



# SEXUALIZED VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE POLICY

Policy review primer – April 2025



University  
of Victoria

# OVERVIEW OF THE POLICY

- UVic-wide policy that applies to all members of the University community (staff, faculty, students, etc.)
- Works to instill and cultivate institutional, collective and individual responsibility to create an environment and culture free from Sexualized Violence
- Defines important terms like Sexualized Violence and Consent which establish the scope of what behaviors are covered in the policy and serve as the basis for related education
- Provides a range of resolution options including formal investigations and voluntary processes such as mediation, educational conversations, etc.
- Clarifies the responsibilities of various UVic groups in preventing and responding to Sexualized Violence

# POLICY REVIEW

After the work of an advisory group and a public survey in fall 2024, a full draft of the revised policy is now posted for feedback.

At this stage, we are seeking feedback via email ([policyreview@uvic.ca](mailto:policyreview@uvic.ca)) or an [anonymous survey](#) by May 1, 2025. We welcome any feedback on the policy, general and specific. If you are providing feedback on a specific section, please note the section number in your response. This slide deck has been created to help summarize some of the significant changes to the policy. Please note: capitalized terms are defined in the policy.

As you review the draft policy and/or the following slides and provide feedback, consider:

- Is there anything missing or unclear in this section of the policy?
- Does this section support an improved Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response Policy?
- Does this section address potential barriers or gaps in the existing policy?
- What supporting resources would be helpful as we prepare to implement the revised policy (e.g., quick guides, information sessions, etc.)?

To access the policy draft and to learn more about the policy review process visit:  
[uvic.ca/sexualizedviolence/policy/review](https://uvic.ca/sexualizedviolence/policy/review)

# ALIGNMENT WITH NEW D&H POLICY

UVic's new Discrimination and Harassment Prevention and Response (D&H) Policy was drafted based on the structure and procedures of the Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response (SVPR) Policy meaning the policies share significant similarities. Therefore, given recent review of the D&H Policy and that the SVPR Policy was reviewed in 2020/2021 with extensive community consultation, this review has had a focused scope.

To avoid over consulting our university community, we drew on the relevant feedback already gathered and focused public consultation on the areas unique to the SVPR Policy or where there are proposed substantial changes. This fall, we completed a round of campus wide engagement and a focused review with a group of students, staff and faculty. We are now at the final stages of the review, having worked with various units and divisions across campus (i.e., Human Resources, Faculty Relations, Campus Security, Student Affairs, General Counsel and Occupational Health, Safety and the Environment) over the last couple months on a technical review.

# SUMMARY OF CHANGES

This slide deck summarizes the revisions to the Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response (SVPR) Policy in the following sections:

- Definitions
- Foundational statements
- Policy-related roles and responsibilities

# DEFINITIONS

The main goal for revising the Definitions section of the SVPR Policy was to align the common definitions with those that are in the updated D&H Policy.

Based on community and advisory group feedback changes were made to the definitions of *Consent* and *Sexualized Violence*.

Changes to these two definitions:

- Indicate that Consent is required regardless of relationship status, length of relationship, and sexual history
- State that Sexualized Violence can occur between individuals regardless of relationship status, sexual orientation, gender, gender expression and gender identity
- Remove or clarify confusing or unclear language in definitions such as initiator, salacious and fraud
- Broaden example of unconsensual distribution of sexually explicit photographs and video to also include images of a person's likeness to account for changes in technology (e.g., AI)

The full definitions can be found on page 3 to 7 of the policy.

# Consent

“Consent” means the voluntary agreement to engage in sexualized contact or activity and to continue to engage in the contact or activity. Consent means that all persons involved demonstrate, through words or actions, that they freely and mutually agree to participate in a contact or activity. It is the responsibility of the initiator of the specific sexualized contact or activity to obtain ongoing Consent. More specifically, Consent:

- a) is required regardless of the relationship status or sexual history of the parties;
- b) must be obtained at the outset and at all stages of sexualized contact or activity;
- c) can be withdrawn at any time by any participant;
- d) cannot be given by someone who is Incapacitated;
- e) cannot be given on behalf of another person;
- f) cannot be assumed from previous consent to the same or similar activities;
- g) is not silence, the absence of “no” or the absence of perceived resistance;
- h) is not present when one person abuses a position of trust, power, or authority over another person; and
- i) cannot be obtained through coercion, force, threats, or intimidation towards any person, or through deception or the withholding of information that could affect a person’s decision to Consent.

# Sexualized Violence

“Sexualized Violence” means, for the purposes of this policy, any non-consensual, unwanted actual, attempted, or threatened act or behaviour, that is carried out through sexual means or by targeting a person’s sex, sexual identity, or gender identity or expression. Sexualized Violence is a continuum of behaviour that may take place through any form or means of communication (e.g., online, social media, verbal, written, visual) or physical contact. Sexualized Violence can occur between individuals regardless of sexual orientation, gender, gender expression and gender identity. Sexualized Violence can occur between those currently or previously in an intimate relationship, those in a nonintimate relationship (e.g., acquaintances, friends and coworkers) and between strangers. Forms of Sexualized Violence include but are not limited to:

- a) inappropriate sexualized comments;
- b) sexual assault;
- c) sexual exploitation;
- d) sexual harassment;
- e) stalking;
- f) Stealthing;
- g) indecent exposure;
- h) voyeurism; and
- i) the distribution of a sexually explicit image, photograph or video of a person or their likeness to one or more persons without the Consent of the person in the photograph or video.



# FOUNDATIONAL STATEMENTS

The Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response Policy begins with a clear purpose, principles to support the interpretation of the policy, commitments to those covered by the policy and to awareness and education.

Some of the revisions:

- States that Sexualized Violence between intimate partners is covered under this policy. It also mentions the University's commitment to coordinating across multiple policies and providing integrated support when appropriate.
- Recognizes that Sexualized Violence can be an abuse of power.
- States that Sexualized Violence must be linked to the university's broader anti-oppression and equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives.
- Describes the meaning of being survivor-centred.
- These sections have been moved from the policy to the Statement of Rights of Complainant and Respondent (Appendix B):
  - Commitment to Support Survivors and Those Impacted by Sexualized Violence.
  - Commitment to Support Persons Alleged to Have Caused Harm and Respondents.
- Clarify that the University may require awareness and education programs for University Community Members.

Full foundational statements can be found in sections 1 to 4 on page 7 to 10.

# POLICY RELATED ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The policy works to invest responsibility across the University. In addition to laying out responsibilities for specific units (e.g., Equity and Human Rights, Human Resources, Faculty Relations, Student Affairs, etc.) in the procedures, the policy includes responsibilities relevant to all University Community Members:

- To strive to create an environment free of Sexualized Violence in their areas of responsibility and in their interactions with others. To do this, they are responsible for building their awareness and understanding of what constitutes Sexualized Violence and the rights and responsibilities within the policy.
- Are expected to practice Consent and respect for the dignity and diversity of all community members, uphold the Policy principles, and refuse to engage in or condone behaviour contrary to the policy.
- Are encouraged, when contacted by EQHR, to participate in processes under the policy. The University acknowledges that some University Community Members may not participate in processes under the policy for health and/or safety reasons.
- Are encouraged to act in a non-judgmental, empathetic, and supportive manner if they receive a Disclosure related to the policy. University Community Members shall act in accordance with the confidentiality provisions set out in section 24. Anyone who receives a Disclosure can seek advice from EQHR and should refer the Survivor to EQHR for coordinated information and referrals to support.

The full list of Policy Related Roles and Responsibilities can be found in sections 21 to 24, page 17 to 20.

# NOTE ON SUPPORT

If you are interested in learning more about options for reporting Sexualized Violence, please contact [eqhr01@uvic.ca](mailto:eqhr01@uvic.ca).

Additional support options can be found at [uvic.ca/sexualizedviolence/get-support](https://uvic.ca/sexualizedviolence/get-support)