



POLICY STATEMENT

Policy Name	Sexual Assault and Sexual Violence		
Policy #	605	Category	Health and Safety
Approved by	Board of Directors	Issue Date	October 28, 2016
Policy Sponsor(s)	Human Resources	Revision Date	
		Review Date	October, 2021

See the related [PROCEDURES](#).

PURPOSE

All members of the Saskatchewan Polytechnic community have a right to work and study in an environment that is free from any form of sexual violence. This document sets out our policy and response protocol to sexual violence and ensures that those who experience sexual violence are believed and their rights respected, that Saskatchewan Polytechnic has a process of investigation that protects the rights of individuals and holds individuals who have committed an act of sexual violence accountable.

POLICY

Sexual assault and sexual violence are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Saskatchewan Polytechnic strives to be a safe and positive space where members of the Saskatchewan Polytechnic community feel able to work, learn and express themselves in an environment free from sexual violence.

All reported incidents of sexual violence will be investigated to the best of the administration's ability and in a manner that ensures procedural fairness. The intention of this policy is to make individuals feel comfortable about making a report in good faith about sexual violence that they have experienced or witnessed.

We recognize that sexual violence can occur between individuals regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or relationship status. We also recognize that individuals who have experienced sexual violence may experience emotional, academic or other difficulties.

We are committed to:

1. Assisting those who have experienced sexual violence by providing choices, including detailed information and support, such as provision of and/or referral to counseling and medical care, information about legal options, and appropriate academic and other accommodation;
2. Ensuring that those who disclose that they have been sexually assaulted are believed, and that their right to dignity and respect is protected throughout the process of disclosure, investigation and institutional response;
3. Addressing harmful attitudes and behaviours (e.g., adhering to myths of sexual violence) that reinforce that the person who experienced sexual violence is somehow to blame for what happened;

4. Treating individuals who disclose sexual violence with compassion, recognizing that they are the final decision-makers about their own best interests;
5. Ensuring that on-campus (internal) investigation procedures are available in the case of sexual violence, even when the individual chooses not to make a report to the police;
6. Engaging in appropriate procedures for investigation and adjudication of a complaint that are in accordance with Saskatchewan Polytechnic policies, standards and applicable collective agreements, and that ensure fairness and due process;
7. Ensuring coordination and communication among the various departments who are most likely to be involved in the response to sexual violence on campus;
8. Engaging in public education and prevention activities;
9. Providing information to the Saskatchewan Polytechnic community about our sexual violence policies and protocols;
10. Providing appropriate education and training to the Saskatchewan Polytechnic community about responding to the disclosure of sexual violence;
11. Contributing to the creation of a campus atmosphere in which sexual violence is not tolerated; and
12. Monitoring and updating our policies and protocols to ensure that they remain effective and in line with other existing policies and best practices.

DEFINITIONS

Acquaintance sexual assault: Includes partner, friend, date, peer, colleague or anyone already known to the person. Sexual gender-based violence is most often perpetrated by an acquaintance. The term “date rape” is interchangeable with “acquaintance sexual assault.”

Age of consent for sexual activity: The age at which a person can legally consent to sexual activity. In Canada, children under 12 can never legally consent to sexual acts. Sixteen is the legal age of consent for sexual acts. There are variations on the age of consent for adolescents who are close in age between the ages of 12 and 16. Twelve and 13 year-olds can consent to have sex with other youth who are less than 2 years older than themselves. Youth who are 14 and 15 years old may consent to sexual involvement that is mutual with a person who is less than 5 years older. Youths 16 and 17 years old may legally consent to sexual acts with someone who is not in a position of trust or authority.

Bystander: For the purposes of sexual violence prevention, a bystander is anyone who is neither a victim nor an offender, but who could potentially get involved to make a difference. It refers to anyone who is in a position to intervene before, during or after the sexual act.

Coercion: In the context of sexual violence, coercion is unreasonable and persistent pressure for sexual activity. Coercion is the use of emotional manipulation, blackmail, threats to family or friends, or the promise of rewards or special treatment, to persuade someone to do something they do not wish to do, such as being sexual or performing particular sexual acts.

Consent: The voluntary and explicit agreement to engage in the sexual activity in question. It is the act of willingly agreeing to engage in specific sexual behaviour, and requires that a person is able to freely choose between two options: yes and no. This means that there must be an understandable exchange of affirmative words, which indicates a willingness to participate in mutually agreed upon sexual activity. It is also imperative that everyone understands the following:

- Silence or non-communication must never be interpreted as consent, and a person in a state of diminished judgment cannot consent.
- A person is incapable of giving consent if they are asleep, unconscious or otherwise unable to communicate.

- A person who has been threatened or coerced (i.e. is not agreeing voluntarily) into engaging in the sexual activity is not consenting to it.
- A person who is drugged is unable to consent.
- A person is usually unable to give consent when under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.
- A person may be unable to give consent if they have a mental disability preventing them from fully understanding the sexual acts.
- The fact that consent was given in the past to a sexual or dating relationship does not mean that consent is deemed to exist for all future sexual activity.
- A person can withdraw consent at any time during the course of a sexual encounter.
- A person is incapable of giving consent to a person in a position of trust, power or authority, such as, a faculty member initiating a relationship with a student who they teach, an administrator in a relationship with anyone who reports to that position.
- Consent cannot be given on behalf of another person.
- It is the responsibility of the initiator of sexual activity to ensure clear and affirmative responses are communicated at all stages of sexual engagement. It is also the initiator's responsibility to know if the person they are engaging with sexually is a minor.

Note: For information purposes only, the *Criminal Code* defines "consent" as follows:

Consent: The voluntary agreement to engage in the sexual activity in question. No consent is obtained, where:

- the agreement is expressed by the words or conduct of a person other than the complainant;
- the complainant is incapable of consenting to the activity;
- the accused induces the complainant to engage in the activity by abusing a position of trust, power or authority;
- the complainant expresses, by words or conduct, a lack of agreement to engage in the activity; or
- the complainant, having consented to engage in sexual activity, expresses, by words or conduct, a lack of agreement to continue to engage in the activity.

Drug-facilitated sexual assault: The use of alcohol and/or drugs (prescription or non-prescription) by a perpetrator to control, overpower or subdue a victim for purposes of sexual assault.

Member of the Saskatchewan Polytechnic Community: Includes but is not limited to all employees, students, student groups, volunteer staff and board members.

Sexual assault: A criminal offence under the *Criminal Code* of Canada. Sexual assault is any type of unwanted sexual act done by one person to another that violates the sexual integrity of the victim and involves a range of behaviours from any unwanted touching to penetration. Sexual assault is characterized by a broad range of behaviours that involve the use of force, threats, or control towards a person, which makes that person feel uncomfortable, distressed, frightened, threatened, or that is carried out in circumstances in which the person has not freely agreed, consented to, or is incapable of consenting to.

Sexual violence: A broad term that describes any violence, physical or psychological, carried out through sexual means or by targeting sexuality. This violence takes different forms including sexual abuse and sexual assault.

Stalking: A form of criminal harassment prohibited by the *Criminal Code* of Canada. It involves behaviours that occur on more than one occasion and which collectively instill fear in the victim or

threaten the victim/target's safety or mental health. Stalking can also include threats of harm to the target's friends and/or family. These behaviours include, but are not limited to non-consensual communications (face to face, phone, email, social media); threatening or obscene gestures; surveillance; sending unsolicited gifts; "creeping" via social media/cyber-stalking; and uttering threats.

Survivor: Some who have experienced sexual violence may choose to identify as a survivor. Individuals might be more familiar with the term "victim". We use the term survivor throughout this policy where relevant because some who have experienced sexual assault believe they have overcome the violent experience and do not wish to identify with the victimization. It is the prerogative of the person who has experienced these circumstances to determine how they wish to identify.

REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Members of the Saskatchewan Polytechnic community should immediately report sexual violence incidents they witness or have knowledge of, or where they have reason to believe that sexual violence has occurred or may occur. Members who have experienced sexual violence are encouraged to come forward to report as soon as they are able to do so.

Persons in a position of authority, including persons directing the activities of others, shall take immediate action to respond to or to prevent sexual violence from occurring.

Where Saskatchewan Polytechnic becomes aware of incidents of sexual violence by a member of the Saskatchewan Polytechnic community or against a member of the Saskatchewan Polytechnic community, which occur on or off Saskatchewan Polytechnic property and that pose a risk to the safety of members of the Saskatchewan Polytechnic community, Saskatchewan Polytechnic shall take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of the Saskatchewan Polytechnic community.

1. Complaints and Investigations

A complaint of sexual assault or any other kind of sexual violence can be filed under this Policy by any member of the Saskatchewan Polytechnic community.

Saskatchewan Polytechnic will seek to achieve procedural fairness in dealing with all complaints. As such, no sanction and/or disciplinary action will be taken against a person or group without their knowledge where there is an alleged breach of this Policy. All reasonable efforts will be made to ensure respondents are given reasonable notice, with full details of the allegations, and respondents will be provided with an opportunity to answer to the allegations made against them.

2. Right to Withdraw a Complaint

A complainant has the right to withdraw a complaint at any stage of the process; however, Saskatchewan Polytechnic may continue to act on the issue identified in the complaint in order to ensure the safety and well-being of the community.

3. Protection from Reprisals, Retaliation or Threats

It is contrary to this Policy for anyone to retaliate, engage in reprisals or threaten to retaliate against a complainant or other individual for:

- having pursued rights under this Policy or *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*;
- having participated or cooperated in an investigation under this Policy or *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*; or
- having been associated with someone who has pursued rights under this Policy or *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*.

Anyone engaged in such conduct may be subject to sanctions and/or discipline.

4. Unsubstantiated or Vexatious Complaints

If a person, in good faith, discloses or files a sexual violence complaint that is not supported by evidence gathered during an investigation, that complaint will be dismissed.

Disclosures or complaints that are found following investigation to be frivolous, vexatious or bad faith complaints, that is, made to purposely annoy, embarrass or harm the respondent, may result in sanctions and/or discipline against the complainant.

5. Confidentiality

Confidentiality is particularly important to those who have disclosed sexual violence. The confidentiality of all persons involved in a report of sexual violence must be strictly observed, and Saskatchewan Polytechnic does its best to respect the confidentiality of all persons, including the complainant, respondent, and witnesses. However, confidentiality cannot be assured in the following circumstances:

- an individual is at imminent risk of self-harm;
- there are reasonable grounds to believe that an individual or individuals in the Saskatchewan Polytechnic community or the wider community may be at risk of harm.

In such circumstances, information would only be shared with necessary services to prevent harm, and the name of the survivor would not be released to the public.

Where Saskatchewan Polytechnic becomes aware of an allegation of sexual violence by a member of the Saskatchewan Polytechnic community against another member of the Saskatchewan Polytechnic community, Saskatchewan Polytechnic may also have an obligation to take steps to ensure that the matter is dealt with in order to comply with Saskatchewan Polytechnic's legal obligation and/or its policies to investigate such allegations. In such cases, certain Saskatchewan Polytechnic administrators will be informed about the reported incident on a "need to know" and confidential basis.

RELATED POLICIES/DOCUMENTS

Code of Conduct 703
Harassment 601-G
Student Conduct 1211
Violence 604

APPLICABLE LEGISLATION OR REGULATIONS

Criminal Code of Canada
Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Saskatchewan Employment Act
Saskatchewan Human Rights Code