

# 2021 Dartmouth Sexual Misconduct Surveys

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### **What is the purpose of the surveys?**

The student survey is a follow-up to previous surveys, in 2015 and 2017, on sexual assault and sexual misconduct. The longitudinal study is designed to better understand the attitudes and experiences of undergraduate, graduate, and professional students over time with respect to sexual assault and sexual misconduct. Administered for the first time in 2021, the faculty and staff survey aims to extend our understanding of the same issues among the faculty and staff population.

### **How were the surveys developed?**

The 2021 Dartmouth Sexual Misconduct Student Survey is based on the 2015 Association of American Universities (AAU) Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct, which was administered at Dartmouth and other AAU institutions. Modifications for the 2017 and 2021 Dartmouth-only student administrations were made based on lessons learned and campus-specific needs for further information. Where possible, question wording was kept consistent with 2015 and 2017 to facilitate comparisons, most notably with respect to prevalence rates. For the 2021 faculty and staff survey, the 2017 student survey was modified to apply to the employee population.

### **How was Sexual Assault defined?**

The 2021 surveys used the same definitions as the 2015 AAU Survey and 2017 Dartmouth student 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 43% for students and 46% for faculty and staff. Are the results valid?**

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

### **When and how were the surveys administered?**

The 2021 surveys were launched at Dartmouth on April 2, 2021 and closed three weeks later on April 23, 2021. The Office of Institutional Research administered the confidential surveys via Qualtrics, a survey software platform.

**What does it mean that the survey is confidential?**

A unique link was emailed to each person invited to complete the survey, which allows the software to generate reminders only to members of the population who have not yet responded. This means email addresses are connected with each response, but they are kept confidential. Results are aggregated, and only analysts in the Office of Institutional Research are able to see the raw data.

**Who was invited to participate in the surveys?**

All enrolled students (undergraduate, graduate, and professional) and all currently active faculty and staff 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 |
|--|-------------------------------|-------------|
| <i>Disproportionate Representation</i> | Female                        | 70%         |
|  | Age group: 18-20              | 45%         |
|  | Year in School: UG first year | 40%         |
|  | Race/ethnicity: Hispanic      | 2%          |

For the student survey, 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 first-year, Undergraduate sophomore, Undergraduate junior, Undergraduate senior, and Graduate/Professional year); and 4) Race/Ethnicity (Hispanic, White, Black, Other race, and International).

For faculty and staff survey, the variables used in the weighting (raking) procedure included: 1) Gender (Male/Female); 2) Age Group (18-29, 30-49, 50-69, and 70+); 3) People group (Faculty, Exempt Staff, Other Staff, Postdoc/Research Associate); and 4) Race/Ethnicity (Hispanic, White, Black, Other race, and International).

**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 respondents to make an informed decision whether participation was right for them. Respondents who felt they would become distressed taking such a survey could choose not to participate (and not enter the survey), and those who consented to participate were prepared for the sensitive topics.

**Did the surveys include a trigger warning?**

Yes. The survey included a note about the explicit nature of some of the questions.

### **What happened if respondents 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 surveys?**

To help ensure that the data collected represents the views and experiences of the entire student community, all student respondents submitting a survey received a \$10 Amazon electronic gift code. No incentive was offered to faculty and staff.

### **How many participated in the surveys?**

A total of 3,006 students participated, translating to a response rate of 43% for students; and 2,104 faculty and staff participated, translating to a 46% response rate for faculty and staff.

### **How do the results from 2021 compare to 2015 and 2017?**

The survey was administered to faculty and staff for the first time in 2021, so comparison to a prior survey is not available for this demographic. Prevalence rates of sexual violence among students are lower than in 2017 or 2015. This may be due to a wide variety of reasons, including effective Dartmouth programming in the intervening years, increased levels of awareness tied to the #MeToo movement, and decreased social contact due to the pandemic. Knowledge of resources/policies and perceptions of the College are improved when compared to 2017.

### **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

For faculty and staff:

- [WISE of the Upper Valley](#)
- [Faculty/Employee Assistance Program \(F/EAP\) resources](#)

To get become more involved in the Sexual Violence Prevention Project, contact [SVPP@dartmouth.edu](mailto: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](#).