



Work Health and Safety (WHS) Sexual Harassment and gender-based discrimination Prevention Plan

D1.4.2

Purpose

1. The purpose of this Prevention Plan is to create a safe, respectful, and inclusive workplace by preventing, addressing, and eliminating sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination. This plan aligns with legal obligations, organizational values, and best practices in workplace health and safety. Through proactive measures, education, and clear reporting processes, we aim to:
 - Prevent referred hazards through awareness and workplace policies
 - Protect employees by fostering a safe, supportive environment
 - Provide clear procedures for reporting and addressing concerns
 - Ensure compliance with WHS laws and standards
 - Empower employees with knowledge to recognize and respond effectively
2. To promote a safe working environment and manage the risk to the health or safety of a worker, or other person from sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination in compliance with:
 - E.1.1 Fairness at Work Policy
 - A1.3. Complaints and Allegations Policy
 - B.1.1. Privacy Policy
 - E.2.1. Performance Policy
 - D. Synod Wide WHS Policy
 - Work, Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)
 - Work Health and Safety (Sexual Harassment) amendment regulation 2024
 - Respect and Work Reforms (2023)
 - Anti-Discrimination Act 1991

Scope

This plan:

1. Applies to employees (lay staff), volunteers engaged in work, ministry agents and other persons within the bounds of the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod Office (UCAQ) including Trinity College Queensland, Raymont Residential College, Alexandra Park Conference Centre, and Uniting Early Learning.
2. Does not apply to certain complaints under Uniting Church in Australia Regulation 5 (Church Discipline) and Safe Church procedures when a Minister is not involved in work or activities within the bounds of the Queensland Synod Office (e.g. Trinity College Queensland, Raymont Residential College, Alexandra Park Conference Centre, and Uniting Early Learning) where specific procedures apply.
3. Does not apply to the incorporated institutions of the Synod – Wesley Mission Queensland Limited, UnitingCare Queensland Limited and UCQ Limited – or to Synod schools and colleges, who have their own Prevention Plan that is compliant with law and specific to the industries they operate in.



Overview

At Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod we are committed to creating a workplace where safety, respect, and inclusion thrive. This Work Health and Safety (WHS) Prevention Plan serves as our proactive strategy to prevent and address sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination. By tackling inappropriate workplace behaviours, we uphold our duty of care and protect the well-being of every employee, ensuring a culture of integrity and mutual respect.

1 Components of the Prevention Plan

1.1. Sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination risk identification

All staff, and particularly people leaders have a duty of care to be aware of and prevent the following risks:

- unwelcome conduct based on personal characteristics such as gender, race, or age, including offensive comments, gestures, jokes, slurs, or intimidation;
- unwanted physical contact, comments, or gestures, including inappropriate touching, suggestive remarks, or requests for sexual favours;
- inappropriate digital communications (emails, texts, social media);
- power imbalances leading to coercion or threats. this includes treating individuals unfairly based on protected characteristics such as gender, disability, or ethnicity, affecting hiring, promotions, or work conditions;
- lack of reporting channels or fear of retaliation. this includes punishing employees for reporting misconduct or participating in investigations; and
- any form of physical aggression, including verbal abuse, intimidating behaviour, humiliation, or exclusion toward colleagues.

1.2. Control measures

The following measures are required to prevent harassment

People leaders must:

- implement and communicate the UCAQ sexual harassment plan to their staff;
- lead by example in maintaining a respectful work environment;
- ensure employees have access to resources and reporting mechanisms; and
- ensure the plan is available on the UCAQ intranet and in printed copies.

Employees must:

- participate in training and awareness programs;
- speak up if you witness inappropriate behaviour;
- report any incidents through the proper channels; and
- managers and employees are encouraged to foster mutual respect, and to address concerns without fear of retaliation.

1.3. Reporting and investigation procedures

1.3.1 Reporting

- All staff may submit confidential complaints directly to the UCAQ People & Culture (P&C) team in accordance with the Grievance Procedure (see E.1.1.1 Grievance management) or the online safety and compliance program (Protecht).
- Reports will be handled by a trained designated People and Culture representative with strict confidentiality protocols.

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- No retaliation will be tolerated for those who report in good faith
- People leaders will promptly address any reports they receive.

1.3.2 Investigating

- Systematic, fair and timely steps for resolution will be followed.
- All staff involved will receive appropriate updates on investigations while maintaining confidentiality.
- While the investigation process is conducted, a designated person from the investigative team will maintain contact with the worker, ideally this will be someone like their immediate supervisor.

Consultation with workers

- Quarterly meetings will be held to discuss workplace safety concerns, including sexual harassment and discrimination.
- All staff will be encouraged to provide feedback on policies and procedures through surveys and open forums.
- A designated representative from the People and Culture team will be available for private and confidential consultations on harassment and discriminative practices or concerns.
- UCAQ will ensure continuous improvement by incorporating worker feedback into policy updates.

Related documents

[Work Health and Safety Act 2011 \(Qld\)](#)

[UCAQ WHS Incident management procedure](#)

[UCAQ Guide on how to report incidents via Protecht](#)

[SafeWork Guidelines - Creating safe work/reporting safety](#)

Related Support

All staff impacted by sexual harassment or sex or gender-based harassment may contact an organisation listed below for further information or support. In the event of emergency, call emergency services on 000 or attend your local hospital emergency department.

- Queensland Mental Health Commission
- Lifeline Australia – 13 11 14
- Mental Health access line – 1300 642 255: Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and links callers to the nearest public Queensland mental health service.
- 1800RESPECT – a free, confidential service for people impacted by domestic, family or sexual violence
- Sexual Assault helpline – 1800 010 120
- Queensland Health–sexual assault services
- Queensland Health–sexual health clinic
- Living Well — Supports for men affected by Sexual Assault
- OurWatch — a national leader in the prevention of violence against women and their children
- Suicide Callback Service
- 13 YARN – a free and confidential service that connects you with an Aboriginal or Torres
- Strait Islander Crisis Supporter over the phone, 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- Beyond blue – for mental health information and support
- Workers' Psychological Support Service – assists Queensland workers who have experienced a work-related psychological injury
- Queensland Police Service (non-urgent reporting) – 131 444

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Definitions

Term	Meaning
Duty of care	All staff have a duty to take reasonable care of their own health and safety, and to ensure their acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of others. This considers the degree of control, staff have over their work activities and work environment and includes following any information, training or instructions provided.
Protecht	Protecht is a safety and compliance program designed to keep regulatory records all in one place. This includes training records, incident reports, actions items, risk register and others. Training content and login licenses can be obtained through the UCAQLD Legal and Risk Department.
Sexual harassment	Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual behaviour that a reasonable person could anticipate may make another person feel offended, intimidated or humiliated in that situation or any conduct that creates a hostile work environment.
Gender-based discrimination	Gender-based discrimination is any unfair or unfavourable treatment based on a person's gender, gender identity, or gender expression, affecting their employment conditions, opportunities, or workplace experience.
Inappropriate workplace behaviours	Inappropriate workplace behaviours refer to actions, words, or conduct that create a hostile, uncomfortable, or unsafe work environment. These behaviours violate workplace policies, ethical standards, and legal obligations, negatively impacting employee well-being and organisational culture.

Revisions

Document number		D1.4.2			
Version	Approval date	Approved by	Effective date	Policy owner	Policy contacts
V1	27.02.2025	General Counsel and Chief Risk Officer	27.02.2025	Legal and Risk	WHS
Next scheduled review		Every 3 years			



Appendix

1. Role matrix

The following RACI matrix delimitate roles and responsibilities and associated task owner.

- Responsible: Person/stakeholder responsible for doing the work to complete the task.
- Accountable: Person/stakeholder who delegates work and determines if the task is complete.
- Consulted: Person/stakeholder consulted about the task.
- Informed: Person/stakeholder informed about progress.

Task	People and Culture	WHS	Legal	Safe Church	Area Manager /People leader	Worker
Develop policy framework and procedures	Responsible	Responsible	Consulted	Consulted	Consulted	Consulted
Implement Synod policies and procedures	Responsible	Consulted	Consulted	Consulted	Consulted	Consulted Informed
Conduct training	Responsible	Consulted	Consulted	Consulted	Consulted	Informed
Monitor compliance	Responsible	Consulted	Consulted	Consulted	Consulted	Informed
Incident reporting	Accountable	Accountable	Accountable	Accountable	Responsible	Responsible
Incident investigation	Responsible	Accountable	Accountable	Accountable	Accountable	Consulted Informed
Communication and consultation	Responsible	Consulted	Consulted	Consulted	Consulted	Consulted Informed
Performance review	Accountable Responsible	Consulted	Consulted	Consulted	Consulted	Informed