

Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy and Procedure

Approving body	Governing Board (GB)
Date approved	17 August 2026
Date of effect	Date of operation commencement
Next scheduled review	Two years from when policy commences
Policy owner	Chief Executive Officer
Policy contact	Chief Executive Officer
Related Documents	Student Misconduct Policy and Procedure Human Resources Management Policy and Procedure Student Code of Conduct Staff Code of Conduct Student Wellbeing Policy and Procedure Student Support Framework Critical Incident and Emergency Management Policy and Procedure Student Orientation Policy and Procedure Student Orientation Booklet
Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF) 2021 (Cth)	Standards 2.3.1 to 2.3.5 Good Practice Note: Preventing and responding to sexual assault and sexual harassment in the Australian higher education sector Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency
National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018	Standard 6.8
Other Applicable Legislation and Instruments	<i>Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011</i>

Purpose

1. This Policy outlines a framework for the prevention of sexual assault and sexual harassment at Zenith, the response to any reported incidents and the mitigation of the negative consequences of sexual assault and sexual harassment to Zenith's students, should it occur.

Scope

2. This Policy applies to:
 - (a) prospective and current students of Zenith Innovation Institute (**Zenith / ZII / the Institute**);
 - (b) all students, staff, contractors, and visitors, including those who identify as trans-gender and gender diverse, LGBTIQ+, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, with a disability, culturally and linguistically diverse;
 - (c) members of the Institute's governing bodies;
 - (d) individuals engaged in providing services to the Institute or receiving services from the Institute, such as students, contractors or consultants; and
 - (e) all behaviours defined as sexual assault and sexual harassment in this Policy, both on and off campus.

Policy

Principles

3. The Institute adopts a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment and sexual assault. Sexual harassment and sexual assault are prohibited and constitute serious misconduct at Zenith. In some cases, sexual harassment and sexual assault are criminal activities and police will be involved. Action will be taken against any person who breaches this policy.
4. At Zenith, a culture of respect and safety will be developed and maintained, and supported by processes to prevent, prepare for, respond, and recover from sexual assault and sexual harassment.
5. The reporting of incidents will be encouraged. The Institute will support complainants, and will appropriately sanction perpetrators. The Institute understands that international students may have cultural and language barriers to disclosing or reporting sexual harassment and sexual assault. Information about this Policy is covered during all student orientation sessions, relevant information sessions, and staff training.
6. Where sexual assault and/or sexual harassment takes place outside of the scope of the activities of the Institute, support services will still be made available.
7. The Policy applies whether the sexual harassment or sexual assault is initiated in person, by telephone, or through electronic technologies such as mobile phone cameras, social networking websites, emails, SMS/MMS communications, through another person, agent, or any other means.
8. In its approach to the prevention and management of sexual assault and sexual harassment, the Institute will:
 - (a) seek to prevent the occurrence of sexual assault and sexual harassment across all areas of the Institute's operations, on campus and online;

- (i) ensure management is aware of its responsibilities for establishing controls and procedures for the prevention and detection of, response to, and recovery from instances of sexual assault and sexual harassment;
- (b) ensure staff members are aware of the Institute's expectation to report promptly and respond effectively to cases of sexual assault and sexual harassment;
- (c) treat all reports with confidentiality and care, including protecting the rights and confidentiality of the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator;
- (d) provide assurances to staff, students, and the wider community that any suspected case of sexual assault and sexual harassment will be fully investigated, and sanctions imposed, up to termination of enrolment or employment; and
- (e) provide integrated support to individuals who have experienced sexual assault and sexual harassment to enable reporting to be supported, and to enable recovery and resumption of studies or employment.

Strategies

Prevention

9. Prevention of sexual assault and sexual harassment is implemented through the Institute through the following measures:
 - (a) **Culture:** The Institute promotes a culture of mutual respect and safety through a process of awareness, training, and monitoring.
 - (b) **Leadership:** Senior staff will demonstrate a high level of commitment to the prevention of sexual assault and sexual harassment at the Institute.
 - (c) **Staff awareness:** All staff members will have a general awareness of issues relating to sexual assault and sexual harassment in the higher education sector and understand how such conduct should be managed if it is reported, witnessed or suspected.
10. Student awareness: The Institute delivers structured SASH awareness to all students through the orientation program and through ongoing educational campaigns. This is operationalised through the Student Orientation Policy and Procedure and the Student Orientation Booklet, which together constitute the Institute's primary student-facing SASH prevention instruments.
11. At orientation, all commencing students receive the following SASH-specific information:
 - (a) the Institute's zero-tolerance approach to sexual assault and sexual harassment, and that these behaviours constitute serious misconduct and may be criminal offences;
 - (b) how to report an incident of sexual assault or sexual harassment, including emergency contact numbers (000), the trained support personnel contacts on campus, and external specialist services;
 - (c) information about online SASH risks, including sexual harassment through emails, social media, and digital channels, and the Institute's expectations for online conduct;
 - (d) that the Institute does not tolerate discrimination, bullying, or victimisation, and the process for raising concerns with Student Services; and
 - (e) where to find the Student Orientation Booklet, the SASH Policy, and external support services including the 1800RESPECT national helpline.
12. Orientation delivery of SASH content is documented by the Student Services Manager and confirmed to the CEO at the end of each orientation program. Regular educational campaigns on SASH are conducted throughout the year, including on sexual harassment on social media and the link between alcohol and drug use and SASH incidents.
13. Within the first two weeks of each teaching period, Student Services administers the post-orientation needs assessment to all commencing students (Student Orientation Policy and Procedure). The needs assessment includes a prompt for students to identify any personal safety concerns or support needs, providing a second opportunity to identify students who may have experienced SASH prior to or during the commencement period. Where a student identifies a

personal safety concern, Student Services contacts the student directly and initiates referral to trained support personnel.

14. Risk assessment: The Institute conducts structured risk assessments for the identification and assessment of precursors, early warning signs, and 'red flags' for early intervention. Risk assessments are conducted at least annually as part of the Institute's broader risk management cycle, following any significant SASH-related incident or disclosure, following any material change to the Institute's operations, facilities, or student and staff profile, and whenever any of the following risk indicators are identified:
 - (a) reports or disclosures of sexual harassment or assault received in the preceding period, including anonymous reports;
 - (b) changes in the Institute's student or staff profile that may increase vulnerability, such as a significant increase in international student enrolments or new WIL placement environments;
 - (c) identified deficiencies in existing SASH prevention controls, such as inadequate lighting or gaps in staff training;
 - (d) external events or sector-wide alerts relating to SASH risks in higher education; or
 - (e) results of student satisfaction surveys or complaints indicating a deterioration in perceptions of campus safety.
15. Risk assessments are conducted by the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Student Services Manager and the Critical Incident Team. Where the CEO is directly involved in or affected by an incident, the Governing Board Chair oversees the assessment. Each assessment produces a written record documenting the specific risks identified, existing controls and their adequacy, recommended additional controls or improvements, the responsible officer and timeline for implementing recommendations, and sign-off by the CEO confirming the assessment is complete. The outcomes of all SASH risk assessments are reported to the Governing Board by the Academic Dean at the next scheduled board meeting.
 - (a) **Facilities:** As far as is reasonably practicable, campus facilities and onsite security are designed to prevent or minimise the risk of sexual assault and sexual harassment.

Preparedness

16. The Institute enacts a range of proactive activities, and develops a range of resources to aid in preparedness of sexual assault and sexual harassment including:
 - (a) **Training:** At least 2 Staff members will be trained on how to receive reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment, including on privacy and confidentiality requirements, and to initiate an adequate response from the Institute. Staff members responsible for investigating such reports will be, and be seen as, independent and will receive institutional support to conduct an effective, fair and prompt investigation. These staff will be identified in posters or SMS around the campus and will be referred to as "trained support personnel".
 - (b) **Information:** Information on immediate assistance in the case of sexual assault or sexual harassment will be made available in ways that students and staff can access it as and when needed, including key Institute contacts and relevant external services, such as support helplines.
 - (c) **External services:** The Institute will develop and maintain a network of services to respond to sexual misconduct or provide information for access to essential free services, including counselling services, local police, hospitals, sexual assault services, and legal centres.

Response

17. The Institute has a range of measures in place to aid in response to a sexual assault and sexual harassment case:
 - (a) **Support:** The Institute will provide integrated support to a student or staff member who has experienced sexual assault, including professional support (e.g., counselling),

reasonable adjustments, and other measures to enable recovery and return to study or employment.

- (b) **Investigation:** The Institute will investigate all reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment and will provide a response to the person who made the report.
- (c) **Sanction:** Perpetrators will be sanctioned if the allegation is proven, up to termination of enrolment or employment. If the sanction does not involve exclusion or termination, it will always include mandatory participation in educational programs on sexual assault and sexual harassment.
- (d) **Referral to Police:** The Institute will refer cases to the Police only with the consent of the victim or where legally required to do so.
- (e) **Cultural competence:** Zenith acknowledges the needs and sensitivities of students from diverse backgrounds and experiences, such as cultural, gender, and social diversity must be recognised and managed in an appropriate manner. It will achieve this by ensuring its staff has, or has access to, individuals with the necessary expertise to respond to disclosures of sexual assault and sexual harassment in a culturally competent way. Identified groups include but are not limited to:
 - (i) those with a disability;
 - (ii) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
 - (iii) LGBTIQ+ community;
 - (iv) culturally and linguistically diverse students;
 - (v) international students, including people who would prefer to disclose their experience in their native language; and
 - (vi) transgender or gender diverse people.

Recovery

- 18. **Ongoing support:** individuals who experienced, and persons who reported, sexual assault and sexual harassment will receive ongoing support from the Institute, including academic support, reasonable adjustments, employment support and other measures to enable participation and progression. Staff members and supervisors will take into consideration the psychological impact of sexual assault and sexual harassment and its negative consequences for staff and students. With the approval of the Academic Dean, procedures may be adjusted to maintain confidentiality, e.g., with reasonable adjustments for students which normally require disclosure to staff members.

Definitions

Consent

- 19. An individual can only consent to sexual behaviour, which means an individual agrees to the behaviour, when a student is not being intimidated and is aware of what is going on. For example, a person cannot give free agreement where they are:
 - (a) bullied, threatened, manipulated or tricked;
 - (b) asleep, unconscious, or so affected by drugs or alcohol as to be unable to form a rational opinion;
 - (c) intimidated by the nature or position of another; and
 - (d) if they are silent (that is do not say or do anything to communicate consent).
- 20. An individual or their sexual partner can decide at any time that they don't consent to sexual behaviour continuing, even the activity has already started. If this happens, all participants have to stop right away.

Sexual assault

What is sexual assault?

21. Sexual assault is any unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature that makes a person feel uncomfortable, frightened or threatened. It can occur when a person is forced, tricked or coerced into sexual behaviour without agreeing to it.
22. Sexual assault includes unwanted or inappropriate touching or kissing of a person's body, having sex with someone without their consent, and rape. It can also involve non physical activity e.g. exposing another person to sexual behaviour without their consent, such forcing the person to watch pornography.
23. Sexual assault is a crime and a major health and welfare concern in Australia.

Response

24. In an emergency or in circumstances of immediate danger on campus, the person who has experienced sexual assault or observers should call:
 - (a) Police or emergency services (24 hours): 000; and then
 - (b) Trained Support Personnel (XX hours): *[insert number]*
25. Where there is an incident of sexual assault, the Institute will:
 - (a) take immediate steps to provide appropriate support to the person who has experienced sexual assault, including the engagement of external sexual assault services where the person provides consent or arrange for them to talk confidentially with a support staff of the same gender
 - (b) encourage but not require the person to make a report to the Police
 - (c) ensure that the Academic Dean is informed and implement the processes set out in the *Critical Incident Policy and Procedure*.
26. Where a person who has experienced sexual assault chooses to make a report to the Police while the Institute is investigating the incident of sexual misconduct, the Institute will suspend its investigation. Any action taken by the Institute to support the person who has experienced sexual assault or to make adjustments to its own environment or procedures as a result of any serious incidents will occur independently of any Police criminal investigation.

Sexual Harassment

What is sexual harassment?

27. Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual behaviour that is likely to offend, humiliate or intimidate. The *Sexual Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth) defines sexual harassment as when
 - (a) the person makes an unwelcome sexual advance, or an unwelcome request for sexual favours, to the person harassed; or
 - (b) engages in other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature in relation to the person harassed in circumstances in which a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would have anticipated the possibility that the person harassed would be offended, humiliated, or intimidated.
28. Examples of sexual harassment include but are not limited to:
 - (a) unwelcome physical touching including deliberately brushing up against the other person;
 - (b) uninvited kisses or embraces;
 - (c) domestic violence
 - (d) requests for sex;
 - (e) staring or leering;
 - (f) sexually explicit conversation;

- (g) suggestive comments or jokes;
 - (h) unwanted requests to go out on dates, especially after a prior refusal;
 - (i) intrusive questions about the person's private life or body;
 - (j) making promises or threats in return for sexual favours;
 - (k) "flashing" (exposing private parts of the body) or sexual gestures;
 - (l) sex-based insults, taunts, teasing or name-calling;
 - (m) touching or interfering with a person's clothing, e.g., lifting up skirts, flicking bra straps;
 - (n) offensive phone calls or letters;
 - (o) displaying posters, magazines, or screen savers of a sexual nature;
 - (p) stalking, sexual insults, or taunting;
 - (q) emailing pornography or rude jokes;
 - (r) sending sexually explicit texts;
 - (s) offensive messages through new technologies such as mobile phone cameras, social networking; and
 - (t) websites, emails, or SMS/MMS communications.
29. Sexual harassment can also an offence under criminal law may be referred to the police; this includes matters involving:
- (a) sexual assault;
 - (b) domestic violence
 - (c) physical molestation or assault;
 - (d) indecent exposure;
 - (e) stalking; and
 - (f) obscene communications.

Procedures

Making a formal complaint of sexual harassment and/or sexual assault

- 30. A formal complaint may be made by the individual concerned or by another person on their behalf, subject to the consent of the individual concerned.
- 31. When an individual (or their representative), the complainant, lodges a formal complaint of sexual assault or sexual harassment the student must be referred to the trained support person (this is why you need a certain cadre of trained staff) who will offer available support services and can assist them with the necessary procedures and referral to the police, with their consent. However, it may be appropriate for the trained support person to refer the concerned individual to an individual with the necessary expertise to respond to disclosures of sexual assault and sexual harassment in a culturally competent way.
- 32. Complaints are kept strictly confidential and information on the incident is provided to staff only where required to respond effectively to the report of the complaint.
- 33. An individual may decide not to proceed with their complaint. Should this occur the individual is still able to use all the Institute's support services.
- 34. The Institute will accept anonymous reports or reports for incidents which happened in the past, however, the Institute may be limited in its response due to lack of evidence or information.
- 35. An individual may choose to disclose an incident of sexual assault or sexual harassment to a staff member or student support person without wishing to make a formal complaint and/or reporting

the matter to the police. Where this situation arises, referral to the trained support person must be made who will seek to assist and offer all the Institute's support services. In the case where a student is involved student advocates are provided to students at no cost.

Investigations

36. Complaints of sexual assault or sexual harassment will be investigated promptly, fairly and confidentially.
37. Most complaints will be investigated by the Student Services Manager. In circumstances where a report is submitted directly to the Academic Dean, or the Academic Dean determines that escalation is required, an independent appropriately experienced third party may be appointed to conduct the investigation.
38. The investigator/Academic Dean will review the initial report and will interview the complainant and the respondent(s) and any other person who may have been involved or witnessed the incident(s).
39. All parties to a complaint of sexual assault or sexual harassment have the right to:
 - (a) natural justice and fair treatment at all stages of the process; and
 - (b) be accompanied by a support person when being interviewed as part of an investigation.
40. The investigation will normally be concluded within ten (10) working days of receipt of the initial report.

Findings and outcomes

41. The investigator/Academic Dean will prepare a report with their findings and recommendations for action. The findings may be either:
 - (a) sexual assault or sexual harassment has been established; and
 - (b) sexual assault or sexual harassment has not been established.
42. Where sexual assault or sexual harassment has been established the recommendations will include appropriate responses and any Institute-level actions that may need to occur, such as more training or awareness programs.
43. The Academic Dean will review, and if appropriate, approve the recommendations and prepare or authorise a letter of outcome for both the complainant and respondent(s). The letter must be sent within ten (10) working days of the conclusion of the investigation and will advise:
 - (a) the findings and outcome of the investigation;
 - (b) the responses and/or penalties to be applied where appropriate; and
 - (c) the right of either party to the complaint to appeal the decision.
44. Depending on the identity of the perpetrator, the response will be implemented in accordance with either the *Student Misconduct Policy and Procedure* or the *Human Resources Management Policy and Procedure* and may include the mandatory completion of a sexual misconduct awareness program, through to suspension or exclusion from enrolment or termination of employment.
45. The Academic Dean is responsible for ensuring that any recommendations for Institute-level changes are implemented.

Records

46. An individual, confidential file is opened for each incident and all positive findings of sexual assault or sexual harassment are recorded.
47. A record of actions taken, students and staff involved, and any available outcomes/supporting documents will be included in the file.
48. It is the responsibility of the Academic Dean to ensure that complete records are filed for reports of sexual assault or sexual harassment.

Monitoring

49. The Institute collects data using a Register on reports of sexual assault or sexual harassment and any follow-up actions.
50. The Institute uses data collected from the Register to monitor trends and emerging issues.
51. The Institute will improve its strategies for sexual assault or sexual harassment prevention, response and recovery based on the collected data.
52. The effectiveness of the Institute's SASH risk assessment and prevention strategies is evaluated annually as part of the Academic Dean's report to the Governing Board. This evaluation considers the timeliness and completeness of risk assessments conducted during the year, the outcomes of any prevention strategies implemented, and trends in incident reports. The Governing Board reviews the evaluation and approves any changes to SASH prevention strategies or resource allocation required.
53. The Academic Dean will submit an annual report to the Governing Board on the adequacy and effectiveness of Institute's strategies.
54. The Institute is required to, and will, report material changes to TEQSA, including incidents of sexual assault or sexual harassment.

Appeals

55. If a party to a complaint of sexual harassment or sexual assault is not satisfied with the way the complaint has been handled, they may lodge an appeal as follows:
 - (a) students may appeal under the provisions of the *Student Appeals Policy and Procedure*; and
 - (b) staff may appeal under the provisions in the *Human Resource Management Policy and Procedure*.

Vexatious Claims and Misuse of the Policy

56. The Institute acknowledges the importance of genuine and good faith reporting of sexual assault and sexual harassment. However, vexatious, malicious, or deliberately false complaints are not tolerated and will be subject to appropriate sanctions.
57. If a report is found to be intentionally false, misleading, or made with malicious intent, the Institute will take disciplinary action against the complainant, which may include:
 - For students: Sanctions under the Student Misconduct Policy, up to and including suspension or exclusion.
 - For staff: Disciplinary measures under the Human Resources Management Policy, up to and including termination of employment.
58. The trained support personnel will ensure that all reports are assessed fairly, confidentially, and impartially, with appropriate procedural fairness afforded to all parties.
59. The Institute will continue to support all parties involved in an allegation while ensuring that misuse of the reporting process does not undermine trust in its policies and procedures.

Responsibilities

60. All students are to:
 - (a) ensure their behaviour and conduct always reflects the standards of the Institute's Student Code of Conduct; and
 - (b) reporting observed or alleged sexual assault or sexual harassment promptly.
61. All staff:
 - (a) will report observed or alleged sexual assault or sexual harassment promptly; and
 - (b) must protect the confidentiality of information relating to reports of sexual misconduct.

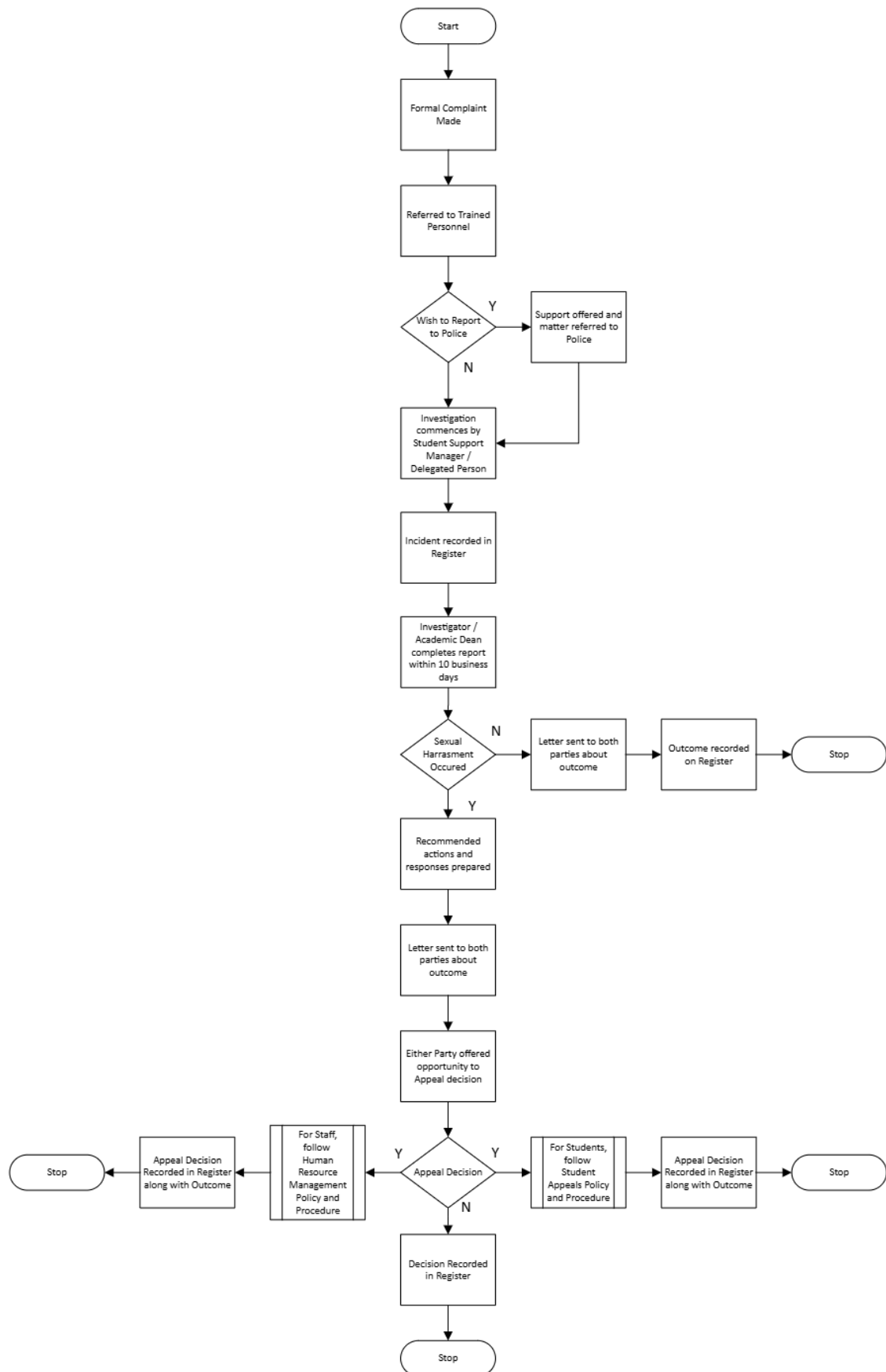
62. The Student Services Manager is responsible for:
- (a) providing all necessary support to students who make any disclosures in relation to sexual assault or sexual harassment, including referring students to specialist external services where necessary; and
 - (b) supporting students to lodge a formal complaint where they wish to do so.
63. The Academic Dean is responsible for:
- (a) implementing the strategies involving students under this Policy and Procedure;
 - (b) managing any escalated cases of sexual assault or sexual harassment affecting students where required, including the appointment of a third-party investigator;
 - (c) approval of findings, recommendations and penalties arising from investigations into sexual assault or sexual harassment affecting students;
 - (d) escalating any substantial or systemic issues relating to sexual assault or sexual harassment to the Governing Board as they emerge;
 - (e) submitting an annual report to the Governing Board on the adequacy and effectiveness of Institute's strategies; and
 - (f) reports of material breaches to TEQSA where required.
64. The Governing Board is responsible for:
- (a) the overall governance of this Policy;
 - (b) Ongoing innovation, evaluation and improvement of SASH prevention and response measures and
 - (c) approving any strategies and resources to improve the Institute's ability to provide a safe environment for all.

Definitions

65. For the purposes of this Policy and Procedure, the following terms are defined as follows:

Term	Definition
Complainant	A person who is taking action in relation to a complaint of sexual misconduct under this Policy
Individual	A person who is either a student or staff member and may be involved in a complaint of sexual misconduct under this Policy
Perpetrator	A person against whom a positive finding of sexual misconduct has been made
Respondent(s)	A person or person against whom a complaint of sexual misconduct has been lodged

Flow Chart for making formal SASH complaints



Version history

Version	Changes	Approval Body	Approval Date
1.0	New Policy and Procedure	Governing Board (GB)	
1.1	Flowchart Added	Governing Board (GB)	21 November 2024
1.2	Point 10 a) added “At least 2 Staff...” and “These staff will be identified in posters or SMS around the campus and will be referred to as “trained support personnel” Point 22 c) added “domestic violence” Point 23 b) added “domestic violence” Point 18 b) replaced campus security with “trained support personnel” Point 29 added “Student advocates are provided to students at no cost.” Added “vexatious claims and misuse of policy” Replaced student with an individual Added “Individual” in definition	GB	27 Feb 2025
1.3	Added SASH Risk Assessment Protocol section specifying defined risk indicators (red flags), who conducts assessments (CEO, Student Services, CIT), minimum frequency (annual and post-incident), required documentation outputs, and Governing Board reporting per HESF 6.2.1(e).	Governing Board	
1.4	Restructured V1.3 orphaned “SASH Risk Assessment Protocol” section. Content integrated directly into Strategies – Prevention section as an expansion of the existing ‘Risk assessment’ bullet point, which TEQSA specifically identified as the location where the risk assessment detail should appear. The integrated section now specifies the six risk indicators that trigger a formal assessment, who conducts assessments (CEO, Student Services Manager, CIT), minimum frequency (annual and post-incident), required documentation outputs (written record with risks, controls, recommendations, responsible officer, CEO sign-off), and Governing Board reporting. Self-assurance evaluation added as concluding paragraph in Monitoring section. HESF citation headings and prescriptive language removed; content rewritten in plain policy voice consistent with the remainder of the document. Student awareness strategy in Prevention section expanded to cross-reference the Student Orientation Policy and Procedure V1.5 and Student Orientation Booklet V1.4 as	Governing Board	17 August 2026

Version	Changes	Approval Body	Approval Date
	the primary student-facing SASH prevention instruments. Expanded section now specifies: the five SASH content items delivered at orientation (zero tolerance, reporting pathways including trained support personnel, online SASH risks, discrimination/bullying, policy and external service locations); documentation of orientation delivery by Student Services Manager; ongoing educational campaigns; and the post-orientation needs assessment (Student Orientation Policy V1.5) as a second-opportunity mechanism for identifying students who may have experienced SASH at commencement. Student Orientation Policy and Procedure V1.5 and Student Orientation Booklet V1.4 added to Related Documents. Health and Safety Policy and Procedure version reference updated to V1.4; Critical Incident and Emergency Management Policy and Procedure version reference updated to V1.3.		