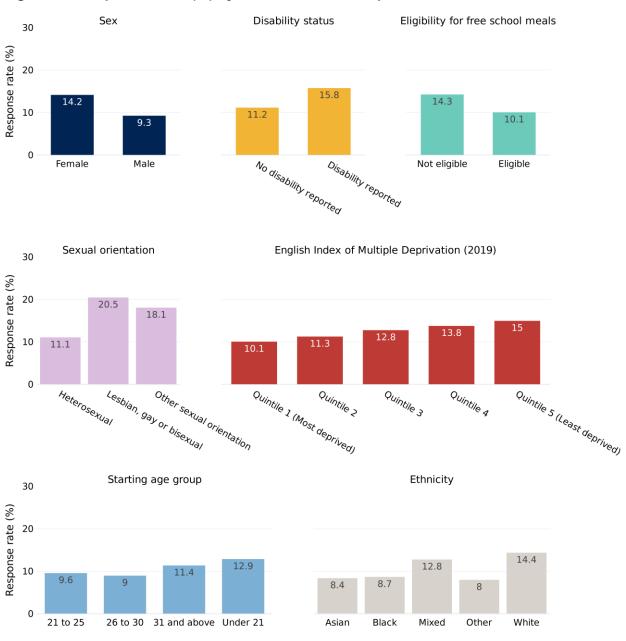
56. To find whether a student had responded we checked whether they gave a substantive response to the four questions to which all students were routed throughout the survey. A

⁵ See NSS documentation and definitions.

⁶ See the sexual misconduct survey questionnaire.

- substantive response was considered to be anything other than 'Prefer not to say' which could be used to skip a question. We have not included results for this option in the outputs.
- 57. Out of those who were eligible, 51,920 responded to the survey with an overall response rate of 12.1 per cent. Variation in response between characteristic splits was observed which can be viewed in Figure 20.
- 58. As can be seen, response rates varied substantially between different groups in multiple ways. The most obvious pattern was that those groups with higher response rates tended to also be those who reported a higher prevalence of sexual harassment and sexual assault.

Figure 20: Response rates (%) by characteristic and split





Non-response weighting

- 59. Our approach to non-response weighting broadly follows the approach taken for the 2023 pilot.
- 60. From our investigation into response rates, we know that not all groups of students responded equally to the survey. To correct for this difference, we used characteristics of students and providers to model differences in response. Unusually for social surveys in general, we have detailed information for all students who could have taken part in the survey, and not just the respondents.
- 61. This allowed us to build logistic regression models, where propensity to respond was the dependent variable, and other characteristics were used as independent variables. A number of combinations of independent variables were tested, prioritising goodness-of-fit to maximise predictive power. A number of possible interaction terms were also tested but made very little difference to the fit of the model so were not kept in the final model used.
- 62. We used the Python Statsmodels package to model the data and then calculate a response propensity for each individual by subject. We then took the reciprocal of the propensities calculated to assign weights. These weights are therefore higher for the respondents who were underrepresented, and lower for those who were overrepresented.
- 63. Fields tested as part of the weighting estimation were:
 - a. Age
 - b. Ethnicity
 - c. Disability type
 - d. Distance learning*
 - e. Fee limits
 - f. Financial typology*
 - g. Free school meals
 - h. IMD quintile
 - i. Level of study
 - j. Mode of study
 - k. Registering provider region
 - I. Religion
 - m. Sex

⁷ Students studying joint honours or multiple subjects are split proportionally across those subjects.

- n. Sexual orientation
- o. Student data collection*
- p. Student domicile*
- q. Student typology
- r. Subject
- 64. All those characteristics with * were not used in the final model as they added very little predictive power.
- 65. When applied, the weighting generally decreased the prevalence statistics. This is because response propensity was generally higher in those groups who were more likely to report experiencing sexual harassment and sexual assault/violence. There are exceptions to this for example, the age group 31 and above had a higher response rate than those in ages 21 to 30 but a lower prevalence.
- 66. The model explained only a little of the overall response propensity of individuals. This is because there are factors that influence whether a student responds that are not captured as part of the characteristics we were able to include in our model, for example, an individual's attitude to surveys, interest in the particular topic or whether they have the time to participate. However, the quality of the model depends on whether these factors are associated with how people respond, independently of any of the characteristics we included in the model. This will, of course, always be true to some extent; however, the intention of including so many aspects of students is to reduce such bias as far as possible.

Student confidentiality

- 67. All population counts are rounded to the nearest 10.
- 68. All percentages are rounded to the nearest 0.1.
- 69. We have suppressed the outputs where there are fewer than 12.5 respondents in the overall numbers for that question and characteristic split.
- 70. The low response rate means we have chosen not to suppress results below a certain response-rate threshold as we do for the Graduate Outcomes and NSS which have response-rate suppression thresholds of 30 per cent and 50 per cent respectively.
- 71. Weighted outputs may be 0 even when there were responses to the question.

Discussion - strengths and limitations

- 72. The 2025 sexual misconduct survey was run using best practice wherever possible. However, sexual misconduct among students is not well understood, and is a complex, difficult and sensitive issue to research.
- 73. In designing the survey, we based our questionnaire and methods on the 2023 pilot study, which was designed in line with best practice in discussion with an external advisory group and

was well received.⁸ We also spoke to methodological experts at the Office for National Statistics to sense-check our approach to weighting. Further, we used the framework and infrastructure of the NSS to enable us to survey a large population with a standardised approach.

- 74. Our approach to weighting allows us to compensate for many sources of non-response bias. While we have discussed the approach with internal and external survey experts, it is somewhat unusual for a large social survey if only because few such surveys have access to such extensive data on non-respondents. We also tested decision trees to build response models and found broadly similar patterns. However, time and technical limitations prevented us from fully exploring this approach. We picked logistic regression because it is simple and readily explicable.
- 75. At this point the analysis has been straightforward, to allow the Office for Students to share results as early as possible. We are still working on analysing the data by combinations of variables to understand better the reasons for various patterns and may also build regression models to look at which characteristics have the greatest impact.
- 76. Most of our analysis on the prevalence of harassment and assault/violence among different groups has treated all responses equally; we have not so far differentiated between more and less serious types of harassment, or types of assault/violence, and doing so could change the patterns discussed above.
- 77. We are interested in feedback on avenues for analysis and likely issues from those with knowledge in sexual misconduct or the higher education sector, and if possible, will use such feedback in our future exploration and analysis of the data.
- 78. Because the sexual misconduct survey was tied to the NSS, it is limited to final-year undergraduate students, and so the results are representative of final-year undergraduates, and not the student population as a whole. We will consider this limitation in any future data collection in this area. However, we will need to offset this against the benefits gained from using the NSS infrastructure and response-chasing framework. These are considerable advantages, making the survey much more practical and almost certainly improving response rates compared with other potential approaches.

⁸ See Survey of sexual misconduct - 2023 pilot.

Annex A

79. This annex contains information about how we have derived fields based on answers to the survey questions.

A Overall prevalence of experience of unwanted behaviours of a sexual nature since being a student

80. This field indicates whether a student has experienced any form of unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature since being a student (Since being a student, have you experienced any of the following behaviours? Someone...).

Value	Description	Definition
1	Student experienced some form of unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature since being a student.	a A_1 = 1 or A_2 = 1 or A_3 = 1 or A_4 = 1 or A_5 = 1 or A_6 = 1 or A_7 = 1 or A_8 = 1 or A_9 = 1
0	Student has not experienced some form of unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature since being a student.	A_NA = 1 or A_DK = 1 or A_REF = 1
BLANK	Student has not answered the question.	Otherwise

Bi Prevalence of experience of unwanted behaviours of a sexual nature in the last 12 months

81. This field shows, out of those who started the survey and didn't drop out after the first question, whether a student has experienced some form of unwanted behaviour in the 12 months prior to the survey.

Value	Description	Definition
1	Student has experienced some form of unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature in the last 12 months.	A_1 = 1 or A_2 = 1 or A_3 = 1 or A_4 = 1 or A_5 = 1 or A_6 = 1 or A_7 = 1 or A_8 = 1 or A_9 = 1 or A_NA = 1 or A_DK = 1 or A_REF = 1 and (B is not NULL or (H_1 = 1 or H_2 = 1 or H_3 = 1 or H_4 = 1 or H_5 = 1 or H_6 = 1 or H_7 = 1 or H_8 = 1 or H_9 = 1 or H_NA = 1 or H_DK = 1 or H_REF = 1)) and B = 1
8	Don't know	A_1 = 1 or A_2 = 1 or A_3 = 1 or A_4 = 1 or A_5 = 1

		or A_6 = 1 or A_7 = 1 or A_8 = 1 or A_9 = 1 or A_NA = 1 or A_DK = 1 or A_REF = 1 and (B is not NULL or (H_1 = 1 or H_2 = 1 or H_3 = 1 or H_4 = 1 or H_5 = 1 or H_6 = 1 or H_7 = 1 or H_8 = 1 or H_9 = 1 or H_NA = 1 or H_DK = 1 or H_REF = 1)) and B = 8
9	Prefer not to say	A_1 = 1 or A_2 = 1 or A_3 = 1 or A_4 = 1 or A_5 = 1 or A_6 = 1 or A_7 = 1 or A_8 = 1 or A_9 = 1 or A_NA = 1 or A_DK = 1 or A_REF = 1 and (B is not NULL or (H_1 = 1 or H_2 = 1 or H_3 = 1 or H_4 = 1 or H_5 = 1 or H_6 = 1 or H_7 = 1 or H_8 = 1 or H_9 = 1 or H_NA = 1 or H_DK = 1 or H_REF = 1)) and B = 9
2	Student has not experienced some form of unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature in the last 12 months.	A_1 = 1 or A_2 = 1 or A_3 = 1 or A_4 = 1 or A_5 = 1 or A_6 = 1 or A_7 = 1 or A_8 = 1 or A_9 = 1 or A_NA = 1 or A_DK = 1 or A_REF = 1 and not above
BLANK	Student has not answered the question.	Otherwise

Gi Experience of the university or college's format reporting process

82. Information about how the responses to question G 'Overall, how good or poor was your experience of the university/college's formal reporting process?' have been categorised.

Value	Description	Definition
1	NET: Good	G in (1, 2)
3	Neither good nor poor	G = 3

4	NET: Poor	G in (4, 5)
6	Don't know / Can't remember	G = 6
7	Prefer not to say	G = 7
BLANK	Student has not answered the question	Otherwise

H Overall prevalence of experience of unwanted sexual contact since being a student

83. This field indicates whether a student has experienced any form of unwanted sexual contact since being a student.

Value	Description	Definition
1	Student experienced some form of unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature since being a student.	a H_1 = 1 or H_2 = 1 or H_3 = 1 or H_4 = 1 or H_5 = 1 or H_6 = 1
0	Student has not experienced some form of unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature since being a student.	H_NA = 1 or H_DK = 1 or H_REF = 1
BLANK	Student has not answered the question.	Otherwise

li Prevalence of experience of unwanted sexual contact in the last 12 months

84. This field shows, out of those who answered question H and didn't drop out immediately after, whether a student has experienced some form of unwanted sexual contact in the 12 months prior to the survey.

Value	Description	Definition
1	Student has experienced some form of unwanted sexual contact in the last 12 months.	H_1 = 1 or H_2 = 1 or H_3 = 1 or H_4 = 1 or H_5 = 1 or H_6 = 1 or H_NA = 1 or H_DK = 1 or H_REF = 1 and (I is not NULL or O is not NULL) and I = 1
8	Don't know	H_1 = 1 or H_2 = 1 or H_3 = 1 or H_4 = 1 or H_5 = 1 or H_6 = 1 or H_NA = 1 or H_DK = 1 or H_REF = 1 and (I is not NULL or O is not NULL) and I = 8

9	Prefer not to say	H_1 = 1 or H_2 = 1 or H_3 = 1 or H_4 = 1 or H_5 = 1 or H_6 = 1 or H_NA = 1 or H_DK = 1 or H_REF = 1 and (I is not NULL or O is not NULL) and I = 9
2	Student has not experienced some form of unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature in the last 12 months.	H_1 = 1 or H_2 = 1 or H_3 = 1 or H_4 = 1 or H_5 = 1 or H_6 = 1 or H_NA = 1 or H_DK = 1 or H_REF = 1 and not above
BLANK	Student has not answered the question.	Otherwise

Ni Experience of the university or college's format reporting process

85. Information about how the responses to question N 'Overall, how good or poor was your experience of the university/college's formal reporting process?' have been categorised.

Value	Description	Definition
1	NET: Good	N in (1, 2)
3	Neither good nor poor	N = 3
4	NET: Poor	N in (4, 5)
8	Don't know / Can't remember	N = 6
9	Prefer not to say	N = 7
BLANK	Student has not answered the question	Otherwise

Oi Confidence in seeking support from the university or college

86. Information about how the responses to question O 'How confident are you about where to seek support within your university/college about an experience of sexual harassment or misconduct?' have been categorised.

Value	Description	Definition
1	NET: Confident	N in (1, 2)
3	NET: Not confident	N in (3, 4)
8	Don't know / Can't remember	N = 6
9	Prefer not to say	N = 7
BLANK	Student has not answered the question	Otherwise

