

2017 Dartmouth Sexual Misconduct Survey

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is the purpose of the survey?

The survey is a follow-up to the 2015 Association of American Universities AAU Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct aimed at better understanding the attitudes and experiences of undergraduate, graduate, and professional students with respect to sexual assault and sexual misconduct.

How was the survey developed?

The 2017 Dartmouth Sexual Misconduct Survey used the 2015 AAU Survey as its base with modifications based on lessons learned and campus-specific needs for further information. Where possible, question wording was kept consistent with 2015 to expedite comparisons, most notably with respect to prevalence rates.

How was Sexual Assault defined?

The 2017 Survey used the same definitions as the 2015 AAU Survey which focused on nonconsensual sexual contact involving both sexual penetration and sexual touching or kissing. Respondents were asked whether one or more of these contacts occurred as a result of four tactics: 1) physical force or threat of physical force, 2) being incapacitated because of drugs, alcohol or being unconscious, asleep or passed out, 3) coercive threats of non-physical harm or promised rewards, and 4) failure to obtain affirmative consent. The first two tactics generally meet legal definitions of rape (penetration) and sexual battery (sexual touching or kissing). The other two tactics generally are violations of student codes of conduct.

Our response rate was only 47%, are the results valid?

Survey research does not typically have 100% response rates. Since this was a census survey in which all students enrolled at Dartmouth were invited to participate, instead of a sample survey which is open only to students in the selected sample group, 100% is not expected.

When and how was the survey administered?

The 2017 Survey was launched at Dartmouth on May 4, 2017 and closed three weeks later on May 25, 2017. The Office of Institutional Research administered the confidential survey via Qualtrics, a survey software platform.

Who was invited to participate in the survey?

All enrolled students (undergraduate, graduate, and professional) were offered the opportunity to participate in the survey.

Was participation mandatory?

No.

Are survey responses “weighted” and what does “weighting” mean?

In survey research, a threat to the accuracy of estimates is non-response and weighting is a common research technique used to address potential representation imbalances between the sample and population. An example is provided in the table below.

	Population	Respondents
Disproportionate Representation	Female	50% → 70%
	Age group: 18-20	65% → 45%
	Year in School: UG freshman	25% → 40%
	Race/ethnicity: Hispanic	10% → 2%

The variables used in the weighting (raking) procedure included: 1) *Gender* (Male/Female); 2) *Age Group* (18-20, 21-23, 24-26, and 27+); 3) *Year in School* (Undergraduate freshman, Undergraduate sophomore, Undergraduate junior, Undergraduate senior, and Graduate/Professional year); and 4) *Race/Ethnicity* (Hispanic, White, Black, Other race, Nonresident alien).

What was the process for informed consent?

The first page of the survey served as the consent form. It provided details about the survey, set expectations for the types of questions to be asked, and allowed students to make an informed decision whether participation was right for them. Students who felt they would become distressed taking such a survey could choose not to participate (and not enter the survey), and students who consented to participate were prepared for the sensitive topics.

Did the survey include a trigger warning?

Yes. The survey included an **Important note** about the explicit nature of some of the questions.

What happened if students became upset while answering the questions?

Each page of the online survey had a link to a list of confidential and private resources students could contact if they became upset.

Were incentives offered for participation in the survey?

Yes. To help ensure that the data collected represents the views and experiences of the entire campus community, all students submitting a survey received a \$10 Amazon electronic gift code.

How many students participated in the survey?

At Dartmouth, a total of 3,147 students participated, translating to an overall response rate of 47%.

How do the results from 2017 compare to 2015?

Prevalence rates of sexual violence are similar to or higher in 2017 than in 2015. This may be due to a wide variety of reasons, such as (but not limited to) students’ increased ability to recognize their own experiences as instances of sexual violence, variations across years regarding which students completed the survey, and a true increase in rates. Knowledge of resources/policies and perceptions of the College are consistent, when able to be compared with 2015 data. The [2017 results](#) provides more comparisons between the 2017 data and the 2015 AAU data for nonconsensual sexual contact.

The primary positive change is the rate of bystander intervention, which showed a marked improvement with more students now intervening when they encounter a situation that could potentially lead to sexual violence.

Why are the 2017 results presented differently from 2015?

The 2017 results are presented via a storyboard which is comprised of a series of separate dashboards corresponding to the various sections of the survey. This presentation style was selected since it is a more user-friendly option allowing users to more quickly access results of interest compared to the 100+ pages of static tables from 2015. The presentation option also allows the data to be viewed as charts or tables as well as either weighted or unweighted.

This first release of results is similar to 2015 in that genders (female, male, and transgender, genderqueer, gender non-Conforming, questioning, or not listed (TGQN)) and levels (undergraduate and graduate/professional) are available as filters. However, we recognize how important it is to understand how sexual violence impacts marginalized communities, and **we are committed to running additional analysis to understand how race and sexual orientation impact experiences of violence**, even if the raw data cannot be shared with the community due to confidential concerns due to a small number of students answering questions a particular way.

What work has been done since the last climate survey and will be done based on the 2017 results?

Dartmouth has dedicated more resources and energy into sexual violence prevention than ever before. For a more robust list of work to date, please see the [Action Plan](#).

How do I get involved with sexual violence prevention or response?

There are a wide variety of student organizations, such as:

- [MAV](#): peer educators for sexual violence prevention
- [OPAL Ambassadors](#): peer educators around issues of diversity, power, and oppression
- [SAPAs](#): peer advocates who support student survivors of sexual violence
- [Sexperts](#): peer educators on sexual health and healthy relationships
- [SPCSA](#): student committee that issues annual policy recommendations

To get become more involved in the Sexual Violence Prevention Project, contact SVPP@dartmouth.edu

Who do I contact if I still have questions?

For questions related specifically to the survey design, administration or analyses, please contact [Institutional Research](#). For information on sexual assault or sexual misconduct programs and/or resources, please contact the [Title IX Coordinator](#).