

Sexual Misconduct Policy

1. Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 This Policy sets out the Health Sciences University's commitment to preventing and addressing sexual violence and misconduct within our student community. It applies to all students enrolled at the University, including undergraduates, postgraduates, and apprentices.
- 1.2 It should be read alongside:
 - [The Staff–Student Relationships Policy](#) (which confirms a zero-tolerance approach to such relationships)
 - [The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#)
 - [The Fitness to Practise Policy](#) (for professional programmes)
 - The Sexual Misconduct Procedure (ask the Academic Registrar for further information)
 - [The Safeguarding and Prevent Policies](#)

2. Policy Statement

- 2.1 The University has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and misconduct. We are committed to:

- Fostering a respectful, inclusive, and safe environment for all students,
- Supporting all students affected by sexual misconduct,
- Ensuring robust, fair, and timely handling of concerns and allegations,
- Promoting a culture of transparency, responsibility, and prevention,
- Upholding the principles of lawful freedom of speech and academic freedom, while ensuring that our community remains safe and respectful,
- Prohibiting the use of non-disclosure agreements* (NDAs) to prevent students from disclosing incidents of sexual misconduct or harassment.

**A non-disclosure agreement (NDA) is a legal contract that restricts individuals from sharing specified confidential information. In this context, NDAs must not be used to silence students who have experienced or witnessed sexual misconduct.*

- 2.2 We acknowledge that anyone, regardless of identity, can experience sexual misconduct and that disclosure and support must be free of judgment, assumptions, or stigma.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 Sexual misconduct includes any unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment. Definitions are aligned with the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and OfS guidance.
- 3.2 Consent means someone agrees by choice and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

4. Principles

- Allegations will be taken seriously, handled fairly and impartially.
- Both reporting and responding parties will receive support.
- We encourage third-party and witness reporting.

- No use of NDAs will be permitted to silence reporting of incidents.
- Students and staff will receive appropriate training on expectations and processes.
- Staff–student sexual or intimate relationships are not permitted.
- Freedom of expression will be upheld within legal parameters.

5. Responsibilities

- 5.1 The Vice-Chancellor is ultimately responsible for student conduct. Day-to-day management of this Policy sits with the Academic Registrar.
- 5.2 All members of the University are expected to uphold the principles of this policy.

6. Monitoring and Review

- 6.1 The Student Governance team reports annually to Academic Board on cases and trends.
- 6.2 This Policy will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner in response to sector or legal changes.

7. Supporting Information

- 7.1 This policy is supported by:
- Sexual Misconduct Procedure
 - [Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedure](#)
 - [The Fitness to Practise Policy](#)
 - [Safeguarding Policy](#)
 - [Complaints Policy](#)
 - Training and Awareness Framework
 - Records Retention Policy

Version:	3.0
Approved by:	Academic Board [Wider Management Group Approved version 3.0]
Originator/Author	Academic Registrar
Policy Owner	Academic Registrar
Reference/ source	Durham University UUK report “Changing the Culture”; UUK/Pinsent Masons Guidance for HEI “How to Handle Alleged Student Misconduct Which May Also Constitute a Criminal Offence” The ATIXA Guide to Sanctioning Student Sexual Misconduct Violations 2018
Date approved	07 July 2025
Effective from	August 2025
Review date	2028/29
Target	All staff and all students and apprentices enrolled on University awards. PGR students enrolled on Solent awards.
Policy location	Public Website/ Internal
Equality analysis	No direct impact. The policy provides for reasonable adjustments to be made, where appropriate, for students with specific protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Monitoring will be undertaken to assess whether there is any differential impact in the handling of cases