

Background to Survey Changes

Our revisions to the [HEDS Sexual Assault Campus Climate Survey for Advanced Degree Students](#) were designed to make the survey shorter and less complex for three reasons:

1. Survey response rates are down, and a long survey means people are more likely to drop out and not finish. And for this survey, we only keep data if the respondent hits submit at the end—we don't keep partial surveys.
2. The survey was also very complex in its setup with a lot of logic and branching. This meant that it took us longer to process and analyze the data.
3. We wanted to make the survey less expensive.

We did a deep dive into multiple years of data from the survey to guide our cuts. Ultimately, we:

- eliminated broader climate questions and focused on questions about reporting and sexual violence education that were most relevant to advance degree students.
- eliminated demographic questions that didn't show differences in experiences with sexual violence. This included race/ethnicity and where students lived.
- restructured how we ask about sexual assault so that the behavioral descriptions of the different types of assault are part of the question itself rather than a large paragraph of text separated from the question.
- Since graduate students report so few incidences of sexual assault or violence, we:
 - Removed most follow-up questions about sexual assault incidents
 - Removed all bystander questions
 - Changed the name of the surveys to more accurately reflect its focus: **HEDS Campus Sexual Violence Survey for Advance Degree Students**

These changes have reduced the size of this survey dramatically. It is now a pulse survey with only eight questions. *The survey went from taking 10–15 minutes to complete to less than 5 minutes.*

On the following pages we show the differences between the:

[2024–2025 HEDS Sexual Assault Campus Climate Survey for Advanced Degree Students](#)

And the new:

[2025-2026 HEDS Campus Sexual Violence Survey for Advance Degree Students](#)

2024–2025 HEDS Sexual Assault Campus Climate Survey for Advanced Degree Students

This is a PDF representation of the online version of the survey. It includes all questions and response options, as well as notes (in italics) about how questions will display to survey takers.

In this survey, we will ask you about your perceptions of [Institution Name]’s climate on unwanted sexual contact and sexual assault, your perceptions of how [Institution Name] addresses and responds to sexual assault, and the extent to which you have experienced unwanted sexual contact, sexual assault, intimate partner violence, or stalking behavior.

We would like to hear from all advanced degree students at [Institution name], both those who have experienced unwanted sexual contact or sexual assault and those who have not. The survey usually takes less than 20 minutes to complete.

Your participation is **voluntary**. We are grateful for your cooperation and willingness to provide information that will help us better understand the degree to which student life at [Institution Name] is affected by sexual assault and sexual violence. We are committed to ensuring a safe and healthy environment for our students, and your participation in this survey will help us in our work to keep all students safe.

We will ask you many questions about your identity in this survey to develop a picture of how different people experience our campus. However, your responses are **anonymous**. The survey is being administered by an independent organization, the [Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium \(HEDS\)](#). **They will exclude any personal information, such as your name, email address, student or employee identification number, and your IP address, from the data they send to our institution. We also agreed to follow the organization’s secure data handling practices.** Please note, if other people have access to your computer, they might be able to view your web browsing history, including a link to this survey. To learn how to delete your web browsing history read the article, [How to Clear Your History in Any Browser](#).

You may stop taking the survey at any time or choose not to answer particular questions. You may also go back and change your responses. If you wish to stop taking the survey, simply leave the survey without hitting the “Submit” button at the end. We will not record your responses until you hit the “Submit” button.

Some of the questions will ask you about sexual and personal information and experiences. Should you wish to talk with someone about your experiences, you can access information about campus, local, and national resources for unwanted sexual contact, sexual assault, and relationship violence at any point in the survey by clicking on the link in the footer of the survey page. This information will also be provided at the end of the survey.

The information you provide will be used to inform and improve support, policies, and practices at [Institution Name] and **will not** be used to investigate specific individuals. Disclosing an incident here does not constitute reporting the incident to your campus and will not result in any action, disciplinary or otherwise. Please do not include your name or accuse anyone by name in your survey responses. If you include your name or accuse anyone by name, these names will be removed before we receive the data. Please use [Institution Name]’s reporting procedures if you wish to report an incident of sexual assault.

The [Institution Name] leader(s) of this survey effort [is/are] [name(s)], and [he/she/they] can be reached at [email address(es)] and/or phone number(s)].

By clicking on the “Continue” button below, you indicate that you have read and considered the above information about the survey and agree to participate in the survey.

Students see a “Continue” button.

2025-2026 HEDS Campus Sexual Violence Survey for Advanced Degree Students

This is a PDF representation of the online version of the survey. It includes all questions and response options, as well as notes (in italics) about how questions will display to survey takers.

In this brief survey, we will ask you about your perceptions of how [Institution Name] responds to incidents of sexual violence, its educational programming about sexual violence, and whether you have experienced sexual violence while you’ve been a graduate student at [Institution Name]. This survey should take less than 5 minutes to complete.

Your participation is **voluntary**. We are grateful for your cooperation and willingness to provide information that will help us ensure that [Institution Name] has a safe and healthy environment for our students.

Your responses to this survey are **anonymous**. An independent organization, the [Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium \(HEDS\)](#), is administering the survey, and they will ensure that **no personal information, such as your name, email address, student identification number, or IP address, is included in the survey data.**

You can stop taking the survey at any time or skip any questions. If you wish to stop taking the survey, simply leave the survey without hitting the “Submit” button at the end. We will not record your responses until you hit the “Submit” button.

Two of the questions will ask you about personal experiences. If you would like to talk with someone about these experiences, we provide information about campus, local, and national resources for sexual and relationship violence at the end of the survey.

The [Institution Name] leader(s) of this survey effort [is/are] [name(s)], and [he/she/they] can be reached at [email address(es)] and/or phone number(s)].

By clicking the “Continue” button below, you indicate that you have read and considered the above information and agree to participate in the survey.

[Students see a “Continue” button.]

The title of the survey has changed.

It now highlights sexual **violence** rather than sexual assault.

The survey introduction has been shortened considerably.

Section One: General Climate

1. Below are statements about your views on the general climate at [Institution Name]. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Faculty, staff, and administrators respect what students at [Institution Name] think.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Faculty, staff, and administrators at [Institution Name] are genuinely concerned about students' welfare.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Faculty, staff, and administrators on this campus treat students fairly.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Students at [Institution Name] are genuinely concerned about the welfare of other students.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel valued in the classroom/learning environment.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel close to people on this campus.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel like I am a part of the [Institution Name] community.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel safe on this campus.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. Below are statements about your views on the extent to which different groups contribute to the general climate at [Institution Name]. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The faculty contributes to a positive and supportive campus climate at [Institution Name].	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The staff contributes to a positive and supportive campus climate at [Institution Name].	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The administration contributes to a positive and supportive campus climate at [Institution Name].	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The students contribute to a positive and supportive campus climate at [Institution Name].	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. Below are statements about your views on [Institution Name]'s response to difficult or dangerous situations. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Campus officials do a good job protecting students from harm.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
If a crisis happened here, I am confident campus officials would handle it well.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Campus officials respond quickly in difficult situations.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Campus officials handle incidents in a fair and responsible manner.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
There is a good support system at [Institution Name] for students going through difficult times.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. Below are statements about your views on sexual assault at [Institution Name]. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I believe that the number of sexual assaults that occur on campus, off campus at an event or program connected with [Institution Name], or at a social activity or party near campus is low.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I do not believe that I or one of my friends is at risk for being sexually assaulted on campus, off campus at an event or program connected with [Institution Name], or at a social activity or party near campus.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I believe that students at [Institution Name] would intervene if they witnessed a sexual assault.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

The general questions about the campus climate have been removed.

The survey now focuses only on the questions that deal directly with education about sexual violence, understanding of campus procedures, and direct experience with sexual violence.

5. Below are statements about your views on what might happen if someone were to report a sexual assault to an official at [Institution Name]. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Campus officials would take the report seriously.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Campus officials would support and protect the person making the report.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Campus officials would conduct a careful investigation in order to determine what happened.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Campus officials would take action against the offender(s).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Students would support the person making the report.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

6. Have you received information or education from [Institution Name] about:

	Yes	No	Unsure
What sexual assault is and how to recognize it?	☐	☐	☐
How to report an incident of sexual assault?	☐	☐	☐
[Institution Name]'s confidential resources for sexual assault and how to locate them on campus?	☐	☐	☐
The procedures for investigating a sexual assault?	☐	☐	☐
The actions you can take to help prevent sexual assault, such as bystander intervention, clear communication with a potential partner, or some other action?	☐	☐	☐

Q7 and Q8 only appear to students who selected "Yes" to one or more of the statements in Q6.

7. Overall, how much do you remember about the information or education from [Institution Name] about sexual assault?

☐ Almost all or all of it
☐ Most of it
☐ Some of it
☐ Very little or none of it

8. Overall, how helpful did you think the information or education from [Institution Name] about sexual assault was?

☐ Very helpful
☐ Helpful
☐ Slightly helpful
☐ Not at all helpful

Section Two: Assessing Intimate Partner Violence, Stalking, Unwanted Sexual Contact and Sexual Assault

The questions in this section of the survey will ask you about sexual and personal information and experiences. You can access information about campus, local, and national resources for unwanted sexual contact, sexual assault, and relationship violence at any point in the survey by clicking on the link in the footer of the survey page. This information will also be provided at the end of the survey.

In the following questions we ask about experiences you may have had since you started on an advanced degree at [Institution Name], focusing on experiences you may have had while you were:

- on the [Institution Name] campus;
- off campus at an event or program connected with [Institution Name], including internships, job shadowing, field placements, and preceptorships; or
- at a social activity or party near campus such as at an apartment, restaurant, or bar.

9. Since starting at [Institution Name], have you experienced any of the following things while you were (a) on campus; (b) off campus at an event or program connected with [Institution Name], including study abroad and internships; or (c) at a social activity or party near campus such as at an apartment, restaurant, or bar?

	Yes	No	Unsure
Has a partner ever twisted your arm, thrown something at you that could hurt you, or pushed, grabbed, or slapped you, against your will?	☐	☐	☐
Has a partner ever prevented you from seeing family or friends, held you captive, stalked you, or verbally threatened to hurt you or your family?	☐	☐	☐
Has a partner ever slammed you against a wall, beaten you up, punched or kicked you, hit you with something that could hurt you, burned or scalded you, choked you, or used or threatened to use a knife or gun on you on purpose?	☐	☐	☐
Has someone followed you or kept track of your activities in a way that made you feel you were in serious danger?	☐	☐	☐

This question is reworded slightly, and only two statements kept.

1. Below are two statements about what might happen if someone were to report an incident of sexual violence to an official at [Institution Name]. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Campus officials would take the report seriously	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Campus officials would support and protect the person making the report	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. Have you received information or education from [Institution Name] about:

	Yes	No	Unsure
What sexual violence is and how to recognize it?	☐	☐	☐
How to report an incident of sexual violence?	☐	☐	☐
[Institution Name]'s confidential resources for sexual violence and how to locate them on campus?	☐	☐	☐
The procedures for investigating incidents of sexual violence?	☐	☐	☐

Q7 was reduced to a single response option under Q3 (former Q8).

Q3 only appears to those students who selected "Yes" to one or more of the statements in Q2.

3. Overall, how helpful did you think the information or education from [Institution Name] about sexual violence was?

☐ Very helpful
☐ Helpful
☐ Slightly helpful
☐ Not at all helpful
☐ I remember little or none of the information I received from [Institution Name] about sexual violence

The introduction to the questions about experience with various types of sexual violence has been removed.

The partner violence questions have been removed.

10. In your day-to-day life as a student at [Institution Name], how often have the following things happened to you?

	Never	Less than once a year	A few times a year	A few times a month	At least once a week	Almost every day
People have sent me unwanted messages asking me to sext.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
People have continued to have sexual discussions with me online even after I told them to stop.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
People have spread rumors about my sexual behavior online.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
People have sent me unwanted messages asking for nude pictures of myself online.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
People have shown me unwanted sexual images online.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have received unwanted sexual SPAM, emails or messages.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q10 dealt with sexual violence and harassment through digital media. These issues have been collapsed into the “unwanted nonverbal behaviors” question but are not identical. See the red underlined text in Q4 below.

In the following questions we ask about unwanted sexual contact and sexual assault. We have the following definitions in mind when we ask about unwanted sexual contact and sexual assault. You do not need to remember these definitions. We will provide the definitions again with the questions that ask about these particular experiences.

Unwanted sexual contact includes the following:

- Unwanted verbal behaviors – such as someone making sexual comments about your body; making unwelcome sexual advances, propositions, or suggestions to you; or telling you sexually offensive jokes or kidding about your sex or gender-specific traits
- Unwanted nonverbal behaviors – such as someone showing you sexually offensive pictures or objects; leering at you or making lewd gestures towards you; or touching him/herself sexually in front of you
- Unwanted brief physical contact – such as someone briefly groping you, rubbing sexually against you, pinching you, or engaging in any other brief inappropriate or unwelcome touching of your body

The long definitions section has been removed. Any needed definitions are now part of the questions.

Sexual assault includes the following types of sexual contact, which you **did not want** or for which you **did not give consent**:

- Touching of a sexual nature (kissing you, touching of private parts, grabbing, fondling, rubbing up against you in a sexual way, even if it was over your clothes)
- Oral sex (someone’s mouth or tongue making contact with your genitals, or your mouth or tongue making contact with someone else’s genitals)
- Vaginal sex (someone’s penis being put in your vagina, or your penis being put into someone’s vagina)
- Anal sex (someone’s penis being put in your anus, or your penis being put into someone else’s anus)
- Anal or vaginal penetration with a body part other than a penis or tongue, or by an object, like a bottle or candle

Q11 was simplified, and “Unwanted brief physical contact” removed.

11. Since starting your advanced degree at [Institution Name], how often have you experienced the following forms of unwanted sexual contact while you were (a) on campus; (b) off campus at an event or program connected with [Institution Name], including internships, job shadowing, field placements, and preceptorships; or (c) at a social activity or party near campus such as at an apartment, restaurant, or bar?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
Unwanted verbal behaviors – such as someone making sexual comments about your body; making unwelcome sexual advances, propositions, or suggestions to you; or telling you sexually offensive jokes or kidding about your sex or gender-specific traits	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Unwanted nonverbal behaviors – such as someone showing you sexually offensive pictures or objects; leering at you or making lewd gestures towards you; or touching him/herself sexually in front of you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Unwanted brief physical contact – such as someone briefly groping you, rubbing sexually against you, pinching you, or engaging in any other brief inappropriate or unwelcome touching of your body	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. How often have you experienced either of the following during any part of your graduate program at [Institution Name]?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
Unwanted verbal sexual behaviors – such as someone making sexual comments or unwelcome sexual advances, or telling you sexually offensive jokes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Unwanted nonverbal sexual behaviors – such as someone showing you sexually offensive <u>emails, texts, or pictures; posting sexual comments about you on social media</u> ; making lewd gestures towards you; or touching themselves sexually in front of you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q12 only appears to students who selected an option other than “Never” for at least one statement in Q11.

12. Who was responsible for this behavior? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Student(s) from this institution
- ☐ Student(s) from another institution
- ☐ Faculty member(s), staff member(s), or administrator(s) from this institution
- ☐ Faculty member(s), staff member(s), or administrator(s) from another institution
- ☐ Employer(s)/supervisor(s) at this institution
- ☐ Supervisor/mentor at internship, field placement, preceptorship, or another off-campus program related to your degree
- ☐ Person or people from the local community
- ☐ Other: _____

In the next set of questions when we ask about sexual assault, we are referring to five specific types of sexual contact, which you **did not want** or for which you **did not give consent**.

- Touching of a sexual nature (kissing you, touching of private parts, grabbing, fondling, rubbing up against you in a sexual way, even if it was over your clothes)
- Oral sex (someone’s mouth or tongue making contact with your genitals, or your mouth or tongue making contact with someone else’s genitals)
- Vaginal sex (someone’s penis being put in your vagina, or your penis being put into someone’s vagina)
- Anal sex (someone’s penis being put in your anus, or your penis being put into someone else’s anus)
- Anal or vaginal penetration with a body part other than a penis or tongue, or by an object, like a bottle or candle

13. Since starting your advanced degree at [Institution Name], has anyone attempted, but not succeeded in, sexually assaulting you while you were (a) on campus; (b) off campus at an event or program connected with [Institution Name], including internships, job shadowing, field placements, and preceptorships; or (c) at a social activity or party near campus such as at an apartment, restaurant, or bar?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I suspect that someone attempted to sexually assault me, but I am not certain.

Q14 only appears to students who selected “Yes” to Q13.

14. Who attempted to sexually assault you? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Student(s) from this institution
- ☐ Student(s) from another institution
- ☐ Faculty member(s), staff member(s), or administrator(s) from this institution
- ☐ Faculty member(s), staff member(s), or administrator(s) from another institution
- ☐ Employer(s)/supervisor(s) at this institution
- ☐ Supervisor/mentor at internship, field placement, preceptorship, or another off-campus program related to your degree
- ☐ Person or people from the local community
- ☐ Other: _____

15. Since starting your advanced degree at [Institution Name], have you been sexually assaulted while you were (a) on campus; (b) off campus at an event or program connected with [Institution Name], including internships, job shadowing, field placements, and preceptorships; or (c) at a social activity or party near campus such as at an apartment, restaurant, or bar?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I suspect that I was sexually assaulted, but I am not certain.

Students who select “No” or “I suspect that I was sexually assaulted, but I am not certain” and students who do not respond to Q15 skip to Section Four: Bystander Behaviors.

Q16 only appears to students who selected “Yes” to Q15.

16. Since starting your advanced degree at [Institution Name], how many incidents of sexual assault have you experienced while you were (a) on campus; (b) off campus at an event or program connected with [Institution Name], including internships, job shadowing, field placements, and preceptorships; or (c) at a social activity or party near campus such as at an apartment, restaurant, or bar?

Students will select from a drop-down menu that lists: 1, 2, 3, 4, more than 4.

The question asking if they have experienced sexual assault is different. The old question required them to remember the definitions we laid out at the beginning of the section. The new question includes the definitions and ask if these specific things have happened.

5. Has anyone engaged in any of the following behaviors with you, without your consent, during any part of your graduate program at [Institution Name]?

	Yes	No	Unsure
Touching of a sexual nature such as kissing, grabbing, fondling, or rubbing against you	☐	☐	☐
Oral, vaginal, or anal sex, or any other penetrative sexual act	☐	☐	☐

This follow-up question on the number of incidents has been simplified. The response options of “4” and “more than 4” are merged into a single: “4 or more”

Q6 and Q7 only appear to those students who selected “Yes” to any of the statements in Q5.

6. How many of these incidents have you experienced?

Students will select from a drop-down menu that lists: 1, 2, 3, 4 or more.

After Q16, the original Sexual Assault Campus Climate Survey for Advance Degree Students had an additional 45 possible questions. These included:

- Follow-up question for those who said they *had* experienced sexual assault (Q17-Q37, and Q52 or Q53-Q54).
 - Since most advance degree students don't experience sexual assault, these questions resulted in very little data. *We kept only one question* asking if they reported the assault, which is shown to anyone who said "yes" to either statement in Q5.

~~Q35 only appears to students who did not select "No one" to Q33.~~

35. Did you use [Institution Name]'s procedures to report the sexual assault?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

- Bystander questions for those who *had not* experienced sexual assault. (Bystander Branch One: Q1-Q4).
 - All these have been removed.
- Bystander questions for those who *had* experienced sexual assault. (Bystander Branch Two: Q1-Q3)
 - All these have been removed.
- Demographic questions, including some behavioral questions about drinking (Q38-Q51)
 - We kept only the question about gender, as our findings show gender is the only demographic to show a difference in experience with sexual violence.

44. What is your gender?

- ☐ Man
- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Nonbinary, please self describe: _____
- ☐ Prefer not to respond

7. Did you use [Institution Name]'s procedures to report any of these incidents?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

8. What is your gender?

- ☐ Man
- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Nonbinary
- ☐ Prefer not to respond

Q8 is the last question in the survey. Institutions can still add supplemental questions, though we now restrict that number to five to keep the survey brief.

We still provide national and local sexual violence resources after they hit submit.