



**L-Università  
ta' Malta**

## **Understanding the UM Sexual Harassment Policy**

**A study in awareness by the Gender Equality & Sexual Diversity Committee**

April 2021

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Co-Chair, Gender Equality & Sexual Diversity Committee

## Abbreviations

<b>GESDC</b>	Gender Equality & Sexual Diversity Committee
<b>HRMD</b>	Human Resources Management & Development
<b>JC</b>	Junior College
<b>KSU</b>	Kunsill Studenti Universitarji
<b>SHP</b>	Sexual Harassment Policy
<b>UM</b>	Università ta' Malta

## 1. Introduction

At its meeting of the 28 April 2020, the Gender Equality & Sexual Diversity Committee decided to embark on a study to assess the level of awareness regarding the Sexual Harassment Policy amongst the University's staff and student community. The decision was sparked by the concern committee members had about the rise in domestic violence spurred by the general lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic. An ad hoc subcommittee was established to work on a study and an awareness campaign for the following academic year.

The study was first developed by Mr Roderick Vassallo (GESDC Co-Chair), Ms Nika Levikov and Ms Jasmine Ellul and then brought to completion under the helm of Prof. JosAnn Cutajar (GESDC Chair). The questions developed in the study were meant to give direction to the awareness campaign launched right after the survey closed. The study was composed of two parts: a quantitative survey and a qualitative study through interviews with students from Senate recognized Student Societies. This document shall present the results of the quantitative survey.

The awareness campaign was developed by KSU in collaboration with UM Communications, Marketing & Alumni Office with the supervision of the GESDC Co-Chair. *Draw The Line* campaign was launched on social media with KSU and UM platforms as the principal source between April and May 2021. The campaign's aim was to inform the audience about what constitutes sexual harassment and how to deal with it, as well as raising awareness on the topic, the SHP and the services of the Sexual Harassment Advisor at UM.

## 2. Methodology

The survey, *Understanding UM's Sexual Harassment Policy*, was administered through Google forms in April 2021. The link was distributed to students and staff by the Office of the Academic Registrar and the Office for Human Resources Management and Development. The JC Student Services Office was responsible to send the link to all UM Junior students. A copy of the survey is found in the appendix.

A total of 588 responses were received.

The survey questionnaire had a total of twenty-nine questions pertaining demographics, opinions on what constitutes sexual harassment, awareness about UM sexual harassment policy, information about people who suffered sexual harassment at UM, opinions about the effectiveness of UM sexual harassment policy, opinions about the reporting of sexual harassment and a last section to receive additional comments.

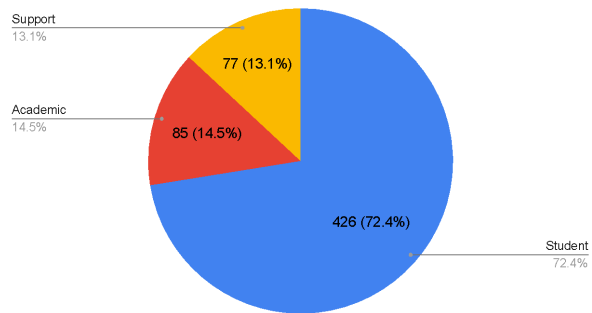
The survey was analysed by Dr Manwel Debono, Senior Lecturer, Centre for Labour Studies and presented during the GESDC half-day seminar on 15 June 2021 at Junior College. This document is a further elaboration by Mr Roderick Vassallo, Co-Chair of the Gender Equality & Sexual Diversity Committee, producing the final version of the results obtained.

### 3. Demographics

#### 3.1. Respondent status and sex

The majority of the respondents, 72.4%, are students. The remaining quarter is split almost equally between academic members of staff (14.5%) and support staff (13.1%).

1. Respondent status

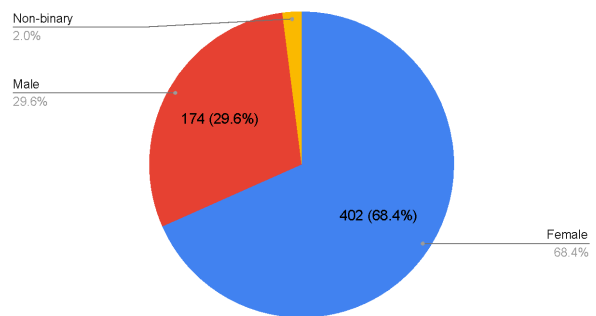


The majority of respondents identified as female (68.4%) and about a third identified as male (29.6%). Two per cent of the respondents identified as non-binary.

#### 3.2. Sex and status combination

The respondents are classified into five categories organized by a combination of sex and status. The following five categories are listed in alphabetical order by status and sex: i) female employees, ii) male employees, iii) female students, iv) male students and v) non-binary students.

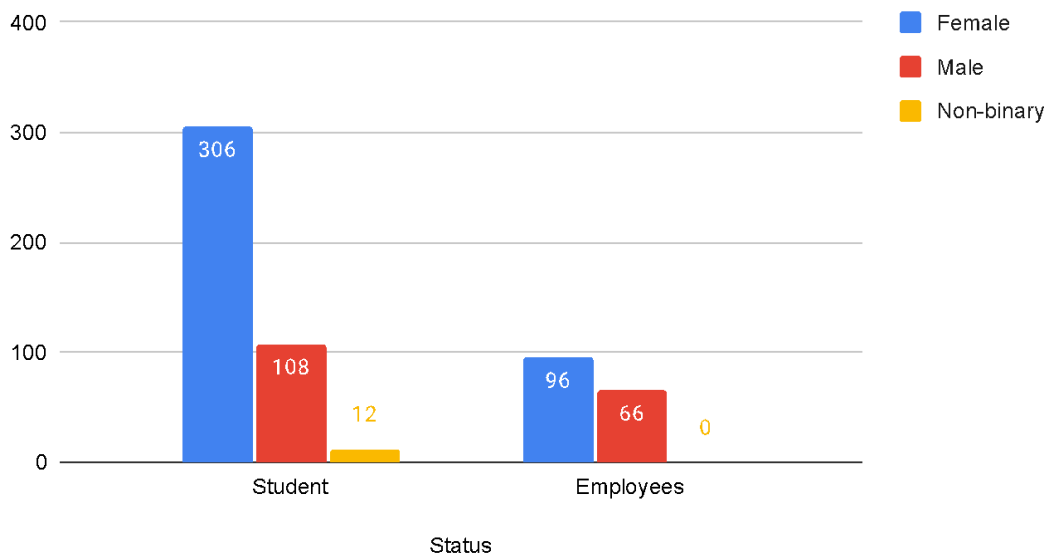
5. Respondent sex



An analysis of the respondent status by sex shows that the majority of the respondents are female students (306, 52.0%), followed by male students (108, 18.4%), female employees (96, 16.3%), male employees (66, 11.2%) and non-binary students (12, 2.0%).

The category total as indicated in the graph below is used to calculate percentages by status and sex throughout this document. These percentage values will indicate the relevant proportions of the categories with respect to their total and allows comparison between the five different categories where applicable throughout the study. None of the employees identified as non-binary.

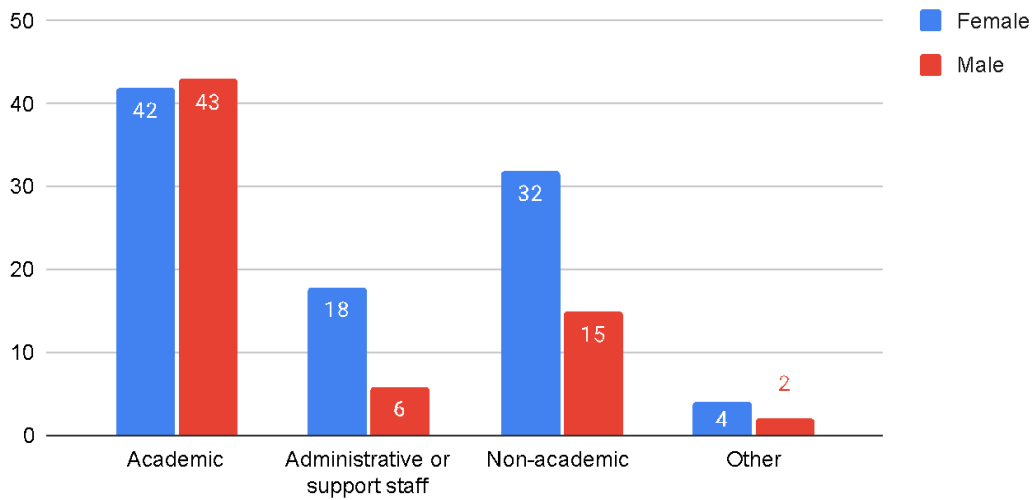
#### Respondents: sex and status



The status of an UM employee was further divided into four categories: Academic, Administrative or Support Staff, Non-academic and Other. Respondents were given the liberty to tick their category. The results show that the majority of the respondents within the employee category are female. However, males and females equally represent the 'Academic staff' category.

There is a significant skew in the 'Administrative/Support staff', 'Non-academic staff' and 'Other' categories. In the first category, the number of female administrators/support staff (18) is three times higher than that of the male counterparts (6). However, in the remaining two categories the number of female respondents is double that of male respondents, 32:15 and 4:2 respectively.

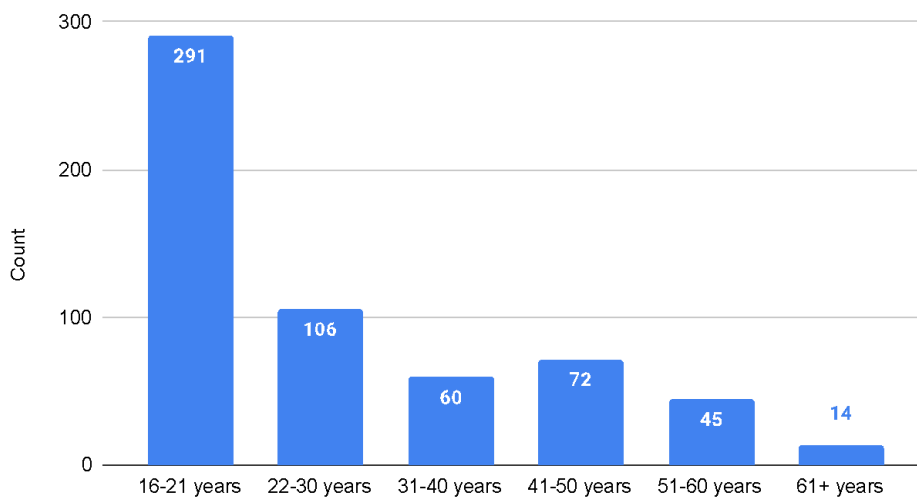
### UM Employee respondents: sex and status



### 3.3. Respondent age

The majority of the respondents, about 50%, fall within the 16-21 years category and are presumably students including Junior College students.

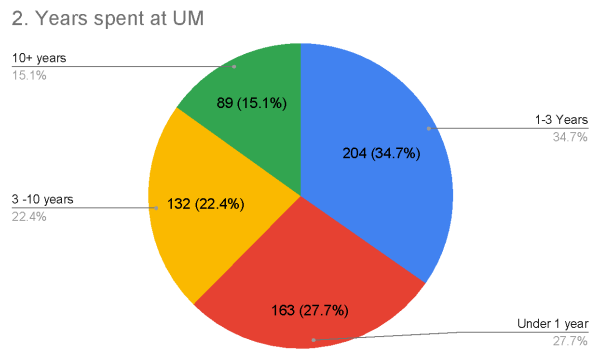
### 4. Respondent age



The remaining categories are represented sequentially from largest to smallest as follows: 22-30 years with 18.0%, 41-50 years with 12.5%, 31-40 years with 10.2%, 51-60 years with 7.7% and ultimately 60+ years with 2.4%.

**3.4. Years spent at UM**

The pie chart, on the right, shows that 34.7% of the respondents have spent from one to three years at UM and 27.7% have just less than one year of UM experience. The raw data shows that the majority of individuals answering with ‘under 1 year’ and ‘1-3 years’ spent at UM are students. However, these categories do not exclude members of staff that have been recently employed by UM. In fact the same data shows that three Academic members of staff were still in their year of probation as they ticked ‘under 1 year’. Five Academic members of staff ticked the ‘1-3 years’ category. Recently employed Administrative and Support staff included in this study totals six in the ‘under 1 year’ and 13 in the ‘1-3 years’ categories.



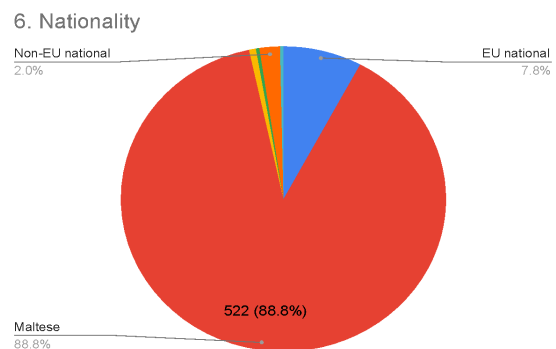
22.4% of the respondents, spent between ‘3-10 years’. This category would refer mainly to members of staff. Respondents identifying themselves as students with 3-10 years of UM experience amount to 14.4% (85).

Members of staff compose the last category of ‘10+ years’ at UM with a proportion of 15.1%. Only one respondent identified as ‘Student’ within this category.

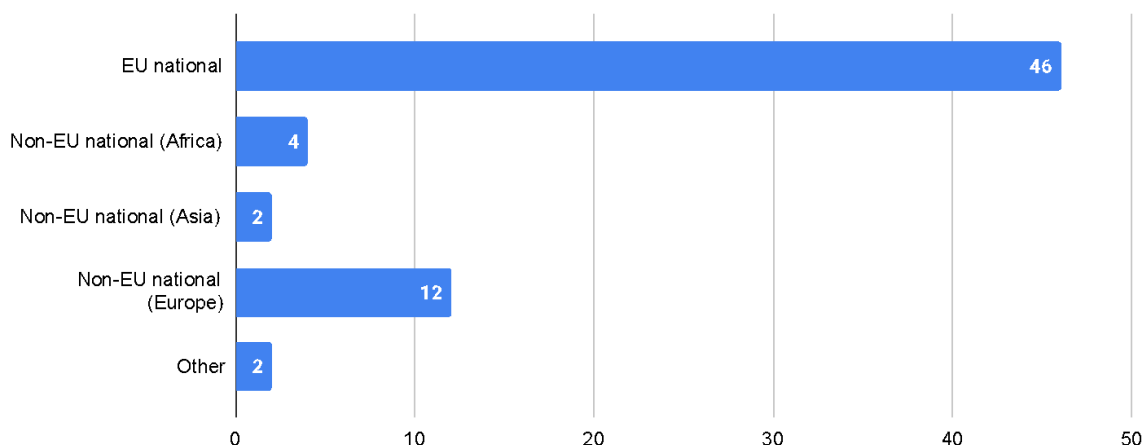
**3.5. Nationality**

The majority of the respondents identify as Maltese (88.8%).

International respondents identify themselves mainly as EU Nationals with 7.8%. Non-EU nationals, 2.0%, originate mainly from Non-EU European countries with 12 respondents out of 20 choosing the Non-EU category, followed by nationals from African states, 4 out of 20 and Asian states, 2 out of 20. Two individuals identified ‘Other’ as their nationality.



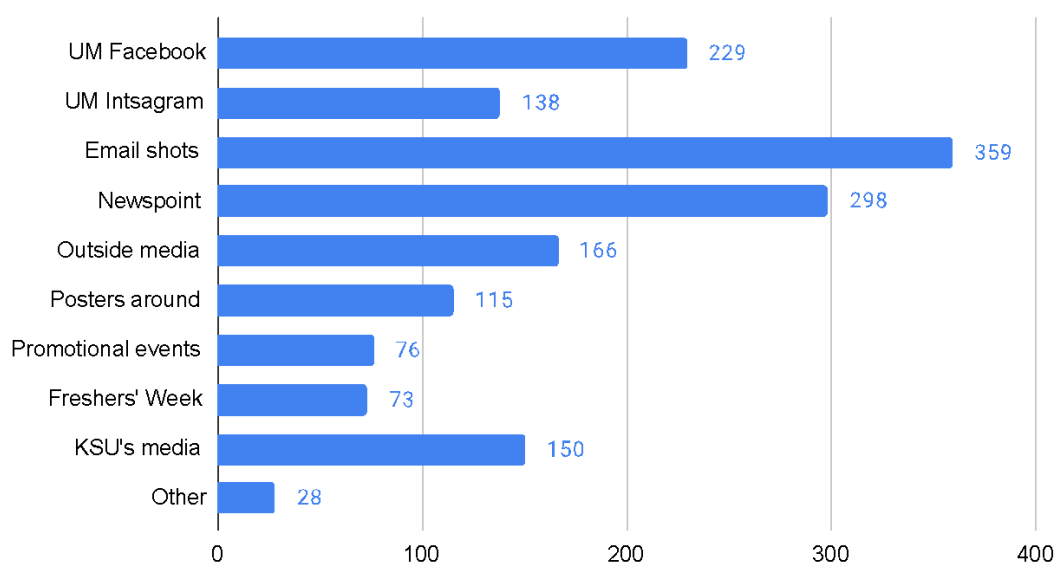
### International respondents



### 3.6. Source of information

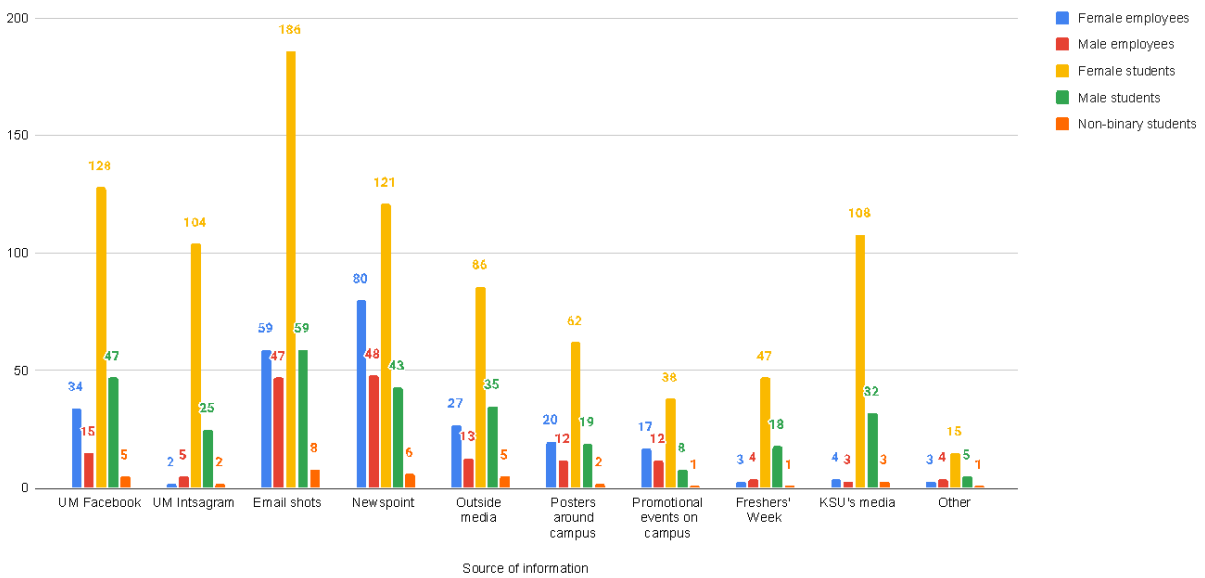
In Question 27 respondents were asked about their sources of information to keep up to date with UM operations and policies. The respondents were asked to select as many sources as they wanted. A total of 567 responses were received. Due to the multiple options available, the results amount to a total of 1632 selections. The three highest sources of information are: Email shots (63.3%), Newspoint (52.6%) and UM Facebook (40.4%).

### 27. Source of information



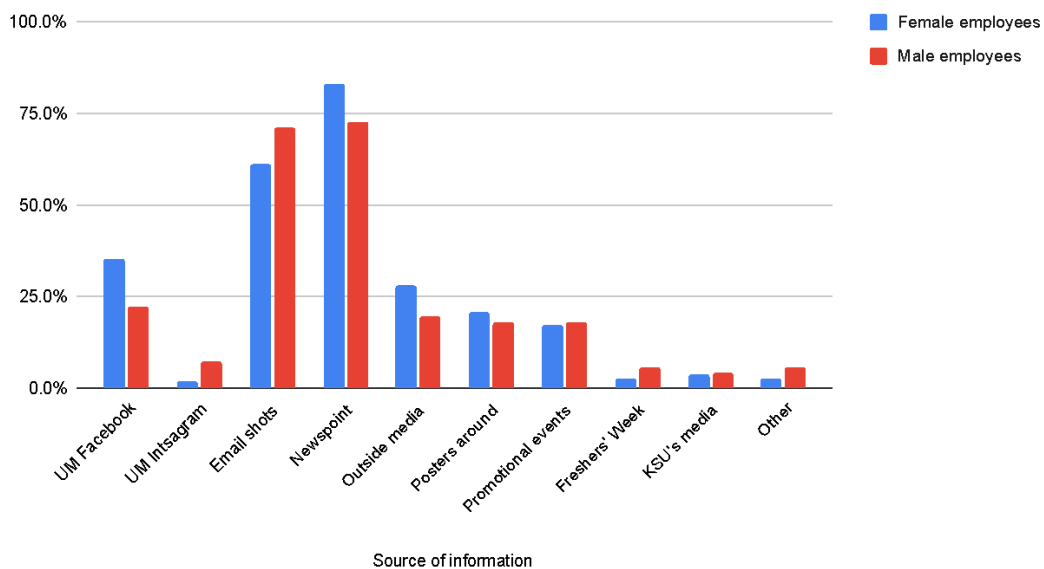
Analysis of the 567 respondents answering this question by status and sex shows the preferences of the respondents grouped in five categories: female employees, male employees, female students, male students and non-binary students.

Source of information by sex and status



UM employees prefer referring to Newspoint and Email shots. The only social media platform registering some relevance to UM employees is the UM Facebook pages. Female employees seem to prefer mostly Newspoint. Male employees have an identical preference between Newspoint and Email shots. There seems to be little or no interest in using sources targeting students such as: Freshers' Week, UM Instagram and KSU's media. Campus promotional events and posters score poorly with UM employees as a source of information.

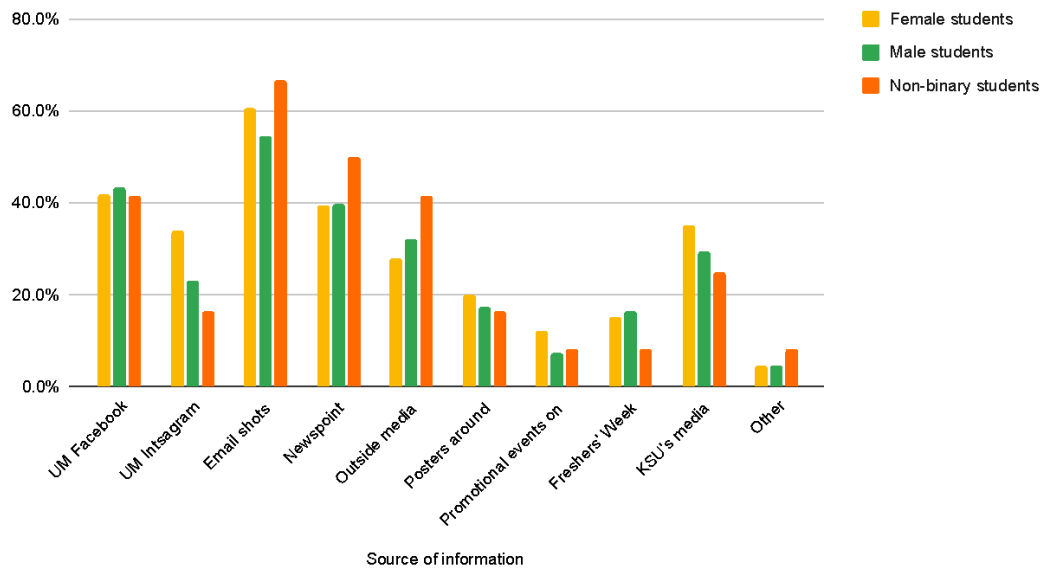
UM Employees source of information



Student responses vary greatly with a trend towards social media, digital information and KSU's media. As opposed to UM employees, students prefer mostly Email shots to Newspoint. The second most used source is UM Facebook followed closely by Newspoint. KSU's media and UM Instagram rank almost equally in the fourth position.

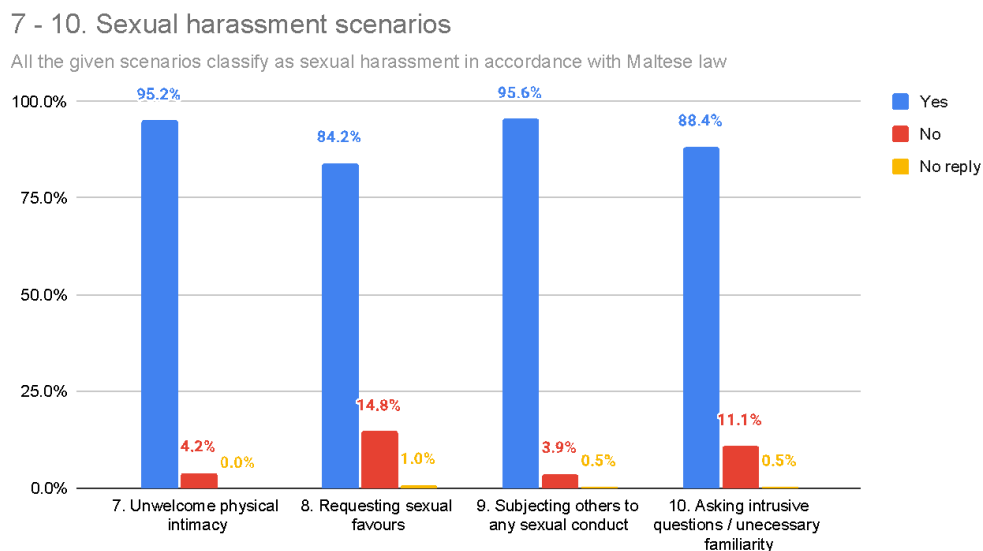


Student source of information



### 4. Opinions on what constitutes sexual harassment

The survey sought to collect the opinions on what constitutes sexual harassment. The respondents were presented with four scenarios depicting sexual harassment with a yes or no answer. The illustration below shows the answers collected. The majority of the respondents answered all the questions.

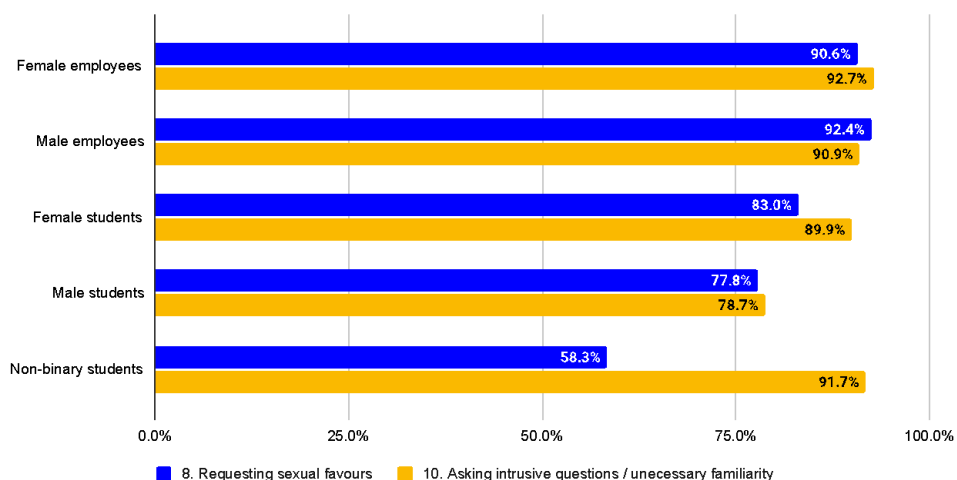


Considering the yes responses for all four scenarios, the grand majority with an average of 91%, agrees that all cases presented are sexual harassment scenarios. Questions 1 and 9 registered 95% of yes responses, whereas questions 8 and 10 registered an average of 86%. In fact, 84.2% of the respondents agree that ‘someone requesting sexual favours from another’ is considered sexual harassment. Similarly, 88.4% of the respondents perceive ‘someone asking intrusive questions about a person’s private life or body, displaying unnecessary familiarity’ as sexually harassing another.

Further analysis of these two scenarios by status and sex showed that male students are less sensitive to the fact that requesting sexual favours and intrusive questions are in fact scenarios of sexual harassment than female students. Female students are particularly more aware that intrusive questions and unnecessary familiarity are forms of sexual harassment.

### 8 & 10. Sexual harassment scenarios

% Yes respondents by status & sex



Male and female employees answered with high and almost equivalent numbers. Male employees seem to be more sensitive to the fact that requesting sexual favours is more of a sexual harassment scenario than being intrusive. Female employees seem to take a contrary stand. In fact, a Chi-Squared statistical analysis at a 0.05 level of significance shows that there is no significant difference in these responses between male and female employees.

Striking is the large difference in the responses given by non-binary respondents. It is evident that being intrusive and displaying unnecessary unfamiliarity is perceived more as sexual harassment than requesting sexual favours to this group of respondents.

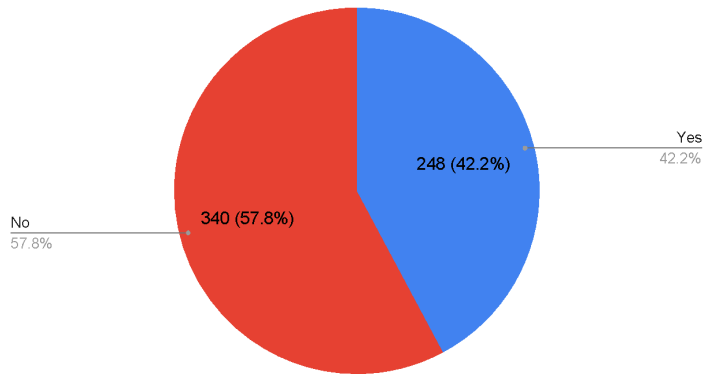
### 5. Awareness about UM Sexual Harassment Policy

The majority of the respondents 57.8% are not aware that UM has a SHP. Only 42.2% know that the policy exists.

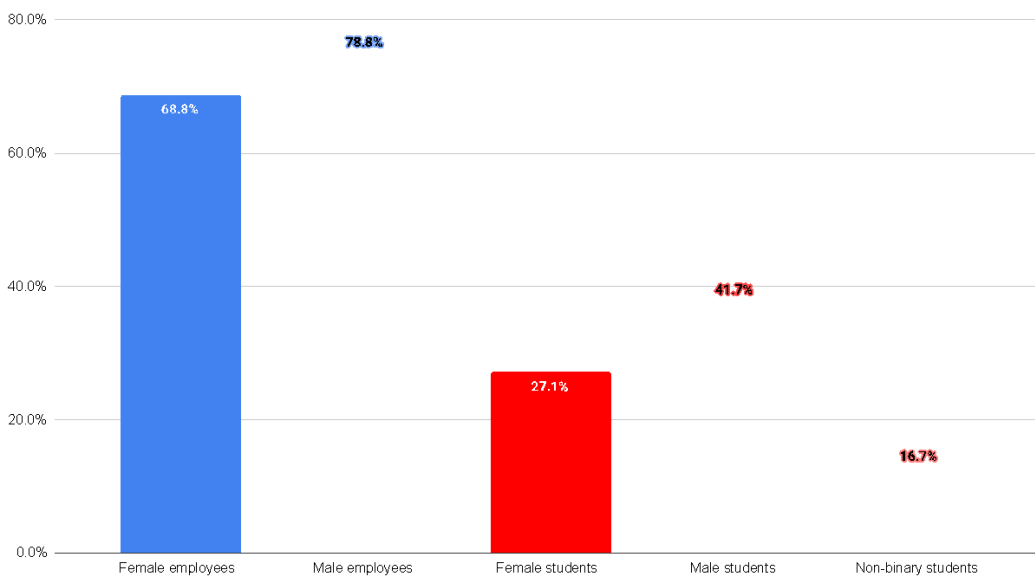
Further analysis of the 248 respondents confirming awareness of the UM SHP by status and sex shows that respondents identifying as male are more aware of the policy than female and non-binary respondents in general.

Male employees are more aware than female employees by a degree of 10%. Male students are more aware than female students with a difference of 15%.

11. Are you aware that UM has a Sexual Harassment Policy?



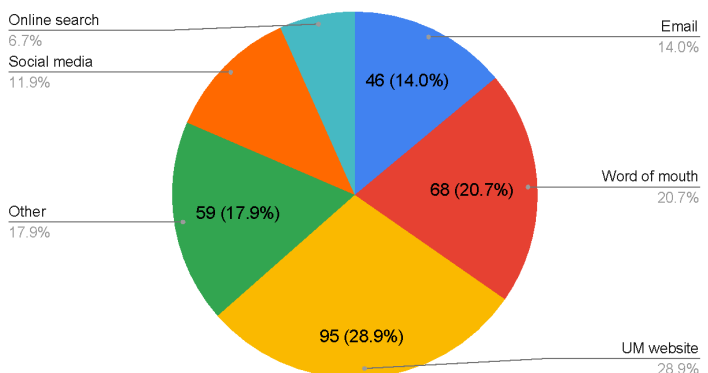
Respondents aware of the SHP by sex and status



We then asked the respondents aware of an existing SHP how did they learn about it. The majority answered by ticking only one of the options available. Others ticked more than one. There were a total of 329 entries.

The results show that 28.9% became aware of the SHP through the UM website and another 20.7% by word of mouth. A significant 17.9% have used 'other' means of information. Communication by means of 'email' (14.0%) and social media (11.9%)

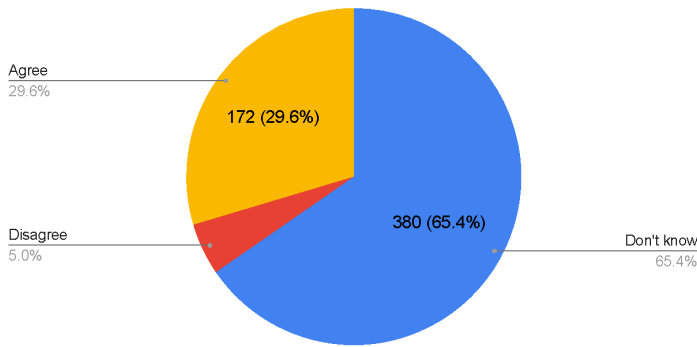
12. How did you learn about the SHP?



ranked in fourth and fifth position respectively. Only 6.7% used 'online search'.

In question 13, we asked the respondents whether the SHP document and other related information

13. The SHP document and any information related to this policy can be easily retrieved from the UM website.

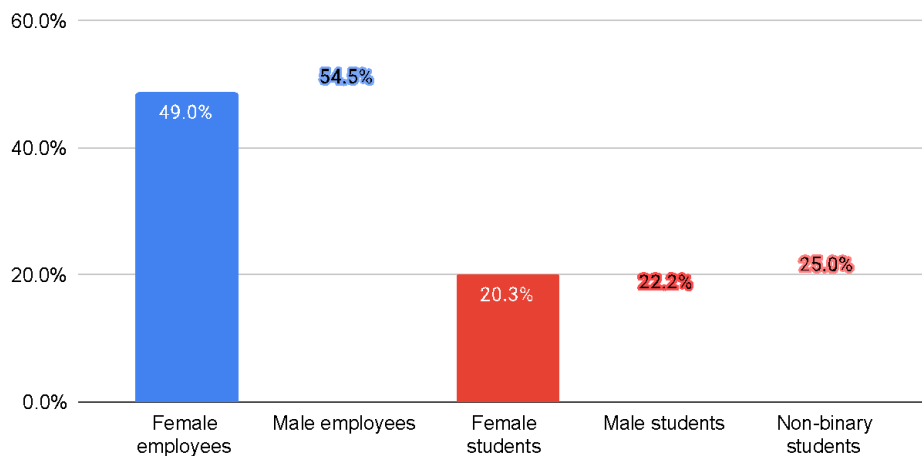


can be easily retrieved from the UM website. 65.4% do not know if such documents can be retrieved easily from the website with only 29.6% agreeing that it is easy to retrieve them. Only 5.0% of the respondents disagree with the statement. Two respondents did not answer the question.

172 respondents agreed that the SHP and other related documents are easily retrievable from the website.

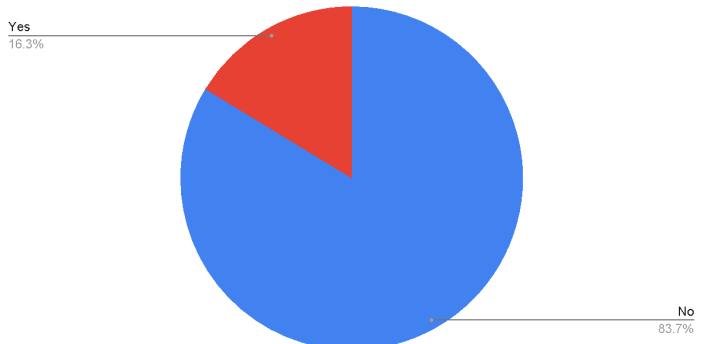
Further analysis of this portion by status and sex showed that male employees (54.5%) agree more than female employees (49.0%) with the statement. Student data suggests agreement to the same degree.

The SHP document & other related information can be easily retrieved from the UM website: Yes answers by sex and status



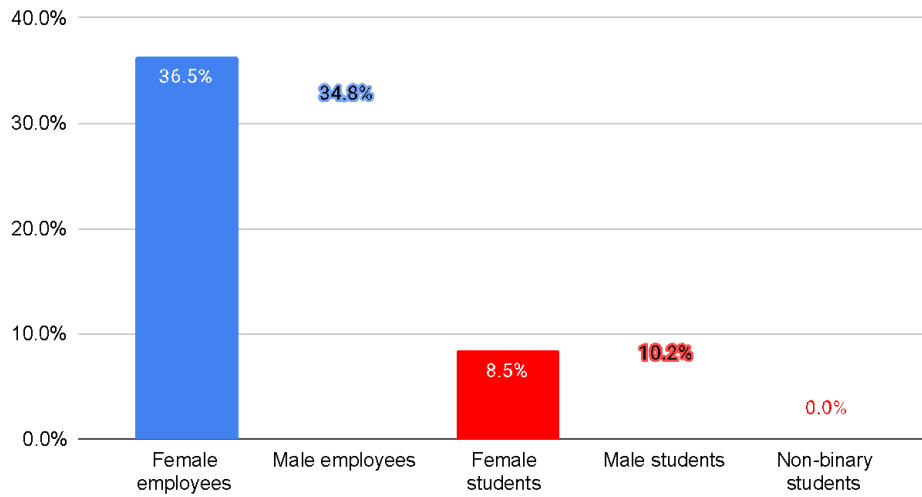
In question 14, we asked the respondents whether they were aware of any staff at UM whose role it is to deal with cases of sexual harassment and/or other related complaints. The grand majority of the respondents, 83.7%, are not aware of the existence of the Sexual Harassment Advisor. Six respondents, two academics and four students, did not answer the question.

14. Are you aware of any staff at UM whose role it is to deal with cases of sexual harassment and/or other related complaints?



Supplementary analysis of the awareness of the existence of the Sexual Harassment Advisor by sex and status shows that employees are generally more aware than students. Female employees (36.5%) are slightly more aware than male employees (34.8%). Male students (10.2%) are slightly more aware than female students (8.5%). None of the non-binary respondents are aware of the existence of the Sexual Harassment Advisor at UM.

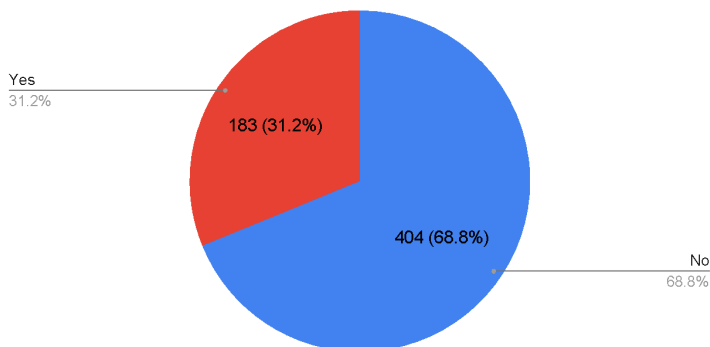
Respondents aware of the SH Advisor by sex and status



## 6. Information about people who suffered sexual harassment at UM

We asked our respondents if they know of anybody who has suffered sexual harassment at UM. Their answer could include third party information, direct experience and/or officially reported cases. A total of 587 respondents replied to the question.

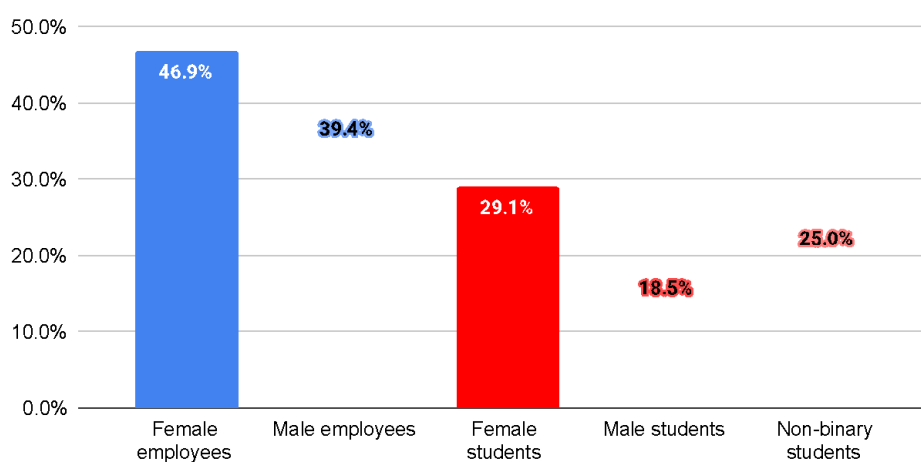
15. Do you know of anybody who has suffered sexual harassment at UM?



Only 31.2% of the respondents are aware of cases of sexual harassment at UM. The majority of the respondents 68.8% are not aware of anybody subjected to sexual harassment.

183 respondents know of somebody or a case of sexual harassment at UM. Further analysis of these by sex and status shows that female respondents are generally more aware of sexual harassment cases than male respondents. Additionally employees are generally more aware than students. Non-binary students seem to be as aware as female students.

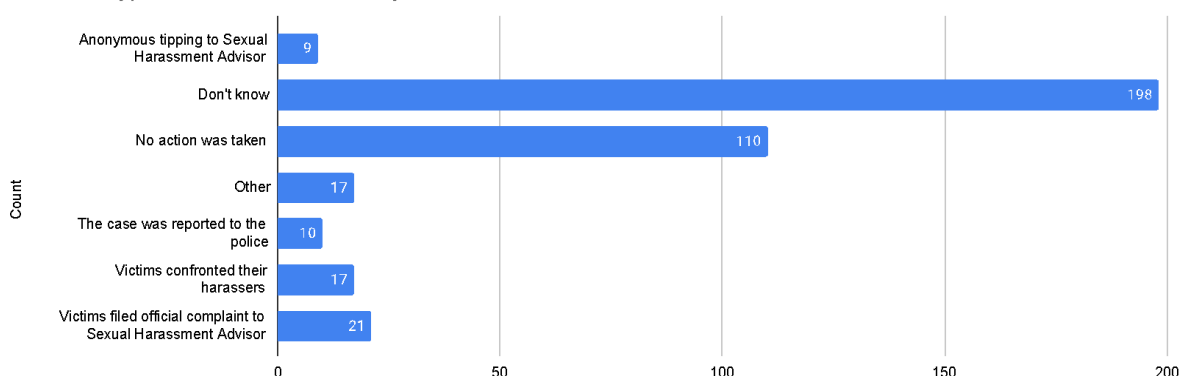
Respondents aware of sexual harassment cases by sex and status



We then asked the respondents to share their views about the type of action that was taken in relation to the known cases of sexual harassment. There were a total of 347 responses corresponding to 59.0% of the respondents, 24 of which ticked multiple actions for a total of 382 actions.

51.8% (198) of the respondents do not know what type of action was taken. The remainder 48.2% (184) is mostly convinced that no action was taken with 59.8% (110) of the actions ticked.

16. What type of action was taken by UM?

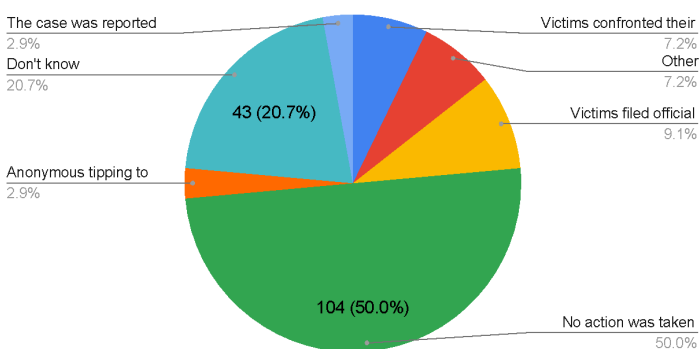


An alternate path of analysis regarding the actions taken was studied amongst the 183 respondents who are aware of at least one sexual harassment case. These respondents ticked a total of 208 of the options available.

20.7% of these respondents do not know of any action taken by UM. Exactly half of these respondents indicated that no action was taken by UM. The other options ticked scored very low percentages

16. What type of action was taken in relation to the above?

% out of the 183 respondents who know about a SH case



6.1. Other actions

Although 'Other' was ticked 17 times, we received a total of 21 responses for question 17 requesting the respondents to specify 'Other'. These actions may be grouped as follows. Numbers in brackets shows the count when such action/s were mentioned or implied.

1. Case reported (6)
2. Case not reported (6) / too traumatised (1)
3. Transfer request by victim (2) / search for alternative employment (1)
4. Warning given (2)
5. No action was taken (3)
6. Action was taken but lacked transparency (1)
7. Confrontation with abuser (2)
8. Fear repercussions (2)
9. Involvement of lawyers (1)

The following are some of the individual significant responses.

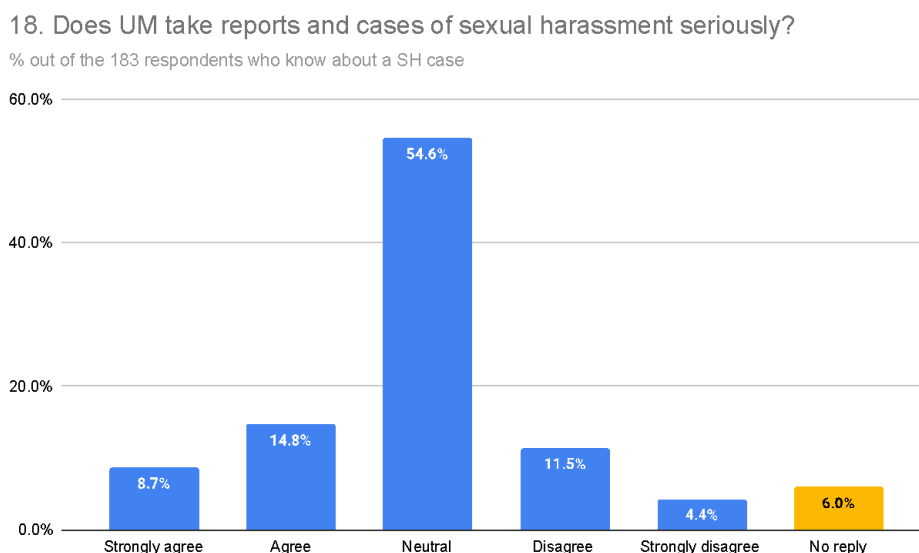
- *Victim reported case (6)*
  - *to the HRMD*
  - *A colleague was informed and spoke to the student and then confronted the 'abuser'*
  - *I was cat called on ring road by a worker in the passenger seat of a UM registered vehicle, one of the blue pickup trucks, I didn't know who to go to so I went to the Disability Unit rep Ms. Mangiafico and gave her the number plate of the UM vehicle. She said she would pass it on. Later she told me all the personal were given a*



- warning, because they supposedly didn't know who it was who did it. So I suppose UM does not keep track of whom uses what vehicle and when*
  - *in one instance, management was informed. in another instance, no action was taken*
  - *reported case to counsellors and admin (this was in relation to a student and NON-academic staff)*
  - *Was told by victim that spoke to a High Authority at UM.*
- *Victim did not report the case (6)*
  - *out of fear it would affect grades;*
  - *the person was still on probation and this person was victimised*
  - *When I was a victim of harassment, I did not report. I don't know what actions other women took (but I know they were harassed by the same people). I requested a transfer, and was granted it, without reporting the incidents.*
  - *We discussed (as friends and colleagues) how the situation may be tackled if it arose again in the future and reporting the issue to HR for advice*
- *More often than not people either get a transfer or search for alternative employment*
- *warning was done*
- *If you report, it backfires. I know of over 10 persons who were sexually harassed by one person and authorities know about this person and nothing was done to this person*
- *some people are afraid to report if the person committing the offence is influential*
- *There was nothing they could do because they don't know the person, others dealt with the person and others were too traumatised or it was too hard for them to deal with it all over again*
- *Action has been taken, but I do not know by who*
- *Involvement of the law through lawyers*

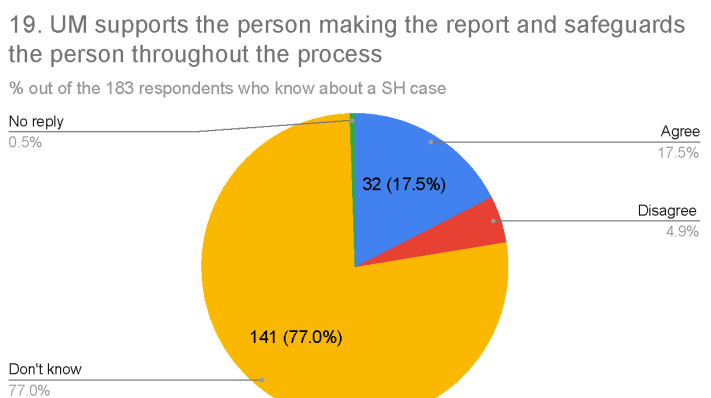
## 7. The effectiveness of the UM Sexual Harassment Policy

Question 18 enquired about the seriousness with which UM tackles reports and cases of sexual harassment. A total of 513 responses were submitted. The following data pertains the 183 respondents who are aware of at least one case of sexual harassment as their opinion is validated by their experience of these cases. 6.0% of these respondents did not share their opinion.



54.6% of the 183 respondents are neutral with respect to the actions of the University in handling reports and cases pertaining sexual harassment. 23.5% agree with the statement and find that UM takes reports and cases of SH seriously. In contrast with 15.9% who disagree and find that UM does not take reports and cases of SH seriously.

Question 19 enquired about the opinion of the respondents with respect to the support UM offers to the person making the report and safeguarding the person throughout the process. The grand majority, 77.0%, of the respondents aware of at least one case of sexual harassment do not know if UM offers this support. Only 17.5% agree with the statement. 4.9% disagreed with the statement and were encouraged to give reasons.



Reasons for ‘disagreement’ were given in 16 responses, but respondents who do not know of any sexual harassment case gave three of these. The other 13 validated replies may be summarized as follows.

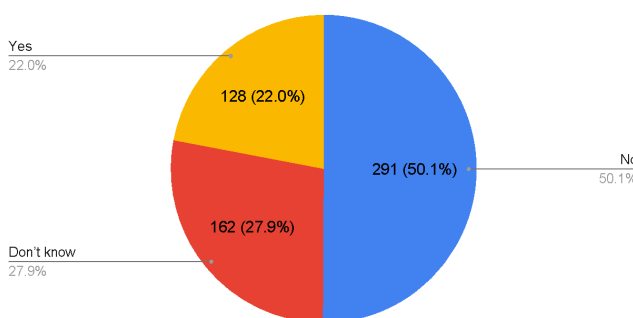
- Empathy with the perpetrator ‘he was being friendly’
- Inaction (3)
- Environment not safe to report (3)
- High ranking persons within UM were protected (3)
- Victims judged (1)
  - When student was sexually harassed, some people said 'don't expect action against

*that person'; when it happened to a staff, when management was told, it was as if vulgarity and uncomfortableness is due to the 'victim' being uptight*

- Not enough awareness / need to raise awareness about sexual harassment issues
- Backlash (2)
- Not taken seriously
- *Sometimes there is not enough proof*

Question 25 asked whether the existence of a SHP is sufficient to encourage reporting of sexual harassment cases? Half the respondents claim that the existence of a SHP is not sufficient to encourage reporting. The 183 respondents who know about at least one sexual harassment case further corroborate this number. 65.0% of the 183 respondents state that the mere existence of the policy is not enough.

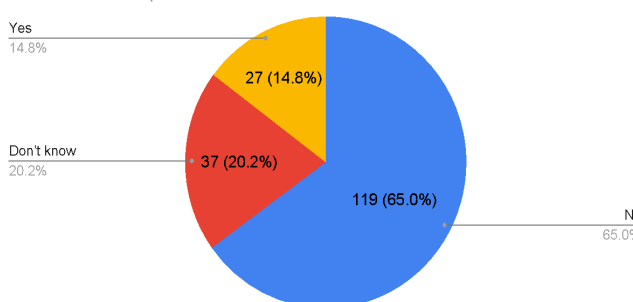
25. Is the existence of a Sexual Harassment Policy sufficient to encourage reporting of sexual harassment cases?



Additionally the number of respondents who think that the SHP is sufficient (22.0%) is lower in the respondents who know of sexual harassment cases (14.8%).

Is the existence of a SHP sufficient to encourage reporting of sexual harassment cases?

% out of the 183 respondents who know about a SH case



Question 26 invited the respondents to provide reasons why the existence of a SHP is insufficient to encourage reporting of sexual harassment cases. A total of 265 responses were submitted. These statements are grouped in the following four categories. Numbers in brackets show the amount of respondents suggesting that point.

1. Awareness of the SHP is generally lacking and therefore a more proactive approach in publicizing its existence through periodic campaigns is imperative. (116)
  - a. Clarification regarding LGBTIQ+ as victims
  - b. Campaign - men can also be victims
2. A SHP without the appropriate enforcement is futile. 39 respondents argued that any actions taken, needed to be visible and clearly communicated throughout UM to encourage victims to speak up. Respondents urged for an easier system to facilitate reporting. (39)
  - a. Make public the actions taken after report was made. (Perhaps adopt CRPD how many reports were made; how many solved; solutions; how many pending)
  - b. Create different avenues of reporting - anonymous reports via forms; designate focal points in every UM entity. HR can also deduce where this behaviour is taking place through the high turnover in certain departments; entities where staff are reluctant to be placed. Authorities should investigate and take action without a report
3. The establishment of a specialized unit/people to proactively reach out and offer support and encouragement to report would be an asset alongside the SHP. (43)
4. Victims do not feel safe to report. Many fear a backlash affecting their studies or careers. Others fear victim shaming or blaming, so they lack the courage to report. The existence of a SHP requires additionally some form of assurance to these victims that they will be protected. (80)

- a. *Create safe and enabling environment for reporting (stigma, shame, victim shaming/ blaming, fear of or reprisal / repercussions/ backlash on victim's life/ course / work)*
- b. *Create positive culture and climate for bystander reporting - inform when they can report an episode shared with them by victim*

A number of respondents expressed delusion and that a SHP alone is not enough to discourage harassment or encourage reporting. The 12 respondents within this number did not offer any suggestions. Some of the comments expressed lack of trust:

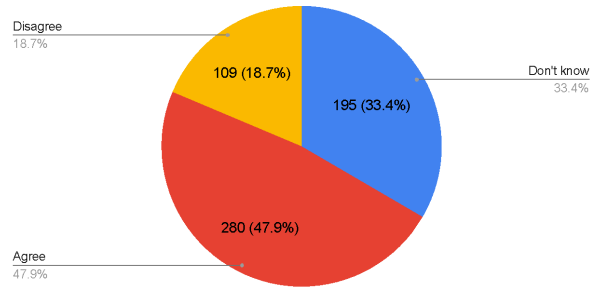
- *No because this person has no fear of no one. Everyone knows about this person unless you check whether employees are happy or why they left a place of work.*
- *Unreliable*
- *A simple policy wont stop sexual harassment or have it be reported more often, it will only make the harassers more secretive and keep what they do in the shadows, and make the victims hide it more in fear*

## 8. Reporting sexual harassment

Question 21 gathers opinions whether the reports on sexual harassment must always include a written and signed statement. Most of the respondents, 47.9% agree with the statement against a disagreeing 18.7%. One third of the respondents 33.4% did not know.

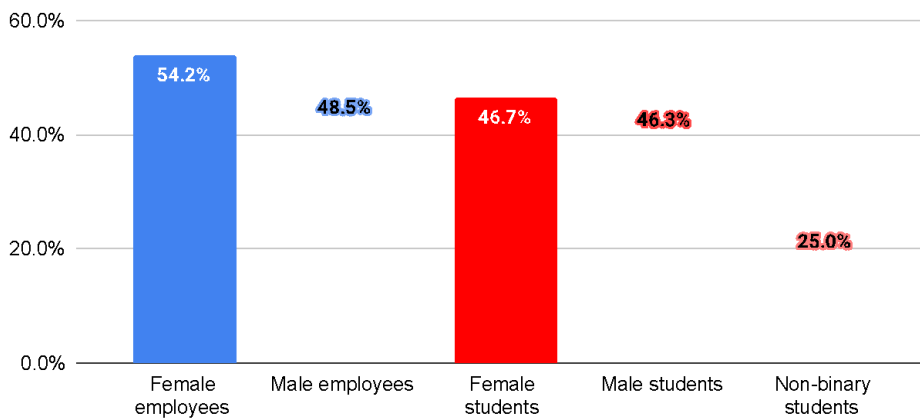
Further analysis of those in agreement by sex and status shows that about half the male and female respondents (employees and students) are of the same mind. However, female employees seem to agree more than other respondents. Non-binary students did not adhere to this pattern as only one quarter agree with the statement.

21. Reports on sexual harassment must always include a written and signed statement.



### Reports on SH must always include a written and signed statement

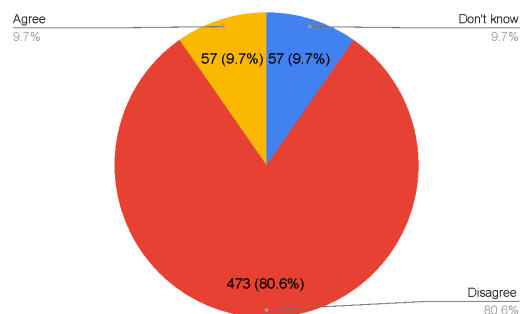
Agree only responses by status & sex



Question 22 investigates the opinion of respondents about a time limit imposition for reporting cases. The grand majority of the respondents (80.6%) are in disagreement; there should not be a time limit for reporting cases.

This portion was further analysed by status and sex as shown below. Female respondents tend to disagree more than male respondents. This holds true for both employees and students. Female employees 72.9% against male employees 62.1%. Female students 89.5% against male students 70.4%.

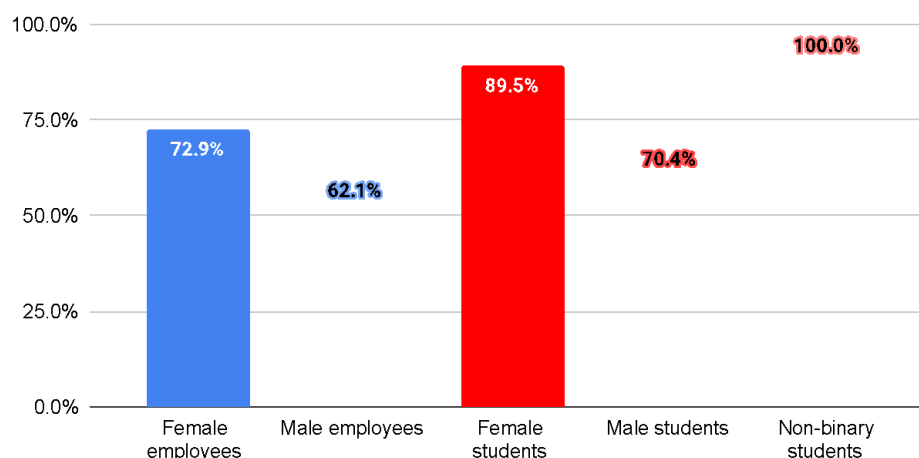
22. There should be a time limit for reporting cases.



The difference in the opinion is marked between students as there is a 20% difference as opposed to a 10% difference within the employee category. Non-binary students are solidly united as all non-binary respondents disagree with a time limit imposed on reporting sexual harassment.

## There should be a time limit for reporting cases

Disagree only responses by status & sex



Respondents agreeing that there should be a time limit for the reporting of sexual harassment where given the chance to give reasons for their opinion. A total of 57 responses were received; 50 of which were given by agreeing respondents. Either disagreeing or unknowing respondents submitted the other seven.

The comments may be grouped into these three categories: (i) time-bound reasons, (ii) wellbeing reasons and (iii) victim shaming.

### Time-bound reasons (6 months, 1-2 years, 10 years)

- Limits allegations, ulterior motives, false accusations or revenge (7)
- Avoids abusive behavior by victim on perpetrator (1)
- Avoids lapses in memory ensuring reliability of the testimony (11)
- Evidence may degrade, ensures reliable collection of evidence (8)
- Easier / proper investigation and assessment of the case (2)
- Not fair on perpetrator / they might not remember (4)
- Victim / perpetrator moved on and are no longer at UM (5)
- Sexual harassment is serious and must be reported at once (3)
- Prescription reasons as indicated in the criminal law (4)

### Wellbeing reasons

- Immediate need for help / action may be taken / quick resolution (5)
- Giving visibility to case might offer a deterrent to potential offenders and avoids other potential victims (4)
- Reasonable time for victim to recover and find the courage to report (2)

### Victim shaming

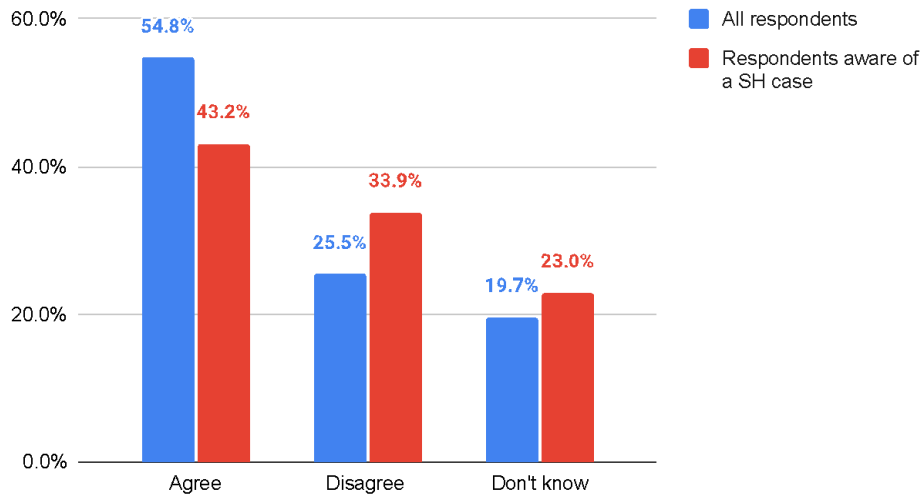
- If it took long to report then there was no real harm done (2)
- Victim is to blame: *The sooner one reports the better. Sometimes the victims twist facts as initially they might enjoy flirting, etc and later on they report the harassment as being done by the other party when in actual fact they would be partially if not totally responsible of the case.* (1)

Question 24 enquired if reporting of known cases should be mandatory. About half of the respondents (54.8%) agree with the statement that reporting should be mandatory against 33.9%

who are in disagreement. 23% of the respondents did not take a position.

A comparison of this data with the 183 respondents who are aware of at least a sexual harassment case shows a similar pattern. However, the number of respondents agreeing (43.2%) is lower by 10%, whereas those in disagreement (33.9%) is slightly higher by 8%.

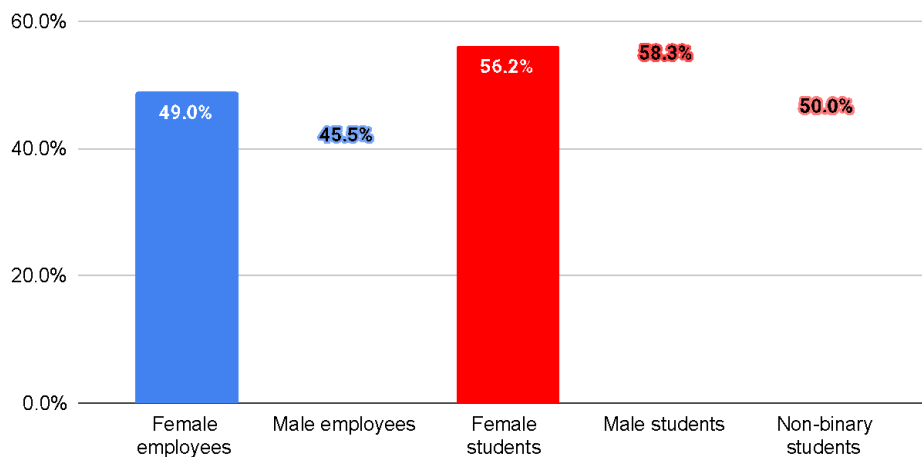
### 24. Reporting of known cases should be mandatory



Analysing the data of the respondents in agreement that reporting should be mandatory with respect to status and sex shows that the proportion of agreeing employees is smaller than that of students. Male students (58.3%) seem to be slightly more in agreement with the reporting being mandatory than female students (56.2%) and non-binary students (50.0%). Female employees (49.0%) are slightly more in agreement than male employees (45.5%).

### Reporting of known cases should be mandatory

Agree only responses by status & sex



## 9. Additional comments and/or suggestions

A total of 81 respondents gave their final comments and/or suggestions. These responses are grouped together under the following topics:

### 1. Awareness campaigns

Respondents stressed the importance of awareness and informative campaigns about sexual harassment in general, the SHP and its procedures. The following suggestions echo most of the proposals:

- *Visual posts on social media, leaflets, meeting at the start of the academic year could work and reach more people.*
- *Awareness raising campaigns:*
  - *More education should be given on what consent is and what is considered to be harassment and what is not.*
  - *inform people of the policy and where they can report harassment*
  - *digital harassment not mentioned? Such as sexting*
  - *Obligations of bystanders - speak up to stop what is happening or report it*
- *No matter how low the cases may be in comparison, men can be as subject to sexual harassment as women. There should be equality of treatment for both males and females without bias. It is well known that certain women act criminally by stating false claims knowing that the general climate of affairs will favour their interpretation of the facts.*
- *Anonymised examples of sexual harassment stories/reports and how UM dealt with the cases will be very helpful for victims to envision how their reporting may go and encourage them to come forward. Fear of consequences related to their studies is an added barrier for victims to report. How is the UM going to assure potential victims that reporting will not impact their results, or any other UM related opportunity negatively?*

### 2. Working towards a safe environment and victim support

- *Create safe climate and support for victims.*
- *Sexual harassment is usually accompanied by bullying.*
- *Staff office doors without glass windows should be replaced or separate rooms provided for ALL meetings which are one to one. This will protect all staff and students*

### 3. Training

- *Training sessions on specific policies will bring policies to life.*

### 4. Enforcing the policy

- *Just having a policy in place is not enough. It needs to be enforced and people need to be made aware of it.*
- *Better clarification regarding the LGBT+ community*

### 5. Normalizing reporting

- *Seeing as research indicates that reporting of such occurrences are generally low, the objective should be normalizing help-seeking. We also need to be perceptive of gender in this regard. While all genders are victimized, the reasons for their lack of reporting such experiences may vary. Especially in a society such as Malta's, where for example hegemonic masculinity is prevalent (among other social factors which detrimentally influence all genders) and obviously drastically influences victims' help-seeking tendencies.*
- *Promote and educate sexual harassment. Normalise people speaking up against it, and not feeling shamed for it.*
- *When people are harassed, the harasser is usually very careful not to leave evidence, and the victim's distress works against him/her. In addition, those witnessing the incident never tend to speak up to stop what is happening or report it - they do nothing to stop it.*



## 10. Conclusions

Undergraduate students in the junior or first cycle of studies at JC and UM respectively were the main respondents (72%) of this study concerning the understanding of the Sexual Harassment Policy at UM. Females amount to the majority of the respondents (68%). The respondents were classified according to sex and status: i) female students (52%), male students (18%), female employees (16%), male employees (11%) and non-binary students (2%). Additionally the majority of the respondents identified as Maltese (89%). **In conclusion Maltese female undergraduate students were the main respondents of this study.**

Email shots, Newspoint and the official UM Facebook page are the three most consulted sources of information amongst the respondents.

The grand **majority of the respondents (91%) agreed that the scenarios presented to them were depictions of sexual harassment.** However, *requesting sexual favours* and *asking intrusive questions* are perceived slightly less as sexual harassment. A future awareness campaign will need to focus more on these situations as Maltese Law clearly defines these as sexual harassment. Interesting to note that non-binary students perceived *asking intrusive questions* more strongly than other students as sexual harassment. This might be due to the curiosity about their sexuality. Uncalled for questions are perceived as unwelcome and intrusive leading to discomfort, embarrassment and possibly humiliation.

About **58% of the respondents were not aware of the existence of the UM Sexual Harassment Policy.** However, male respondents are more aware than female and non-binary respondents about the existence of the policy. Aware respondents claimed that their source of information is mainly due to information retrieved from the UM website or by word of mouth.

The study shows that respondents (65%) do not generally know if the Policy document and other related information is easily retrievable from the UM website. Only 30% confirmed that information is easily retrievable.

It is evident that male employees agree more than female employees with the relative ease in accessing the Policy document and related information.

Only 16% of the respondents were aware of the existence of a Sexual Harassment Advisor at UM. The remaining **84% do not know of the existence of a Sexual Harassment Advisor.** Even though some are convinced that the documents pertaining sexual harassment can be easily retrieved, it does not mean that these were actually retrieved and read, as the numbers do not tally. Moreover, employees seem to be more aware of the Sexual Harassment Advisor than students. Additionally, male employees/students are more aware of the advisor than their female counterparts. None of the non-binary students were aware of the existence of the advisor.

Only **31% of the respondents know somebody who suffered sexual harassment** at UM. Generally female respondents are more aware of victims than male respondents.

**Exactly half (50%) of these respondents stated that no action was taken by UM and about a fifth more (21%) do not know of any action taken by UM.** It is evident that UM needs to address the issue of the visibility of its proceedings amongst the University population. This was also strongly reiterated in the comments and suggestions parts of the questionnaire.

Out of these 183 respondents who know a victim of sexual harassment at UM, only 24% stated that UM takes reports of sexual harassment seriously. Most of these respondents took a neutral position (55%) with 16% stating that UM does not take these reports seriously. The lack of visibility and possibly the known incidents where the proceedings had to be dropped might contribute significantly to these positions.

Additionally 77% of these respondents are unaware of any support and protection offered by UM to

individuals making a report. This corroborates the fact that 84% do not know of the existence of the Advisor and presumably of the processes as outlined in the Policy document. Future awareness campaigns may allow more visibility of the support and protection offered by UM to anyone making a report.

**About 50% of the respondents state that the existence of a Sexual Harassment Policy is insufficient to encourage reporting.** This number is further supported by another 28% taking a neutral stand. Only 22% of the respondents claim that the existence of a Policy is sufficient. 65% of the respondents who know about a sexual harassment case support the perception that the mere existence of the Policy is insufficient to promote reporting. The main reasons behind the **ineffectiveness to encourage reporting are due to the lack of awareness, the lack of enforcement and the lack of safety or the fear of backlash.**

The study shows that **48% support the fact that a report must always include a written and signed statement.** 19% disagree with this stance and a significantly large portion of 33% took a neutral stand. There is no significant difference between male and female respondents with an average of 49% taken from female and male categories affirming that reports should not be anonymous. However, female employees tend to agree more with this fact. Non-binary students diverged from the rest of the population as only 25% are convinced that reports should not be anonymous.

The majority of respondents, about **81%, agree that there should not be a time limit for reporting cases.** All non-binary students are of the same mind of female respondents who generally tend to agree with this conclusion more than the male respondent.

The rest of the respondents gave reasons why a time limit is necessary. These are primarily due to the following facts: i) evidence may degrade and testimony becomes unreliable, ii) prescription reasons, iii) fairness of the process and iv) the immediate support to the victims of sexual harassment.

**Reporting known cases should be mandatory according to 55% of the respondents.** Students tend to agree with this conclusion slightly more than employees.

Respondents call out for more awareness campaigns to educate about sexual harassment, to offer visibility to the Policy and the processes involved and to promote the support and protection offered to the victims of sexual harassment.

Respondents urge UM to strive and create a safe environment by enforcing the policy and normalize reporting.

## Appendix

## Understanding UM's Sexual Harassment Policy

Dear Participants,

The Gender Equality & Sexual Diversity Committee (GESDC) and Kunsill Studenti Universitarji (KSU) are working very hard to improve the wellbeing of all its students and staff.

KSU, in collaboration with the Gender Equality & Sexual Diversity Committee of the University of Malta, is organising a survey on Sexual Harassment. The purpose of this survey is to better understand the current situation at University with regards to sexual harassment, especially the personal experiences of those working or studying on the UM/JC campus. The information you will provide in answering these questions will help us identify and develop the best suggestions and policies we need to put forward for keeping UM/JC campus safe. All answers will be treated with strict confidentiality and anonymity.

By taking part in this survey, you will be giving us consent to use the data you supply here. The results of this survey will be used to boost our Sexual Harassment Campaign over the coming years and ensure that everyone understands their rights and their ability to seek appropriate support and guidance in the eventuality of sexual harassment.

Thank you in advance for completing this survey and participating in this study!

KSU  
Gender Equality & Sexual Diversity Committee

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\*Required

### Understanding UM's Sexual Harassment Policy

#### Demographics

1. 1. Status \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Student
- Academic
- Administrative or support staff
- Other

2. 2. Years spent at UM \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Under 1 year
- 1-3 Years
- 3 -10 years
- 10+ years

3. 3. Are you affiliated to a society, organisation, or part of a committee? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Committee member
- Society/organisation member
- None

4. 4. Age \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- 16-21 years
- 22-30 years
- 31-40 years
- 41-50 years
- 51-60 years
- 61+ years

5. 5. Sex \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary
- Other

6. 6. Nationality \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Maltese
- EU national
- Non-EU national (Europe)
- Non-EU national (Africa)
- Non-EU national (Asia)
- Non-EU national (Americas)
- Non-EU national (Oceania)
- Other

Survey questions

Read the following scenarios and state whether you think these are sexual harassment by ticking "Yes/No"

7. 7. An individual subjecting other people to unwelcome physical intimacy or contact such as touching, hugging or kissing.

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No

8. 8. Someone requesting sexual favours from another.

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

9. 9. A person subjecting others to any conduct with sexual connotation (that may include spoken words, gestures, suggestive jokes and display of material) that is unwelcome, perceived offensive, humiliating or even intimidating.

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

10. 10. Someone asking intrusive questions about a person's private life or body, displaying unnecessary familiarity.

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

11. 11. Are you aware that UM has a Sexual Harassment Policy?

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

12. 12. If you answered 'yes', how did you learn about it?

*Tick all that apply.*

- Social media
- Online search
- Email
- Word of mouth
- UM website
- Other

13. 13. The Sexual Harassment policy document and any information related to this policy can be easily retrieved from the UM website.

*Mark only one oval.*

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know

14. 14. Are you aware of any staff at UM whose role it is to deal with cases of sexual harassment and/or other related complaints?

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No

15. 15. Do you know of anybody who has suffered sexual harassment at University? This can include third party information, direct experience and/or officially reported cases.

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No

16. 16. What type of action was taken in relation to the above? (tick as many as necessary)

*Tick all that apply.*

- Anonymous tipping to Sexual Harassment Advisor
- Victims confronted their harassers
- Victims filed official complaint to Sexual Harassment Advisor
- The case was reported to the police
- No action was taken
- Other
- Don't know

17. 17. If you answered Other, please specify

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18. 18. Does the University of Malta take reports and cases of sexual harassment seriously?

*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree

19. 19. UM supports the person making the report and safeguards the person throughout the process.

*Mark only one oval.*

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know



20. 20. If you disagree, please give a reason why you disagree.

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21. 21. Reports on sexual harassment must always include a written and signed statement.

*Mark only one oval.*

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know

22. 22. There should be a time limit for reporting cases.

*Mark only one oval.*

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know

23. 23. If you agree that there should be a time limit for reporting cases, give the reason why you agree.

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24. 24. Reporting of known cases should be mandatory.

*Mark only one oval.*

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know

25. 25. Is the existence of a Sexual Harassment Policy sufficient to encourage reporting of sexual harassment cases?

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

26. 26. If you disagree with the previous statement, please specify why.

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27. 27. How do you keep up to date with UM operations and policies? (Tick as many as you want)

*Tick all that apply.*

- UM Facebook
- UM Instagram
- Email shots
- Newspoint
- Outside media (e.g. Times of Malta),
- Posters around campus,
- Promotional events on campus,
- Freshers Week
- KSU's Media
- Other

28. 28. If you ticked 'Other', can you please cite the source?

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29. 29. Please leave any additional information, comments and/or suggestions.

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30. Thank you for your help. Keep safe.

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*Example: 7 January 2019*

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