Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Policy

1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the principles underpinning the University's commitment to preventing and responding to Gender-based Violence, in compliance with the national standards for preventing and responding to Gender-based Violence as set out in the *National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence 2025*.

2 Scope

This policy applies to the University's prevention of, and response to, Gender-based Violence involving Students, University Members, alumni, and associated organisations (such as student clubs and societies), regardless of whether the Gender-based Violence occurs on campus, off campus, or online, regardless of whether the Gender-based Violence occurs in connection with University activities, and regardless of the context in which the Gender-based Violence occurs.

3 Policy Statement

The University recognises that:

- gender inequality and harmful social norms, such as condoning violence against women and gender-diverse people, rigid gender stereotyping, and masculine norms that emphasise aggression, dominance, and control, are key drivers of Gender-based Violence; and
- Gender-based Violence is disproportionately experienced by women, First Nations people, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, people with disability, and people of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity.

Gender-based Violence is unacceptable and, as such, the University is committed to addressing the drivers of Gender-based Violence and may take disciplinary action against University Members and Students found to have engaged in Gender-based Violence.

4 Principles

4.1 Roles and Responsibilities

4.1.1 University Council

Failure to comply with this Policy or Policy Instrument may be considered as misconduct and the provisions of the relevant Policy or Procedure applied. A hard copy of this electronic document is uncontrolled and may not be current as UniSQ the University regularly reviews and updates its Policies and Policy Instruments. The latest controlled version can be found in the UniSQ's Policy and Procedure Library.

The University will ensure members of the University Council, or members of the relevant Council Committees, have sufficient understanding of safety and wellbeing factors impacting Students and University Members.

The University Council is responsible for endorsing the University's Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Plan.

4.1.2 Vice-Chancellor and President

The Vice-Chancellor and President is accountable for the University's compliance with the National Gender-based Violence Code, and for leading the implementation of the University's Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Plan.

4.1.3 Vice-Chancellor's Executive, senior leaders, and Supervisors

Members of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive, senior leaders, and Supervisors are responsible for modelling expected standards of behaviour and promoting a University-wide culture that prioritises the safety and support of Students and University Members in the prevention of, and response to, Gender-based Violence.

4.1.4 Students and University Members

Students and University Members must comply with University policies and procedures, including the Student General Conduct Policy and Code of Conduct Policy, respectively, as well as with relevant legislation, and must ensure their conduct does not constitute Gender-based Violence.

4.1.5 Other Persons

Other persons, such as alumni, members of the public, or members of student clubs or societies, must ensure their conduct does not constitute Gender-based Violence.

4.2 Preventing Gender-based Violence

The University will aim to prevent Gender-based Violence through a range of mechanisms and initiatives, including through:

- a whole-of-University Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Plan, published on the University's website;
- robust processes designed to identify risks of Gender-based Violence (including the University's recruitment, selection, appointment, promotion and reward process);
- clear and accessible expectations for the standards of conduct expected from Students and University Members, communicated through the Student General Conduct Policy

and Code of Conduct Policy, respectively;

- education and training, to increase awareness of Gender-based Violence and the drivers of Gender-based Violence (including those specific to the University);
- promotion and communication of evidence-based preventative information across the University's working, learning, living, and social environments; and
- undertaking prevention initiatives to increase awareness and understanding of Gender-based Violence.

The University will take a proactive, collaborative, and evidence-based approach to the prevention of Gender-based Violence. This approach will focus on primary prevention and early intervention through education and training, to raise awareness of Gender-based Violence and foster a culture of respect and inclusion.

The University will provide Students and University Members with ongoing comprehensive education and training on preventing and responding to Gender-based Violence.

These programs will be developed through collaboration and engagement with subject matter experts, Students, University Members, people who have experienced Gender-based Violence, and those groups who are disproportionately affected by Gender-based Violence.

The University will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of its Gender-based Violence education and training, and its preventative activities, to inform improvements to its prevention and response to Gender-based-Violence.

4.3 Reporting and Responding to Gender-based Violence

The University provides multiple pathways for making Gender-based Violence Disclosures and Complaints and encourages Disclosers and third parties to report Gender-based Violence.

These pathways, as well as the University's processes for responding to Gender-based Violence Disclosures and Complaints, are set out in the:

- Gender-based Violence (University Members) Response Procedure (for Gender-based Violence Disclosures or Complaints about University Members); and
- Student Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Procedure and the Student General Misconduct Procedure (for Gender-based Violence Disclosures or formal reports about Students).

4.3.1 Procedural fairness

The University's response to Gender-based Violence will be procedurally fair.

This means the University will ensure that:

- its response is compliant with relevant legislation and University policies and procedures;
- individuals are afforded the opportunity to make a Gender-based Violence Complaint or Disclosure about Students or University Members, and to provide information in support of their allegations;
- Students and University Members are afforded the opportunity to respond to a Gender-based Violence Complaint or Disclosure about their conduct before a decision is made that negatively affects them;
- the decision-maker in a Gender-based Violence Complaint or Disclosure response process is impartial and unbiased; and
- decisions that affect Students and University Members are reasonable and justifiable in the circumstances.

4.3.2 Person-centred approach

The University will take a person-centred approach to responding to Gender-based Violence.

This means the University will genuinely consider the Discloser's wishes when making decisions about its response to Gender-based Violence Disclosures and Complaints. While the decision remains with the University, a person-centred approach means the University will take into account the impact any decision may have on the Discloser, while also ensuring the health and safety of others, and making sure the Discloser is afforded dignity and respect throughout the process.

4.3.3 Trauma-informed approach

The University's response to Gender-based Violence will be trauma-informed.

This means the University will minimise the risk of re-traumatising a Discloser, and will support the Discloser's recovery and wellbeing, by ensuring the process of responding to Gender-based Violence Disclosures and Complaints, is built on safety (including psychological safety), trust, choice, collaboration, and empowerment.

4.3.4 Cultural safety

The University's response to Gender-based Violence will be undertaken in a culturally safe manner.

This means Employees responsible for responding to Gender-based Violence will consider biases towards people of diverse cultural backgrounds, including First Nations people, when

responding to a Gender-based Violence Disclosure or Complaint, and will ensure Disclosers, Respondents, and other persons (such as witnesses) involved in the Disclosure or Complaint are treated with fairness and respect.

4.3.5 Good faith participation

Disclosers, Respondents, and other persons (such as witnesses) involved in a Gender-based Violence Disclosure or Complaint are required to act in good faith. This means that they are required to act in an honest and sincere way when engaging in a process of responding to Gender-based Violence.

4.3.6 Victimisation and retaliation

The University recognises an individual's right to make a Gender-based Violence Disclosure or Complaint, or to participate in the process, as well as their right not to be victimised, vilified, or retaliated against for doing so.

The University will ensure Disclosers, Respondents, and other persons (such as witnesses) involved in a Gender-based Violence Disclosure or Complaint are notified of their rights and obligations in this regard.

4.3.7 Privacy and confidentiality

The University will treat Personal Information disclosed to it in Gender-based Violence Disclosures and Complaints as confidential and will comply with its obligations under the *Information Privacy Act 2009* (Qld) when handling Personal Information.

During any investigation of a Gender-based Violence Disclosure or Complaint, Disclosers, Respondents, and other persons (such as witnesses) involved in a Gender-based Violence Disclosure or Complaint are required to maintain the confidentiality of the matter, including any associated materials and information, for the purpose of maintaining the integrity of the process.

University Members responsible for responding to Gender-based Violence Disclosures and Complaints must ensure they provide Disclosers and Respondents with consistent and clear information (in plain English) in relation to these obligations.

These obligations do not prevent Disclosers or Respondents, or other persons involved in a Gender-based Violence Disclosure or Complaint, from seeking professional advice or support (for example, from an industrial or legal representative, or counsellor).

The University prohibits the use of non-disclosure agreements in relation to Gender-based Violence. Any agreement reached between the University and a Discloser will not require a Discloser to keep their experience of Gender-based Violence confidential.

4.4 Support Services

The University will make a variety of support services available to Disclosers and Respondents in relation to Gender-based Violence, which include:

- risk assessments and the implementation of controls to eliminate or mitigate risk as far as is reasonably practicable in the circumstances;
- tailored support plans for the Discloser and Respondent;
- free and confidential counselling to Students;
- free and confidential counselling to Employees through the Employee Assistance Program;
- emergency and crisis accommodation for Students who reside in the Residential Colleges;
- reasonable academic adjustments for Students;
- reasonable supervisory and/or other workplace adjustments for Employees; and
- appropriate leave arrangements for Employees.

Disclosers, Respondents, and other persons (such as witnesses) involved in a Gender-based Violence Disclosure or Complaint, may be accompanied by a support person throughout the University's process of responding to Gender-based Violence. Support persons must not have a conflict of interest in the matter.

The University will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of its support services to inform improvements to its prevention and response to Gender-based-Violence.

4.5 Student Accommodation

The University will ensure that the engagement of Students and University Members to work in student accommodation owned and operated by the University (i.e., in the Residential Colleges), and those in affiliated accommodation providers, is managed in a manner that is compliant with the disclosure requirements of the Gender-based Violence Code.

4.6 Data and Reporting Requirements

The University recognises that data plays a critical role in understanding the nature and prevalence of Gender-based Violence, identifying the needs of different groups, measuring progress, addressing the drivers of Gender-based Violence specific to the University's study and work environments, and informing the University's policies and procedures.

The University will collect data from Disclosers and Respondents in relation to Gender-based

Violence in a safe, trauma-informed, and person-centred manner.

4.6.1 Internal reporting

The University will regularly report to the University Council, through the appropriate Council Committees, on the effectiveness of its Gender-based Violence prevention and response mechanisms.

This will include periodic reports, using de-identified data, to the Audit and Risk Committee, the Vice-Chancellor's Executive, and other University safety consultative forums.

4.6.2 External reporting

The University will regularly report to the Department of Education on its compliance with the National Gender-based Violence Code. This will include providing the Department of Education with de-identified and aggregated data on Gender-based Violence Disclosures and Complaints.

The University will report or refer individual Gender-based Violence Disclosures or Complaints to other external agencies, such as the Queensland Police Service or the Crime and Corruption Commission, if required to do so by law. These reports or referrals may include Personal Information about the Discloser, Respondent, and other persons (such as witnesses) involved in a Gender-based Violence Disclosure or Complaint.

4.7 Policy Review

The University is committed to implementing any required recommendations from the National Student Ombudsman and will review this policy at least every three years to ensure ongoing compliance with the National Gender-based Violence Code.

5 References

Nil.

6 Schedules

This policy must be read in conjunction with its subordinate schedules as provided in the table below.

7 Policy Information

Accountable Officer	Vice-Chancellor
Responsible Officer	Chief People Officer

	Dean (Students)
Policy Type	Governance Policy
Policy Suite	Gender-based Violence (University Members) Response Procedure
Subordinate Schedules	
Approved Date	12/10/2026
Effective Date	1/1/2026
Review Date	1/1/2031
Relevant Legislation	*National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence 2025* (Cth) *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth) *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (Qld) *Crime and Corruption Act 2001* (Qld) *Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld) *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Qld) *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth) *Information Privacy Act 2009* (Qld) Enterprise Agreement
Policy Exceptions	Policy Exceptions Register
Related Policies	Code of Conduct Policy Employee Complaints Policy Prevention of Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment Policy Student General Conduct Policy
Related Procedures	Student General Misconduct Procedure
Related forms, publications and websites	Complaints Form (about University Members) Disclosure Form (about University Members) Your Call website and Your Call report form

Failure to comply with this Policy or Policy Instrument may be considered as misconduct and the provisions of the relevant Policy or Procedure applied. A hard copy of this electronic document is uncontrolled and may not be current as UniSQ the University regularly reviews and updates its Policies and Policy Instruments. The latest controlled version can be found in the UniSQ's Policy and Procedure Library.

	Feedback, Complaints and Appeals Student General Misconduct Procedure Penalty Schedule
Definitions	**Terms defined in the Definitions Dictionary**
	Employee A person employed by the University and whose conditions of employment are covered by the Enterprise Agreement and includes persons employed on a continuing, fixed term or casual basis. Employees also include senior Employees whose conditions of employment are covered by a written agreement or contract with the University. Personal Information Personal information means information or an opinion about an identified individual or an individual who is reasonably identifiable from the information or opinion - (a) whether the information or opinion is true or not; and (b) whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not. Student A person who is enrolled in a UniSQ Upskill Course or who is admitted to an Award Program or Non-Award Program offered by the University and is: currently enrolled in one or more Courses or study units; or not currently enrolled but is on an approved Leave of Absence or whose admission has not been cancelled. University The term 'University' or 'UniSQ' means the University of Southern Queensland. University Members Persons who include: Employees of the University whose conditions of employment are covered by the UniSQ Enterprise Agreement whether full time or fractional, continuing, fixed-term or casual, including senior Employees whose conditions of employment are covered by a written agreement or contract with the University; members of the University Council and University Committees; visiting, honorary and adjunct appointees; volunteers who contribute to University activities or who act on behalf of the University; and individuals who are granted access to University facilities or who are engaged in providing services to the University, such as contractors or consultants, where applicable.

Failure to comply with this Policy or Policy Instrument may be considered as misconduct and the provisions of the relevant Policy or Procedure applied. A hard copy of this electronic document is uncontrolled and may not be current as UniSQ the University regularly reviews and updates its Policies and Policy Instruments. The latest controlled version can be found in the UniSQ's Policy and Procedure Library.

Definitions that relate to this policy only

Discloser

A person who has experienced Gender-based Violence and has chosen to share information about their experience with another person or with the University.

Gender-based Violence

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.

Gender-based Violence includes, but is not limited to:

- sexual harassment;
- sexual violence;
- family and intimate partner violence;
- technology-facilitated abuse (such as sharing intimate images without consent);
- stalking and harassment;
- coercive control (i.e., abusive patterns of behaviours to exert power and dominance over time, that create fear and deny a person liberty and autonomy); and
- modern slavery or human trafficking.

Gender-based Violence may occur as a single incident, as multiple incidents, or as a pattern of behaviour over time.

Gender-based Violence Code

The *National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence 2025*, which established standards for the University's prevention and response to Gender-based Violence.

Gender-based Violence Complaint

A Gender-based Violence Complaint is made if the Discloser:

Failure to comply with this Policy or Policy Instrument may be considered as misconduct and the provisions of the relevant Policy or Procedure applied. A hard copy of this electronic document is uncontrolled and may not be current as UniSQ the University regularly reviews and updates its Policies and Policy Instruments. The latest controlled version can be found in the UniSQ's Policy and Procedure Library.

	• provides the University with information about their experience of Gender-based Violence through formal reporting pathways; and • requires the University to consider taking steps beyond the offer and provision of support services, including (without limitation) the commencement of an investigation and/or a disciplinary process in appropriate circumstances. **Gender-based Violence Disclosure** A Gender-based Violence Disclosure is made if either the Discloser or another person provides the University with information about the Discloser's experience of Gender-based Violence. **Respondent** A Respondent is the person whose conduct is alleged to be Gender-based Violence.
Keywords	
Record No	26/551PL