

# Equity and Human Rights Annual Report 2023-2024

This annual report provides an overview of the initiatives, priorities, and ongoing response work undertaken by Equity and Human Rights (EQHR) between September 01, 2023 – August 31, 2024.

## What we do

EQHR champions UVic's commitment to practices of equity, fairness and inclusion. EQHR leads UVic in developing and coordinating plans, policies and procedures to promote equity, diversity and inclusion in employment and education. We are a resource for all UVic community members, providing education, information, assistance and advice in aid of building and supporting an inclusive campus.

When issues and concerns arise, we are here to assist community members and help guide them through the range of available options such as dispute resolution, investigating human rights complaints, and providing information and support in cases of sexualized violence.

## Our focuses

There are four main focuses within EQHR.

**EQHR leads UVic's efforts to prevent and respond to discrimination, harassment and sexualized violence on campus.** We are responsible for implementing the [Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#) and the [Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response Policy](#) in a trauma-informed and procedurally fair manner. The case management team provides accessible and person-centred information and support.

**EQHR leads and supports the strategic implementation of institutional equity practices at UVic to promote a culture of respect, consent, equity, diversity and inclusion.** Building on the goals and objectives of UVic's Equity Action Plan, we provide resources and advice on fair, equitable, and other inclusive practices, removing barriers to the recruitment, retention and advancement of underrepresented groups.

**EQHR designs and facilitates educational programs that support equity, diversity, inclusion and human rights, including freedom from sexualized violence.** This includes offering education and training on how to work together through an intersectional and anti-oppressive lens. We offer workshops, courses, training sessions and resources to support the learning and unlearning journey of everyone at UVic. The staff at EQHR are open for consultations for projects, programs, or initiatives that would benefit from being reviewed through an anti-oppressive and equity-centred approach.

**EQHR works to strengthen partnerships and further community engagement to foster equity, diversity and inclusion.** Equity work is the responsibility of every person; by empowering more people to work together, we increase our capacity and ability to make systemic and sustainable changes.

*We acknowledge and respect the Lək'wəḡən (Songhees and Esquimalt) Peoples on whose territory the university stands, and the Lək'wəḡən and W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.*



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## Preventing and responding to discrimination, harassment and sexualized violence

### Discrimination and Harassment Policy (GV0205)

Individuals seek advice and resolution options from EQHR when they feel they have experienced some form of discrimination and harassment. Due to the unique nature of each person's story, every intake begins with a confidential consultation, whereby an impacted individual meets with someone from our case management team. We then learn more about their concerns, review potential resolution options, and identify additional supports needed.

EQHR works hard to support UVic community members in resolving their concerns in a trauma-informed and procedurally fair manner. EQHR's case management team, where appropriate, first attempts to resolve complaints via an informal resolution process (IRP). IRPs can involve everything from education and/or coaching for individuals alleged to have caused harm, to alternative dispute resolution options including mediation, facilitated understanding or a voluntary no-contact or behavioural agreement. The primary reasons why people request an IRP is to:

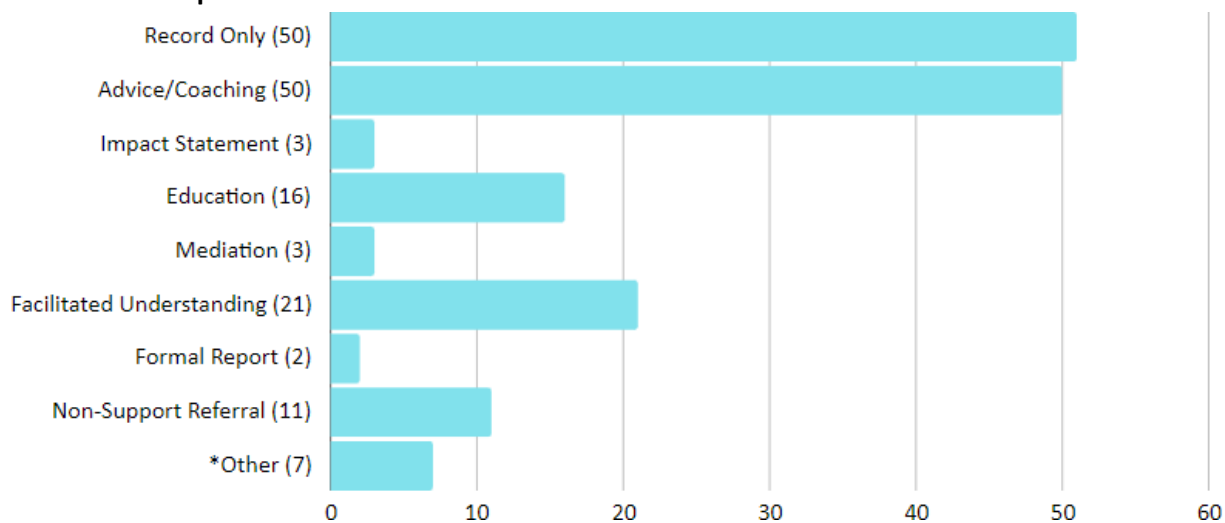
- 1) ensure no one else is impacted by the action or behaviour;
- 2) seek accountability for harm caused;
- 3) create psychological safety for themselves and others; and/or
- 4) improve communication and/or restore relationships.

Between September 1, 2023, and August 31, 2024, EQHR received 142 complaints under the Discrimination and Harassment Policy which is a 12% increase from last year<sup>1</sup>. Out of these complaints, 65% (93) of individuals participated in, but did not proceed beyond, a confidential consultation. An additional 33% (47) individuals chose to pursue an IRP.

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<sup>1</sup> The criteria for counting connections with our office as "complaints" changed this year, raising the bar from talking with our office to engaging in an IRP. With more rigorous criteria, the increase in Complaint numbers becomes even more significant.

### D&H Actions Completed in the 2023-2024 Academic Year



**Figure 1.** A horizontal bar graph with numerical and visual representations of the types of IRPs requested in the 2023-2024 academic year. In many cases, IRP participants use a combination of options which is reflected in an "action completed" count (161) that exceeds the overall number of complaints (142).

\* The category "Other" includes IRPs not captured in typical process options.

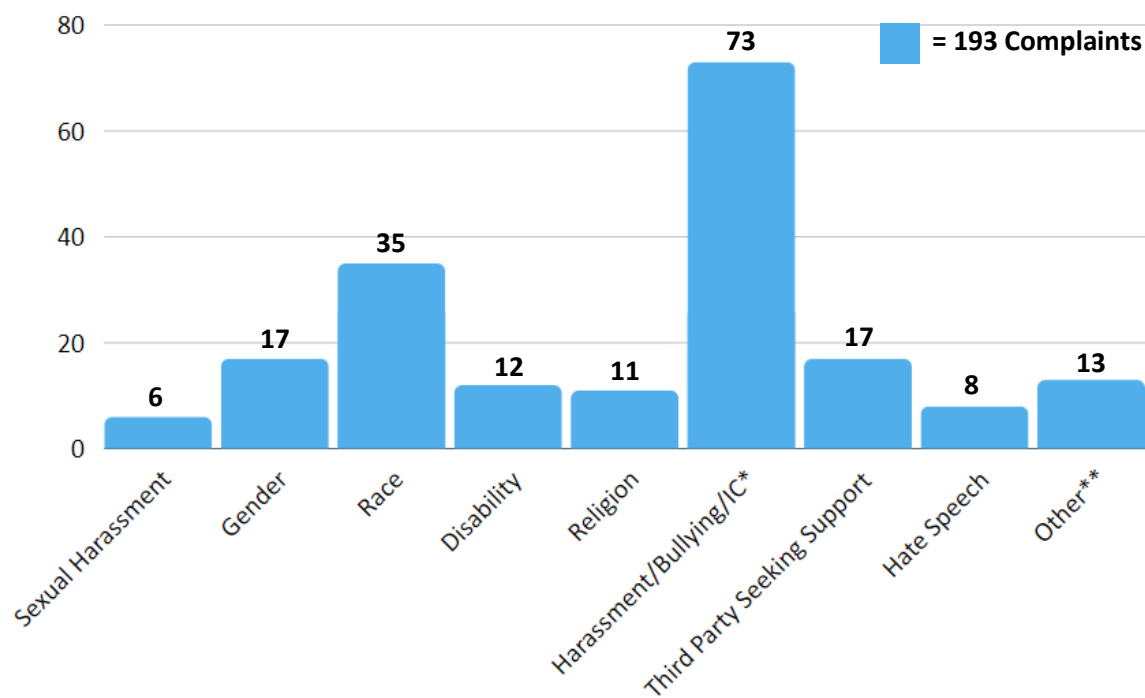
Individuals who engaged in confidential consultations often sought either to solely to create a record of their experience or sought advice and coaching. Another commonly selected option was asking EQHR to provide education to the person alleged to have caused harm to prevent such behaviour from happening in the future.

This year, 1% (2) of complainants filed a formal report with the intention of initiating an investigation. This involves EQHR hiring a third-party investigator to conduct a procedurally fair investigation to determine, on a balance of probabilities, if the Policy was breached. One was not accepted by the investigator. The other is an ongoing investigation.

## Types of incidents

Like last year, complaints of personal harassment, bullying and interpersonal conflict were the most common complaints received, at 37% (73). A notable trend this year was a steep increase in the number of complaints of religious discrimination and hate speech, particularly regarding antisemitism and Islamophobia. This uptick reflects the conflict in the Middle East, and the corresponding protests that occurred on campus.

### D&H Complaint Types 2023-2024



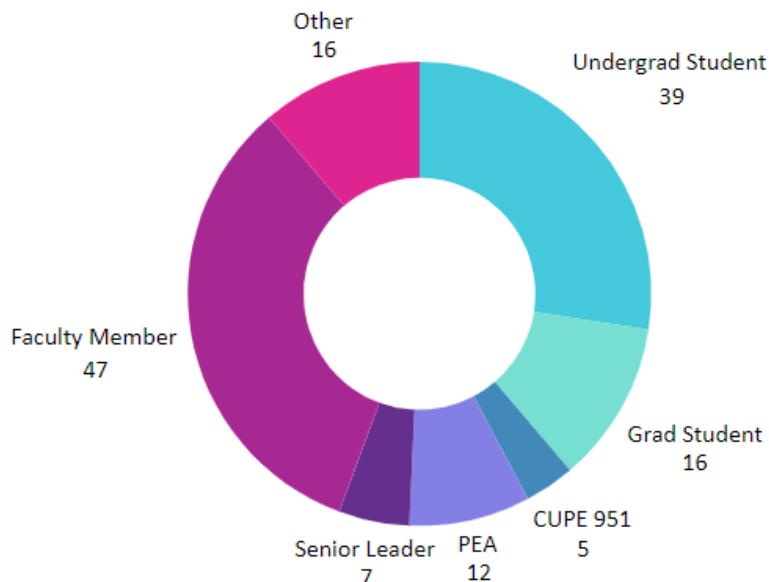
**Figure 2.** A vertical bar graph representing the types of discrimination and harassment concerns brought forward in the 2023-2024 academic year. People often come forward with multiple and intersectional concerns (e.g., both race and disability). As a result, the total here (193) exceeds the overall number of complaints (142).

\* Personal harassment, bullying and interpersonal conflict

\*\* Given our commitment to confidentiality and anonymity, we collapse categories with less than 5 instances into the “other” category. “Other” includes discrimination on the basis of sexuality, age, and family status. “Other” also includes confidential consultations with concerns that did not fall under the Discrimination and Harassment Policy (e.g., academic misconduct).

There was a significant increase in the number of faculty members who came forward with concerns under the Policy compared to last year (33% in 23/24 compared to 18% in 22/23). Whereas last year students were most likely to act as a complainant under the Policy (32%), this year, we have seen faculty members in their place (33%). The office continued to receive a significant number of confidential consultations from individuals who were not directly involved in the incident, but rather third parties seeking advice on how to manage or intervene. Third parties generally wanted to know how to support the parties involved in a conflict and/or their obligations in terms of UVic’s policies and procedures.

## D&H complainant positions in the UVic community 2023-2024



**Figure 3.** A disc graph representing the types of UVic community members who came forward with complaints of discrimination and harassment in the 2023-2024 academic year. Some individuals hold more than one role at UVic and incidents may be relevant to both roles.

Note that Management Excluded, CUPE 4163 and CUPE 917 employees are included in the category “Other” as there were less than 5 in each of these staff groups. This suggests the need for further outreach with UVic’s union groups to ensure they are aware of the options available through EQHR.

### Themes

EQHR looks to identify themes to tailor or target education, and to adjust our practices. Like last year, this year individuals would initiate a complaint then pause for weeks or months before moving forward. This was often due to individuals lacking the capacity needed to participate in a process, and/or either the complainant or alleged respondent going on a leave of absence. Given the importance of ensuring people who come forward feel psychologically safe, we encourage impacted parties to take the necessary time to move through a process. At the same time, once a process has begun it is important that timeliness is considered, as extending the time of a process can have impacts for those involved. More work needs to be done to ensure conflict is addressed early to avoid escalation.

This year there was an increase in faculty members seeking support in addressing complaints related to other faculty members, often regarding personal harassment/bullying and/or interpersonal conflict. There appears to be a greater need for support in resolving conflict, suggesting the need to increase individual capacity for conflict resolution, as well as more education on what constitutes bullying and personal harassment and how to address it.

### Education and awareness of EQHR’s role in resolution processes

To increase UVic’s awareness of both the informal and formal resolution processes, EQHR continues to develop and make available plain language information sheets. These handouts aim to improve transparency and increase accessibility, while supporting individuals in making important decisions

about the processes that will best serve them. These information sheets give parties the tools to enter a process feeling informed and prepared.

In addition, EQHR developed a short training session aimed at raising awareness around EQHR's mandate, approach, and the intake and referral processes. This session was delivered to 13 units and departments who regularly receive disclosures and/or complaints related to discrimination, harassment, workplace bullying, and sexualized violence. EQHR noticed immediately that referrals and reach outs from these groups increased following these presentations.

### **Review of the Discrimination and Harassment Policy**

Continuing from the previous year, EQHR concluded the review and update of the university's Discrimination and Harassment Policy (GV0205). Building off the work of the Learning and Advisory Committee (LAC) in the first half of 2023, this academic year EQHR conducted two rounds of campus wide consultation. In September 2023, University community members were invited to provide feedback by completing an online survey, hosting their own consultation using our discussion guide or attending an open house event. After revising the Discrimination and Harassment Policy based on community consultation, we shared a draft policy for feedback in January 2024. In addition to these open engagement methods, student, staff and faculty unions as well as units with key responsibilities under the policy were invited to participate in consultation meetings with EQHR.

The result of this work has been a complete policy rewrite using the Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response Policy as an exemplar as well as updated procedures. While the changes reflected in the Discrimination and Harassment Prevention and Response Policy are significant and, to some extent, groundbreaking, we know that UVic is ready and is already working with the elements that may seem new, such as, microaggressions, hostile work environments and systemic discrimination. The updated Discrimination and Harassment Prevention and Response Policy is in effect as of September 1, 2024.

### **Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response Policy (GV0245)**

UVic is committed to providing transparent information around the number of disclosures and reports made each year, as well as trends about the type of sexualized violence being reported. The statistics below reflect not only the disclosures and reports made to EQHR, but also, those shared with EQHR by the Office of Student Life, Residence Services, and Campus Security Services.

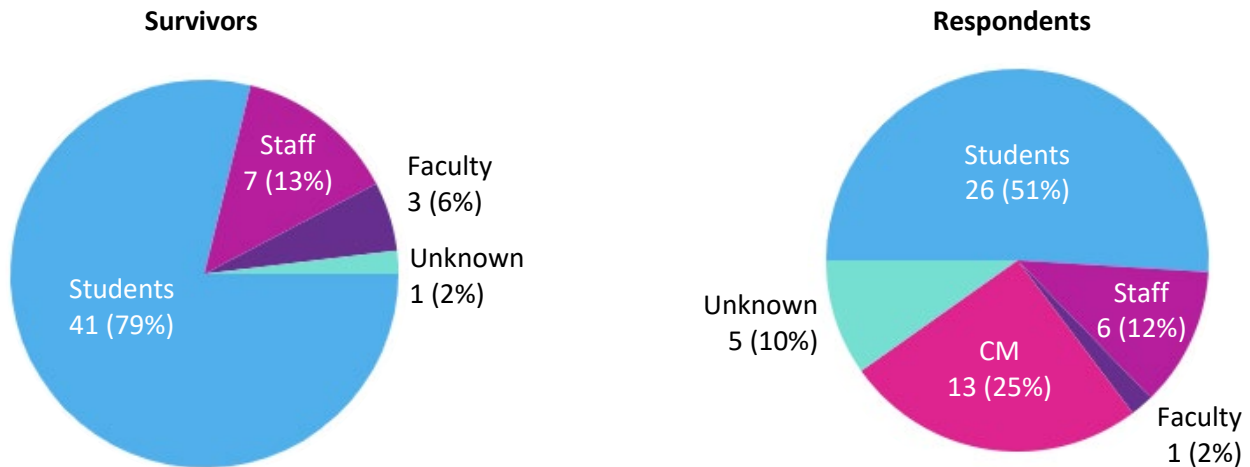
In this report, we share as much information as possible without breaching privacy legislation. Over the next year we will be working on a pilot project to provide a more detailed and intersectional analysis of the social location of the survivors and people alleged to have caused harm/respondents involved in processes through EQHR.

The total number of disclosures received this year (52) is less than what the SVRO received in 2022-23 (59). As with previous years, most disclosures were made by UVic students. Notable is the increase in the total number of community members alleged to have caused harm (25%) – a category that includes anyone who is not a student, staff, or faculty member.

### **Survivor and Respondent Relationships to UVic 2024**

 Student  Staff  Faculty  Community Member  Unknown





**Figure 4.** Some people hold multiple roles at the university, so survivors and respondents are categorized based on the position they were in at the time of the incident. For example, a teaching assistant/graduate student alleged to have engaged in sexualized violence against an undergraduate student in their class would be listed as an employee.

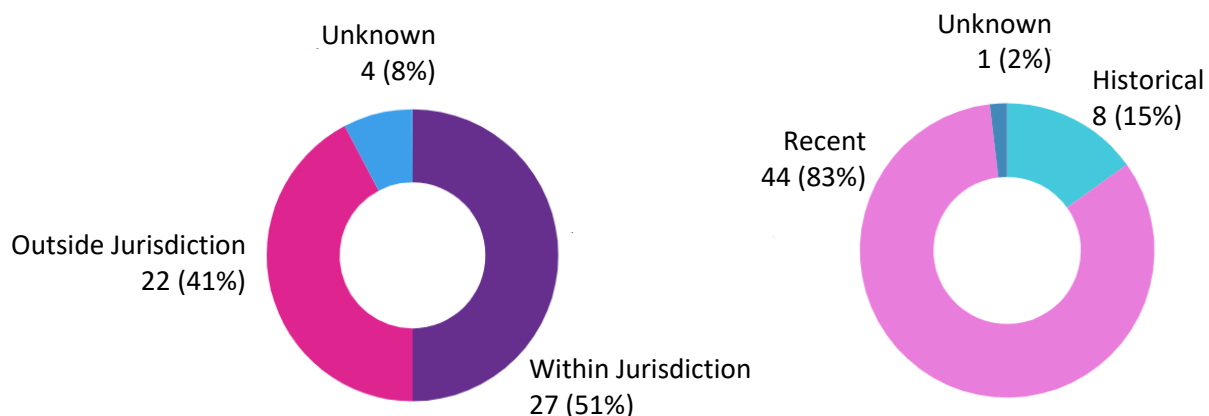
The category “unknown” includes those individuals who are either unknown to the survivor or known but chooses not to disclose this information.

### Policy jurisdiction

The policy and its procedures apply to all members of UVic. UVic has jurisdiction when the incident occurred in one or more of the following circumstances:

1. On property controlled by UVic;
2. When the respondent is/was in a position of power or influence over the survivor’s academic status or employment status at UVic;
3. At an event or activity sponsored or under the auspices of UVic.

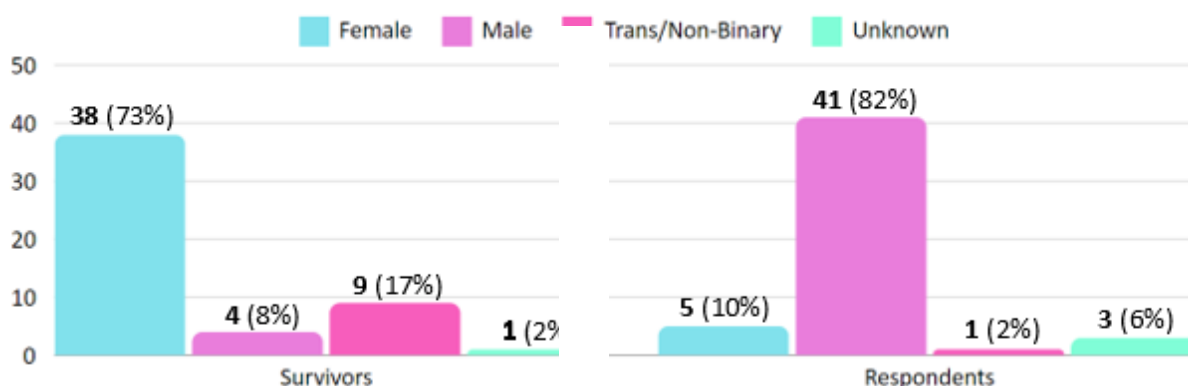
All survivors, regardless of whether there is jurisdiction for the purposes of an investigation, are offered information, advice, and support. As survivors have the choice to not share information about the identity or position of an alleged respondent, some also choose not to disclose where an incident has occurred which results in an “unknown” category.



**Figure 5.** Two disc graphs depicting the jurisdictional and historical nature of disclosures in 2023-2024. A historical disclosure is one that happened more than two years before the disclosure is made. In those cases where we did not know the date of the incident they are listed as unknown as to whether they are historical.

### Gender breakdown

Given the relatively low numbers in each category, we are unable to provide a gender breakdown by position. In some rare cases, the gender of the alleged respondent is “unknown” because the information was not provided during the disclosure. There is more gender diversity in terms of the survivors who came forward this past year, with 9% of survivors identifying as trans/non-binary and 8% identifying as men. It is important to note that there are unique barriers to men reporting that help explain these low numbers.



**Figure 6:** [Left] A bar graph showing the distribution of survivors among gender as 73% female, 8% male, 17% trans/non-binary, and 2% unknown. [Right] A bar graph showing the distribution of respondents among gender as 10% female, 82% male, 2% trans/non-binary, and 6% unknown.

### Voluntary resolution process and formal reports

Many people who make a disclosure go on to initiate a voluntary resolution process (VRP). A VRP includes any process, agreed upon by all the parties, that will bring about accountability and/or closure for the parties. Examples of the most common forms of VRPs include: awareness and education for the person alleged to have caused harm, mediation or behavioural or voluntary no contact agreements. This year, 15% of survivors requested a VRP, with most resulting in either awareness and education for the person alleged to have caused harm and/or behavioural agreements. In many cases, a VRP was initiated but not completed as one or more of the parties withdrew from the process. In some unique cases, UVic will terminate a VRP process that is not serving the interest of the parties.

We received two formal reports this year (4% of survivors) and proceeded to investigate both. Of the two investigations, one resulted in a policy breach while the is still ongoing.

### Types of incidents

Like previous years, most disclosures described unwanted sexualized attention in the form of sexualized looks, comments, and persistent reach outs, messages, and come-ons. While these types of incidents did not involve physical contact, many survivors found these interactions emotionally and psychologically harmful.

## Types of supports offered and requested

Each person who disclosed to the [Sexualized Violence Resource Office](#) was given information on the options available to them both in terms of support and resolution options. Rarely were survivors looking solely for health and counselling referrals; many were seeking accountability from the person alleged to have caused harm or else options to avoid future contact or interaction with the person alleged to have caused harm. As such, we found a quarter of those who disclosed request a VRP. In some instances, these processes led to some form of education and awareness for the person who caused harm, or an agreement that would support the survivor in feeling psychologically safe. In other instances, the request was for some form of academic concession or accommodation.

## Strategic implementation of institutional equity practices

### Identify barriers and work across silos to achieve equity-centred actions

Advancing equity involves identifying systemic barriers and working with our diverse community to centre their experience in removing those barriers. This requires working across institutional silos and units and creating shared strategic actions.

### Looking ahead to reporting on the Equity Action Plan

Over the past year, one of the focuses of the work connected to the [Equity Action Plan \(EAP\)](#) has been creating a plan for institution wide progress reporting.

Reporting is a crucial part of the EAP, as laid out by goal 5:

*Institutional Accountability: Conduct ongoing, transparent evaluations of this action plan with continued opportunities for meaningful engagement and feedback with/from the community.*

During the development of the plan, we heard that there is a lack of trust at UVic when it comes to the evaluation of equity related initiatives, especially from systemically and historically marginalized populations. There is a desire for reporting to be meaningful.

The EAP development team has been working on creating a multi-pronged reporting process that will include the collection and reporting of both qualitative and quantitative data through various mechanisms. For example, ongoing informal reporting has already begun as unit's share updates on the UVic Community Actions page of the EAP website.

One of the key aspects of the overall reporting plan is the EAP Institutional Reporting Survey. The survey provides an opportunity to share a snapshot of the actions that have been taking place across the university. Using the data gathered in the first half of 2025, we will produce an institutional-level progress report that will be shared publicly in fall 2025.

### Academic Equity Advisory Structure

This year, we continued the work of the Academic Advisory Committee on Equity and Diversity (AACED) to strengthen equity work across campus, reduce siloed information sharing, and create stronger support structures for equity committees and their integration with the new Equity Action Plan. The Academic Equity Advisory Structure (AEAS) identified priority issues relating to equity, diversity and

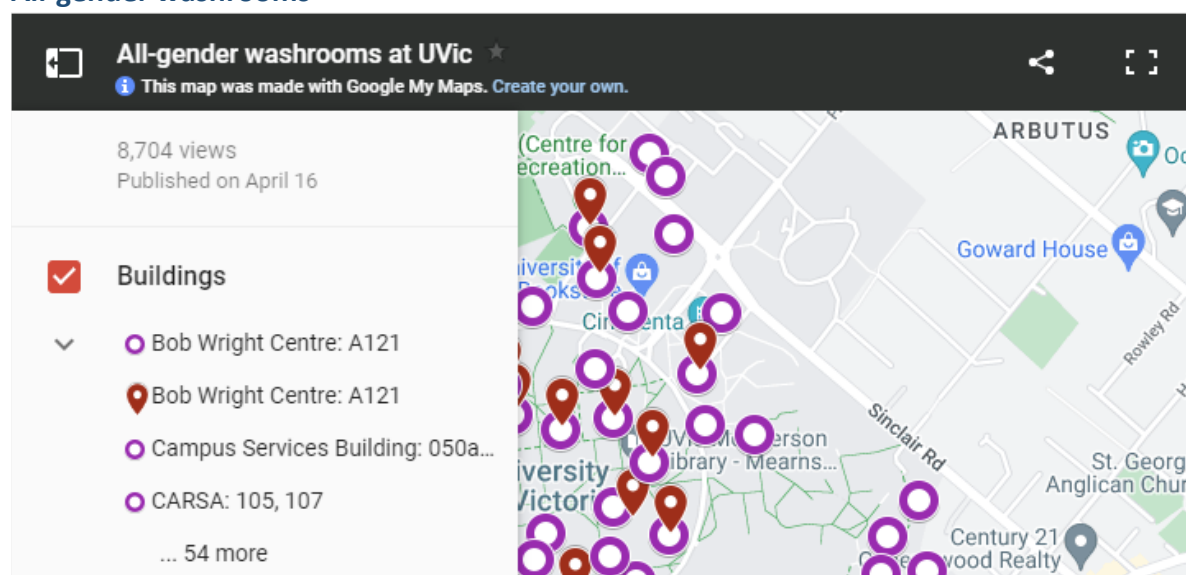
inclusion to leaders (the Office of the Vice-President Academic and Provost and Equity and Human Rights office), academic units and program designers (cross-institutional).

## 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion on campus

In January 2024 the final report from the Rainbow Crosswalk Steering committee was submitted. The report “Over the Rainbow and Beyond” provided a series of recommendations, including a recommendation to “paint and maintain multiple crosswalks on the UVic campus in collaboration with local Indigenous communities and QTBIPOC artists.” Other recommendations ranged from strengthening visual markers of support and commitments to establishing stronger actions, policies and commitments.

EQHR and Student Affairs have begun to process the recommendations and connect with other units who have shared responsibility over their implementation. We expect the first crosswalk to be painted this year in partnership with Two-Spirit, Coast Salish artist, Margaret August.

## All-gender washrooms



Last year, Facilities Management and EQHR developed a new centralized [all-gender washrooms webpage](#) listing the location of all-gender washrooms and free menstrual products on campus. The website is screen-reader friendly and includes a map for those who are less familiar with the building names on campus. In addition to improving access, this page serves as a place to share updates on the project. Facilities leads the work to retrofit the washrooms. EQHR plays an advisory role should priorities need to be re-evaluated.

## Build capacity to embed systemic and sustainable change

A collective effort from leaders, units, and groups is required to make systemic and sustainable changes. EQHR works to develop new resources, strategies, and tools to build capacity for the collective to take on the work and empower individuals to lead actions which prioritize embedding systemic change.

## Increasing the application of the Equity Lens tool

After piloting the Equity Lens ABC's tool with the Board of Governors in 2023, it is now finalized and available for use as one of many tools in the Equity Action Plan implementation toolkit. The Equity Lens

ABCs is a practical analytical tool that is meant to be applied during the planning stage of any initiative/activity. By answering the six main questions with the help of additional prompt questions, teams will be able to identify new equity considerations and determine opportunities to increase equity and mitigate bias in decision-making.

A primary focus for 2024-2025 will be on increasing the use of the tool by Executive and project leaders to embed equity understanding and considerations at the outset of projects and through the various stages of a project or initiative through to Board approval. In addition, an online course to support learning how to apply the Equity Lens ABC's tool is in development and will launch in 2025.

### **Activating the Equity Action Plan**

In October 2023, a year after the launch of the EAP, EQHR made publicly available the new Implementation Framework and toolkit. The Implementation Framework includes the principles and phases necessary for unit-level advancement of the EAP. The principles (equity, diversity, inclusion and accountability) are meant to lead the decisions and actions taken as we move through the phases of implementation: 1) Get started, 2) Plan, 3) Act, 4) Assess for impact, 5) Reflect and iterate.

The toolkit that accompanies this framework is an evolving library of tools, guides, and resources that support unit-level planning and implementation. The tools are for leaders that are responsible for directing and coordinating a faculty, division, department or unit's implementation of the EAP. To date, there are seven tools/resources available as well as two case studies that have been added this spring due to requests for examples of how units are using the tools.

Since the launch of the Implementation Framework and toolkit, the EAP development team has been offering presentations to introduce leaders and those interested in leading implementation of the EAP in their own units/departments. These presentations focus on getting leaders to think about how their units can be part of advancing the actions in the Plan and introducing the framework and toolkit. This presentation was given to various leadership groups and offered through open registration sessions.

This upcoming year, EQHR will be launching training to accompany the Equity Lens ABCs tool and will continue offering sessions on leading the implementation of the EAP using the framework and toolkit.

### **Launch of the Better Data Project**

The [Better Data Project](#) is a proactive institutional initiative at the University of Victoria to enhance the collection, management, and use of self-identification demographic data across campus. The Better Data Questionnaire launched in November 2023. The questionnaire asks identity-related questions across six broad identity categories including gender identity, sexual orientation, disability identity, Indigenous identity, racial and/or ethnocultural identity, and religious and/or spiritual identity. It is continuously open to all UVic employees and students to complete or change their responses, recognizing identities evolve over time.

As of August 7, 2024, approximately 10,600 community members have completed their questionnaire, including 32% of students and 39% of employees. Initial data insights have been shared through a [2024 Spring Report](#) and on the [project's webpage](#). Detailed, disaggregated reporting is under development.

In fall 2024, a Better Data Steering Committee will be formed to oversee decision-making processes for both internal and external reporting and for data use beyond the original project scope.

## Refreshed Employment Equity Framework

Building on the success of the EAP, EQHR began the process of reconsidering and reformulating the varied goals, supports and gaps relating to equity in the employment experience at UVic. Since a number of goals and strategies exist across diverse plans, applying them in an integrated manner across diverse classes of employees ensures an equitable experience for all employees at UVic is a challenge.

A framework for the employment lifecycle was drafted to use in consultation with partners to expand our understanding of the employment goals, resources, projects and gaps that currently exist in each stage of this cycle. Next steps include identifying priority stages within the cycle, where to prioritize resources, and consider how to package and communicate the cycle and engagement expectations to managers and other employees. The support of the Employment Equity Steering Committee has helped this project ensure it considers existing employment equity work on campus and addresses a wide spectrum of categories of employees.

## Preferential and limited hiring

As the university expands its work to increase diversity among employees, EQHR continues to have a role in ensuring that the information we provide about preferential and limited hiring is up to date and aligned with its policy.

A workshop on preferential and limited hiring was developed this year to increase awareness of the university policy among administrators and to share core components of this type of hiring process. The workshop is offered once every term (three times a year) to the university community. EQHR also held consultation meetings with hiring committees conducting preferential and limited hiring throughout the year to support their successful facilitation of the target hiring.

Work this year also led to the creation of more robust web resources to address common questions about preferential and limited hiring, and to guide to use this policy successfully. We have also reviewed our internal process to streamline the work and how to more effectively communicate the processes.

## Designing and facilitating educational programs

To educate and inspire change in the campus community, EQHR offers proactive education on wide-ranging issues such as equity, diversity, anti-racism, anti-oppression, conflict resolution, inclusion and human rights.

Our [educational programming](#) has continued alongside our strategic development. Over 100 staff facilitated training sessions were offered this past year, reaching more than 2,400 participants.

## Increasing Equity in Decision Processes

EQHR is nearing three full years of offering the online course “Increasing Equity in Decision Processes” which is required for all who serve on Faculty ARPT committees. Over 1100 people have taken the training course since it was launched. Year over year feedback indicates the course experience continues to be positive, with just under 70% of survey respondents this past year indicating that they found the course was “extremely effective” or “very effective” in preparing them to contribute to equitable ARPT decisions. Additionally, approximately 76% of participants indicated that their experience taking the course was “Very positive” or “Positive” -- comparable to last year’s 75%.



The design team continues to assess feedback from the end-of-course survey, and this year undertook a significant revision to the lesson on decolonization and Indigenization. The revised unit discusses the impact of colonialism on diverse cultures and identity groups, and explores some ways that we can reframe service, teaching and research when we move beyond colonial norms. It also provides a primer for the upcoming course “Valuing and Evaluating Indigenous Research.” The course re-launched in summer 2024. We have also continued work on the next stage of the project: a draft workbook for to guide committees and committee members in applying equity step by step during their deliberations.

### **Anti-oppression education**

Over the course of this year, EQHR’s new Anti-Oppression Education Program includes 5 workshops running a total of 14 sessions and collectively reaching 634 people:

1. *Kil Daagwiiyaay – “Strong Voice”: Rematriation as Resistance*
2. *Kil Kaahl̥g̥alangdal – “Hear Someone’s Voice Before You See Them”: Anti-Oppression Key Principles, Knowledges, and Equity-Focused Action-Based Frameworks*
3. *Gaayinxal – “Come Closer on a Boat”: Deconstructing Colonial Power Structures*
4. *Maahl̥g̥a Sdiihlga Gaw̥g̥a – “Returning Missing Seeds”: Reclaiming Indigenous Power Structures*
5. *Xidsii, K’iivaat’as, Tlay.yad – “Under, Over, Everywhere”: Centering 2SLGBTQIA+ Knowledges in Anti-Oppression Work*

This new Anti-Oppression Education Program is led by our Indigenous Rights and Anti-Racism Officer. It is open for all students, employees and community and can include tailored content to meet the identified needs of the participants.

Key topics covered throughout the program include, but are not limited to: Rematriation, decolonization, Indigenization, DEI, and identity reclamation frameworks, dismantling colonial power structures such as white supremacy, white privilege, white fragility, settler moves to innocence, and appropriation, 2SLGBTQIA+ knowledges, as well as interactive exercises revolving around locating ourselves, land acknowledgments, and fostering accountable spaces.

### **Sexualized violence education and prevention strategies**

The Sexualized Violence Resource Office in EQHR continues to offer a suite of tailored education and prevention offerings to students, staff, and faculty at UVic, including:

- 1) *Tools for Change*, an in-person workshop aimed at new undergraduate students with an online version of the program delivered through pre-arrival programming;
- 2) *Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response Training* for faculty and staff;
- 3) *Power, Privilege and Accountability*, designed for UVic senior leaders;
- 4) *Engaging Men*, designed for male self-identifying athletes.

In partnership with Vikes Athletics, EQHR piloted the Engaging Men leadership program in January 2024. The goal of this program is to equip participants with the skills and knowledge to be critical agents of change in ending gender-based violence and creating cultures of care, consent and personal, as well as collective accountability. Twenty athletes who self-identify as men consistently attended this 6-week pilot program. The program’s interactive learning modules explored topics such as gender, patriarchy, gender-based and sexualized violence prevention, consent, vulnerability, shame, accountability and bystander intervention.

Using the feedback and recommendations shared by pilot participants, EQHR is updating the program content and will launch the official Engaging Men program with Vikes in Spring 2025.

### **Sexualized violence awareness and impact**

EQHR provided a total of 34 sexualized violence educational sessions to students, staff and faculty this year. Through these 34 sessions EQHR reached 758 UVic community members. This year, we anticipate that we will continue to reach a significant and broad cross section of UVic community members as EQHR continues to reach out to those units and departments on campus who have not done sexualized violence prevention training in 3 years, as well as those who have never done training.

EQHR continues to partner with other offices and student advocacy groups on campus to coordinate awareness of resources and supports available for our campus community and educational sessions on consent for Sexualized Violence Awareness Week. This year that work has included commissioning a video series for students on the distinction between a disclosure and a report, as well as options for anonymous reporting.

### **5 Days of Action: 365 Days of Commitment**



UVic's sixth annual [5 Days of Action: 365 Days of Commitment](#) took place on October 30 – November 3, 2023. The free week-long event is a collaborative event to amplify the efforts of groups, units and organizations on and off-campus and come together in our shared commitment to a more diverse, inclusive and equitable campus 365 days of the year. Each day of the week represents a call to listen, reflect, dialogue, engage, and finally take action. 5 Days of Action: 365 of Commitment is an opportunity for our community to highlight our shared commitment to end discrimination, harassment and sexualized violence.

Many on-campus and off-campus groups held events during the week including the Indigenous Academic and Cultural Engagement office, Faculty of Fine Arts, Co-Op and Career Services, the Transgender Archives, Human Resources, Research Services, Society for Students with a Disability, Music Students' Association, Multifaith Centre, Ambit Gender Diversity, and more. Senior leaders on campus were asked to engage my sponsoring events which also lead to an increased number of programs accessible to people who are deaf or hard of hearing. All together there were 27 scheduled events and



workshops (with over 900 registrants total), in addition to outdoor engagement activities like interactive art number installations with reflective questions and a Jeopardy game, a calls to action list provided resources for members who could not join the scheduled events. New focuses for this year include increasing student engagement in classrooms, increasing awareness, diversifying our offered workshop topics, and improving accessibility to the offered workshops.

Other key events organized and/or supported by EQHR include:

- A Walk to End Gender-Based Violence on December 6<sup>th</sup>, the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women (NDRAVAW) in partnership with the Faculty of Computer Science and Engineering. The event also affirms our commitment to end all gender-based violence.
- Organizing Black History Month events and supports alongside the Scarborough Charter Steering Committee.
- Orange Shirt Day in September in partnership with the Office of Indigenous Academic and Community Engagement, and University Communications and Marketing, along with other campus units and departments.

### **on the Verge Writing Contest**

EQHR in collaboration with the UVic Libraries, hosts an annual *on the Verge* Student Writing Contest. This year's theme focused on equity, diversity, and inclusion. Together with celebrity judge and playwright Thembelihle Moyo, we offered a masterclass writing workshop to explore one's storytelling voice in their artistic practice and ways to develop and strengthen your own unique voice for creative projects. First and second-place student winners were selected in spring 2024 for the categories of fiction, non-fiction, poetry and spoken word and published in the [UVicSpace Collection](#).

After 15 years of celebrating emerging UVic student voices, on the Verge (OTV) writing and spoken word contest will be discontinued in favour of focusing our energy and capacity into ongoing initiatives.

### **Engagement through Instagram**

On December 2023, EQHR launched an Instagram account ([@uvic\\_equity](#)) to easily share with students the types of services, supports, options, and education offered through the office. Having a social media presence allows us to provide updates on current initiatives within EQHR directly to their phones. This platform also allows us to easily collaborate with other campus groups in amplifying shared messages and events.

### **Systematizing equity reviews**

We continue to build on our [Equity Review program](#). This initiative, developed in collaboration with the Department of Chemistry, offers a proactive equity review process for departments, units and/or faculties on campus to gain an objective view on their successes and challenges with regard to equity. The feedback from the review—including documents, a self-study, and a survey—can be used to assess current equity work in the department and to build equity actions into departmental plans.

Given limited ongoing interest from units in applying for and carrying out an equity review, we are working on further streamlining the review process to provide units different levels of entry while still maintaining the rigour of community-centred approach. Building on feedback we have received from [Faculty of Fine Arts review](#), as well as from other interested units, the goal of continued development is to offer an internal equity review process that can both meet units where they're at with respect to

equity work, while also being proactive in our approach to challenging systemic barriers for populations across the university. These updates are on-going and will align with work laid out in the EAP, the refreshed employment equity work framework, and other institutional directives.

## **Strengthening partnerships and community engagement**

EQHR is committed to reciprocal learning and engagement with our UVic and community partners. The Executive Director, EQHR meets regularly with UVic's senior executives, President and Vice-Presidents, to support capacity building and cross-institutional equity initiatives.

While most of EQHR's major initiatives involve partnerships and engagement, this section highlights particularly powerful engagements. These include the Equity Review and community engagement partnerships with the Faculty of Fine Arts, the Scarborough Charter Steering Committee, and embedding EDI expertise between EQHR and Research services.

### **Equity Review process with the Faculty of Fine Arts**

The Faculty of Fine Arts approached EQHR to partner on an Equity Review in support of their Strategic Planning process. Working closely with the Dean and the Fine Arts Indigenous Resurgence Coordinator, and with the support of the leadership team, an Equity Review framework was designed to be reproducible for other units or faculties. The Faculty of Fine Arts conducted an equity survey of their community in early fall 2022; EQHR provided the final report to the Faculty in fall 2023 to inform the upcoming Strategic Planning Process and for the Faculty to share the report with the Fine Arts community. Following that, the Dean of Fine Arts, with support of EQHR, released a formal response that highlighted both short and long-term actions in response to the review findings. More information can be found below under priority [IV\) Developing effective strategies to educate on harm prevention and intersectional inclusion](#) and on the new [Equity Review webpage](#).

### **Black inclusion and flourishing at UVic**

EQHR and the Office of the Vice-President Academic and Provost is working with Black institutional leaders to consider how to best support UVic's commitments in signing [the Scarborough Charter on Anti-Black Racism and Black Inclusion in Canadian Higher Education](#). Tricia Best, Director of International Centre for Students and Kelci Harris, Associate Professor in Psychology, are chairing a Scarborough Charter Steering Committee with administrative support from EQHR. The Committee is composed of Black, African and/or Caribbean members representing UVic faculty, staff, students, alumni and external community members. In addition to following the principles listed in the Scarborough Charter, the Steering Committee's focus is to centre the work in addressing ways to remove existing barriers to Black flourishing, find ways to celebrate excellence and acknowledging the lived experiences of Black people at UVic.

Within this year, the Committee has:

- Consulted Black members of UVic on their experiences on campus
- Launched a [Black Inclusion and Flourishing at UVic](#) webpage to support wayfinding for Black community members
- Organized 4 information sessions on Advancing Black Inclusion and Addressing Anti-Racism in our Community

- Supported and sponsored events during Black History Month
- Advocated for a permanent physical space on campus for Black people to gather, connect and collaborate, and foster community

Moving into fall 2024, the Committee will be hosting a B(l)ack to School event in September in tandem with the launch of a Black inclusion [resources page](#) and a [UVic and community events page](#).

### **Partnering with VPFO**

In addition to presentations, the Associate Director of Institutional Equity Planning (EQHR) has completed the design and implementation of phase 1 of the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB) program with the Vice President Finance and Operations (VPFO) portfolio. This program begun in 2023 with the objective to equip VPFO leaders with the knowledge and skills to lead the advancement of EDIB within the portfolio. Phase 1 included the delivery of foundational EDIB education to strengthen and build leadership skills required to advance equity work.

The EAP Implementation Framework and tools are being used to support Phase 2 and 3 of this program which will focus on applying those skills to projects to practise what has been learned. This will support the systemic advancement of the goals and actions that the VPFO are leading within the EAP.

### **Partnership with Research Services to strengthen EDI initiatives**

EQHR and the Vice-President Research and Innovation continue to partner to strengthen equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) initiatives as they relate to research. This year, the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Research Officer (joint appointment between EQHR and VPRI) oversaw the operationalization of the Accelerating Community Energy Transformation (ACET) initiative's EDI proposal for the Canada First Excellence Research Fund (CFREF) program. This includes the development of the EDI Action Plan and integration of the EDI principles in the ACET's operational structures. At the national level, the Officer chaired the CFREF EDI Community Practice with representatives from the 11 awarded research initiatives. The Officer also coached over 10 faculty hiring committees for Canadian Research Chairs during the reporting period to facilitate an equity-centered decision-making process. In addition, she led Equity Action Plan implementation discussions within the Strategic Research Initiative unit and the Research Profile unit, ideating several actions to be implemented within UVic Research administration. Sub-working groups were established to pursue the identified actions including development of the EDI training program for research administrators and integration of the Declaration of Research Assessment (DORA) principles in researcher output assessment processes.