



UCD Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

# UCD DIGNITY & RESPECT

ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24





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# Foreword

## Welcome to the academic year 2023/24 report of the UCD Dignity and Respect Oversight Group.

The University has continued embedding an enhanced culture of dignity and respect (D&R) at UCD through developing our processes, implementing appropriate structures and providing key support. The wide range of initiatives underway, as described throughout this report, to support the building of an inclusive and respectful culture at UCD are having an impact. These initiatives are broad ranging and complement each other from policy development to the provision of supports, training and raising greater awareness. Our policies and initiatives are under constant review and will continue to adapt based on the data, feedback from stakeholders, national and sectoral developments and best practice.

Our ambition is to build further on our achievements to date through enhancements to data collection (including intersectional data), refreshing our D&R awareness raising campaign, new activities to increase understanding of the dignity and respect policies and processes, reviewing the content and delivery of dignity and respect training, and encouraging local level activities across the University that enhance dignity and respect and build a more inclusive environment.

We all have a role to play in ensuring that our place of work and learning is a respectful one. This may include participating in dignity and respect related training and activities including awareness raising, but always involves us ensuring that we study and work in ways that put the principles of dignity and respect into practice. The Dignity and Respect Oversight Group has representation from a variety of stakeholders internally and externally and our role is to monitor how we are progressing in our journey to become a more inclusive environment and to ensure that this remains an important priority for our senior leaders.

While some of the information presented in this report is challenging to read, it also highlights why we need to work hard to continue on this journey. Part of this, as represented by this publication, is full transparency regarding Dignity and Respect issues within our institution. I encourage anyone who has witnessed or experienced bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct to contact your line manager and/or the Dignity and Respect Support Service, who can provide support for, and information on, reporting and resolving incidents.

*Niamh M. Cherry*

**Professor Niamh Moore-Cherry**  
Chair, Dignity and Respect Oversight Group



# 1

## Dignity and Respect Report Overview

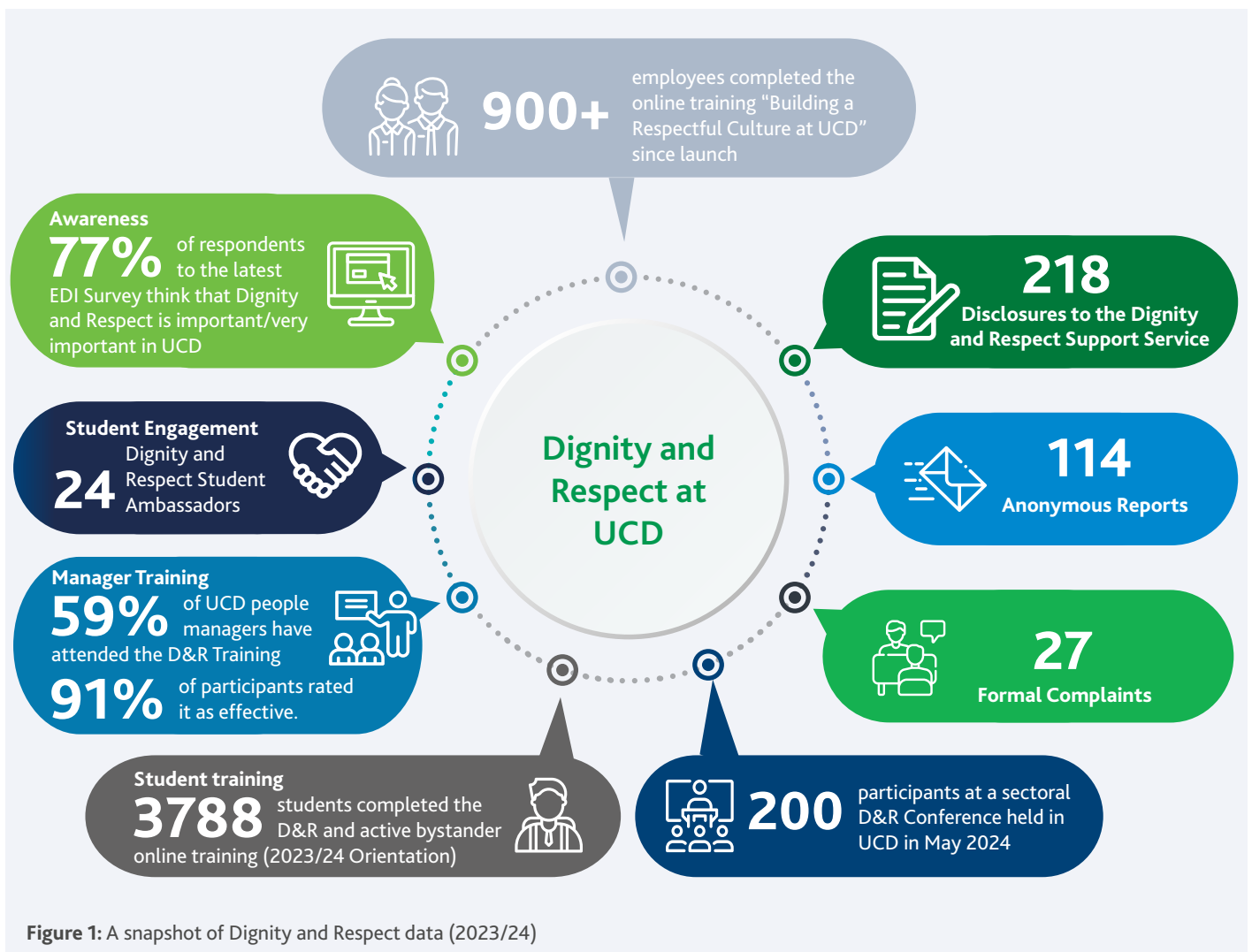


# Dignity and Respect Report Overview

This Report provides an overview of dignity and respect (D&R) in UCD with information about bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct including sexual violence. It builds on the two previous Reports published by UCD for the academic years 2021/22 and 2022/23.

The Report outlines progress towards fostering an inclusive and respectful culture in UCD and contains updates on the key areas of awareness-raising, training, outreach and support as well as a holistic set of data from disclosures to the Dignity and Respect Support Service, anonymous reports and formal complaints.

The below infographic provides a snapshot of dignity and respect information included in this Report. The data across all areas covered is interrelated and provides a full picture of trends and how various initiatives impact disclosures.





UCD Dignity & Respect Support Service

**HARASSMENT**

**BULLYING**

**SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

#NOTINOURUCD

Supporting students, employees & community members



respect@ucd.ie

# 2

## Building a Respectful Culture (Policy Implementation)



# Building a Respectful Culture (Policy Implementation)



## 2.1 Awareness Campaign

Phase two of the communications strategy developed over Spring/Summer 2022, to support the culture change journey by raising awareness and changing behaviours, continued this academic year. High-profile banners running the length of the Belfield Campus spine, from the UCD Sports Centre to the UCD Restaurant continue to be displayed as well as those installed on the Blackrock campus. The #NotInOurUCD banners highlighted unacceptable behaviours and encouraged community members to take the bespoke UCD D&R training.

The campaign banners targeted high footfall buildings and permission was sought to install wall graphics.

In discussions with UCD Estate Services, it was felt important to raise awareness among the students residing in the student residences. A dedicated poster campaign was designed for the laundries (a high footfall area) with related messaging.

Thematic social media posts were issued by the Dignity and Respect Support Service to reinforce the messages displayed around campus. All communications point back to the UCD Dignity & Respect website which details the training and support available.

The Dignity and Respect Oversight Group will guide the ongoing communication messages in response to the needs identified from the Dignity & Respect Support Service and other data sources.



The Dignity and Respect Student Ambassador panel now has 24 members who receive bespoke training. Clearly visible across campus in their green “RESPECT” branded hoodies, the D&R Student Ambassadors not only support outreach activities and serve as role models but also play a key role in signposting their peers to DRSS.

## 2.2 Outreach and Support

### 2.2.1 Dignity and Respect Support Service

The UCD Dignity and Respect Support Service (DRSS) continues to lead in providing trauma-informed support, specialist information, and guidance to employees, students and community members facing issues related to bullying, harassment, and sexual misconduct.

In 2023/24, the D&R Support Advisers expanded their role in campus outreach and cultural change initiatives. The team’s comprehensive outreach campaign has become an integral part of orientation programmes for undergraduates, postgraduates, employees, and postdoctoral researchers. Weekly outreach stands, supported by D&R Student Ambassadors, are a regular presence at the UCD Village, Smurfit, and various buildings across Belfield throughout the term. Additionally, the team enhanced its student-focused social media presence through collaborations with UCD student leader groups.

This year, the DRSS, in collaboration with UCD Global, placed particular emphasis on outreach to and support for international students. This initiative broadened the reach of the services offered, with inclusivity and accessibility as key priorities. The success of this effort was reflected in the International Students Barometer, where the DRSS was recognised as the most impactful university support service among international students.

Building on the success of a pilot programme in 2022/23 with the School of Agriculture and Food Science, the DRSS expanded the D&R pre-placement workshops to the School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems, and the School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science. Student engagement with these workshops has been robust, with a 94% satisfaction rating and participants reporting increased preparedness to handle D&R issues during placements.



Some of the extended Dignity & Respect Support Colleagues panel pictured with Prof. Aoife Ahern, UCD VP for EDI, and Marcellina Fogarty, Senior EDI manager

### 2.2.2 Dignity and Respect Support Colleagues

In early 2024, the DRSS invited expressions of interest to join the D&R Support Colleague panel. The response was overwhelmingly positive, with Academic, Technical, Administrative, Professional, and Research colleagues from various disciplines and campuses expressing keen interest. As a result, the panel was expanded to 22 members, each of whom completed specialised training provided by the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre and DRSS.

D&R Support Colleagues offer nondirective, nonjudgmental support to UCD employees facing issues related to bullying, harassment, or sexual misconduct. They provide confidential support and information on the range of support available, informal resolution options, and explanations of formal procedures. In addition to their primary role, the D&R Support Colleagues contribute to DRSS outreach efforts by participating in local activities and supporting university events. Contact details for the D&R Support Colleagues can be found on their webpage, and they are easily identifiable on campus by their "RESPECT" branded jackets.



## Have you encountered a Dignity & Respect issue at UCD?



Visit [ucd.ie/dignityandrespect/](http://ucd.ie/dignityandrespect/)

## 2.3 Training

### 2.3.1 Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Disclosure Training for People Managers (Dignity & Respect)

As of 31 August 2024, over 400 UCD managers have completed the face-to-face dignity and respect training. A key milestone was reached in 2023/24: just under 60% of UCD managers have now attended the training. Since the launch of this training in June 2022, 51 sessions were held in UCD with an average attendance of 8.5 participants per session.

Feedback on the training is extremely positive with 91% of managers surveyed agreeing that the training is effective. Participants' confidence levels in recognising inappropriate behaviours and gaining the skills to support colleagues impacted by bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct increased significantly when comparing pre-course questionnaires with post-course evaluation.

The comprehensive Dignity and Respect Toolkit developed in 2023 continues to be distributed to participants to further support them. It complements the face-to-face training and includes a recap of key material

like definitions of inappropriate behaviours, relevant law, types of resolution and duty of care. In particular, the techniques outlined in the Toolkit will support managers in handling disclosures and having sensitive conversations.

In February 2024, the UCD Dignity & Respect Advisers delivered two new practical D&R workshops, one tailored to professional/technical staff and one tailored to academic staff. The sessions focused on scenario-based case studies to provide guidance and information on how to handle these situations should they arise. Participants were asked to complete the online training "Building a Respectful Culture at UCD" in advance of the in-person sessions. Feedback was positive with participants finding the case studies helpful in bringing to life D&R scenarios. The sessions will be offered again as part of the EDI Training and Awareness Raising Programme 2024/25.

Typical feedback comments in 2023/24 included:

"The course was very informative. The roleplay and active discussions worked very well and I look forward to putting some of the training to good use!"

"Great course targeted at an appropriate level. Good mix of knowledge gathering, roleplay and interaction with other participants. Would highly recommend."

"Really useful, practical, well-structured and expertly delivered."

"The training was excellent. The exercises and the opportunity to talk with other colleagues about the case studies was very valuable, as was the role play at the end. I have a better understanding of the differences between harassment and bullying and more confidence at offering to help with a facilitated conversation."

**Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Disclosure Training for Managers (Face to Face)**  
June 2022 - August 2024



Figure 2: Completion rates of face-to-face training

<sup>1</sup> Based on average number of people managers over the last three years, which fluctuate regularly

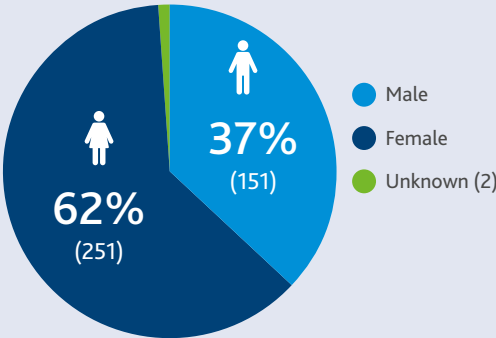


Figure 3: Gender breakdown of face-to-face training

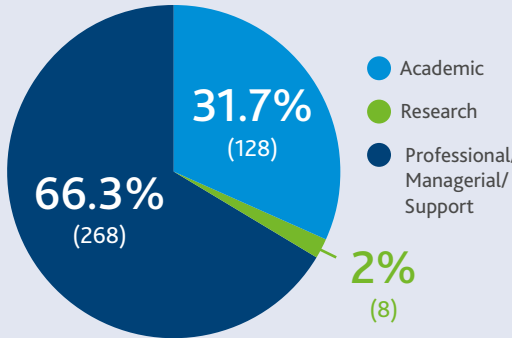


Figure 4: Employee Category breakdown of face-to-face training

### 2.3.2 Building a Respectful Culture at UCD

The Dignity and Respect online training for employees "Building a Respectful Culture at UCD" was launched in September 2022 on Brightspace. It is divided into two parts: 1. "Raising Awareness and Recognising Behaviours", and 2. "Supports, Options and How to Be An Active Bystander".

In 2023/24, 274 employees completed the online D&R training, bringing the total to just over 900 employees (20% of the core employee population), up from 629 last year. The launch of the digital EDI Ambassador Badge contributed to this significant increase, thanks to this course being outlined as essential as part of this new initiative launched in 2023/24.

Feedback is very positive and shows that the training is meeting its objectives:

**99%**

of participants would recommend the course to a colleague

**89.5%**

of participants feel more confident about recognising inappropriate behaviours that constitute bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct after completing the course

**83%**

of participants feel more comfortable in coming forward and would report bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct after completing the course

**85%**

of participants understand the importance of being an active bystander and would intervene in bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct situations, if safe to do so, after completing the course

**89%**

of participants agree that the course will support them in ensuring that UCD is a safe and respectful place for all members of the community

**Building a Respectful Culture at UCD**  
(Completion rates of online employee training)  
September 2022 - August 2024



Figure 5: Completion rates of online training

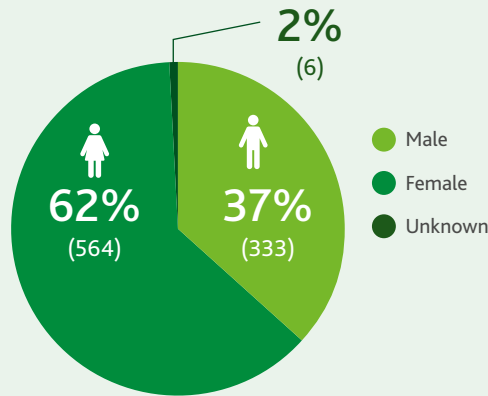


Figure 6: Gender breakdown of online training

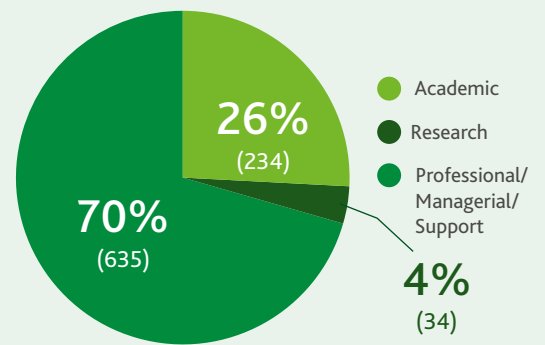


Figure 7: Employee category breakdown of online training

There continues to be higher engagement with both versions of the D&R training among women and support staff (including administrative, professional and technical.) UCD EDI have started making anonymised data available to College and VP Areas in relation to completion rates to update them on participation and attendance and to seek their support in promoting the training across all employee cohorts and categories.



### 2.3.3 Bystander Training for Incoming Students

Bystander training is available to incoming students through online Orientation on Brightspace and is highlighted at various activities for first-year undergraduate students in particular, as well as on posters as part of the communications campaign. Whilst the focus is on incoming students, the training is available to any student in UCD via a link on the D&R website.

In the Academic Year 2023/24, 3457 undergraduate and 331 graduate taught students completed the eLearning course “Active Bystanders Challenging Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct #NotInOurUCD”. Once again this course within the student Orientation programme “Introduction to UCD” Brightspace module had the highest engagement out of all the different elements of the programme amongst undergraduate students (over 50% of students enrolled).



Figure 8: Completion rates of undergraduate and postgraduate training



## Feedback

Similarly to last year, feedback from the anonymous survey shows a positive impact with the student community. Out of those who completed the feedback survey, 97% agreed that they would recommend the training to their peers.

Words most often used to describe the course were 'Informative', 'Interactive', 'Thought-Provoking', 'Eye-Opening', 'Inclusive', 'Educational' and 'Engaging'.

Qualitative feedback from students included:

As a foreign student, I think it is important to know that UCD is that focused on diversity and inclusion and that all the students will be treated the same, no matter where they come from. It is one of the reasons I chose to study at UCD

As someone who experienced little to no diversity in my old schools I am excited at the prospect of meeting people from different backgrounds and overall to study in a space where there is so much support.

As an international student and a member of the LGBT community the emphasis on acceptance and access to resources geared towards me will be a good support and puts my mind at ease.

As a mature student I am delighted that I can feel comfortable studying in a University for All, that we are not all the same, with various different backgrounds.

I feel relieved to know that no one has to struggle alone throughout their UCD experience, since there are support facilities aplenty on campus and (hopefully) every student will be familiar with this module, and be inspired by it - as I am - to reach out when in need of help and to lend a helping hand to one in need.

One of the reasons I picked UCD is the focus on equality, diversity, and inclusion, as well as the amount of students who come from different backgrounds.

I'm so amazed by how much the diversity and inclusion in University has positively improved since I was a Freshman the first time, ten years ago.

I am transgender, so this module made me feel safer and more included in the community.



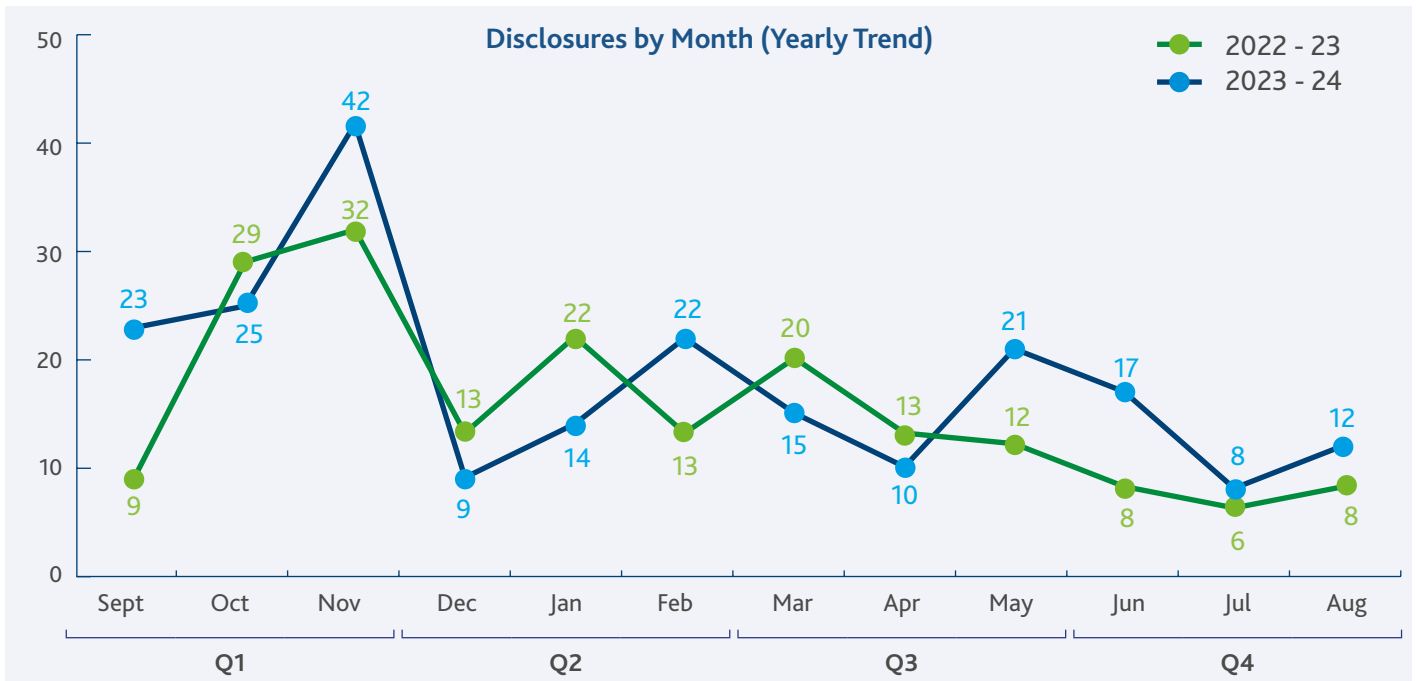
# 3

## Disclosures, Anonymous Reports & Formal Complaints

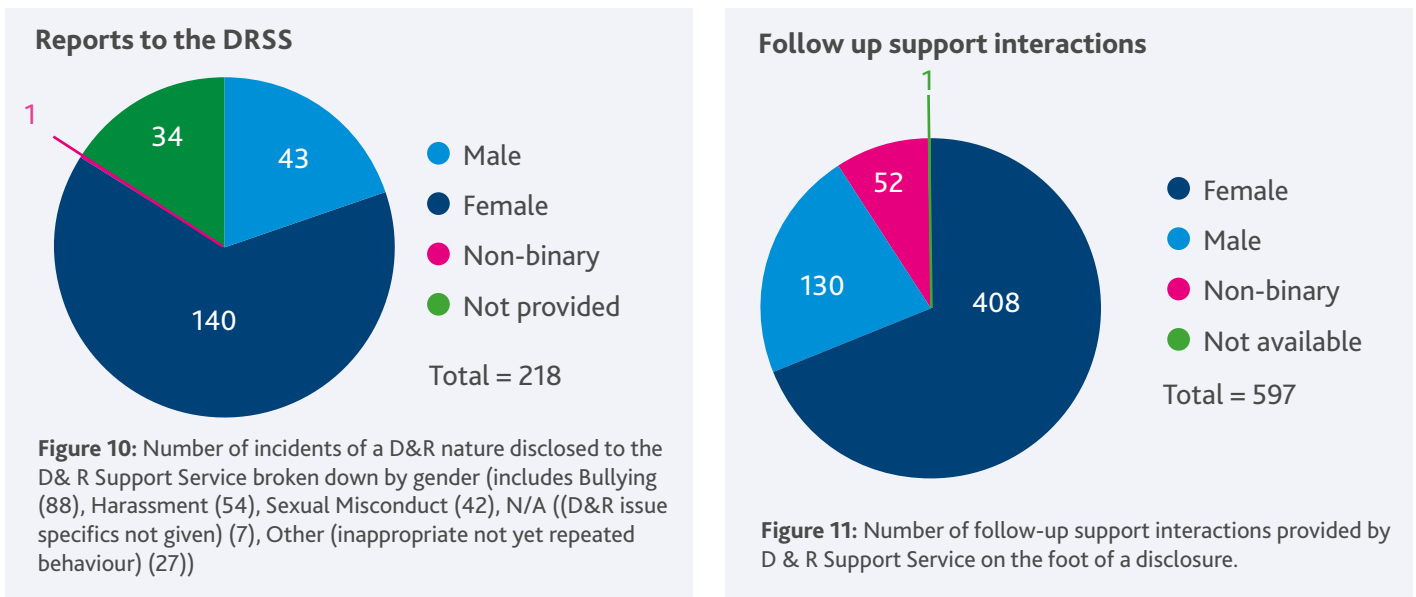


### 3.1 D&R Support Service

From 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024, the DRSS received 218 disclosures of misconduct of a D&R nature (compared to 185 disclosures in 2022/23), which led to 597 follow-up support interactions, resulting in a total of 815 support interactions.

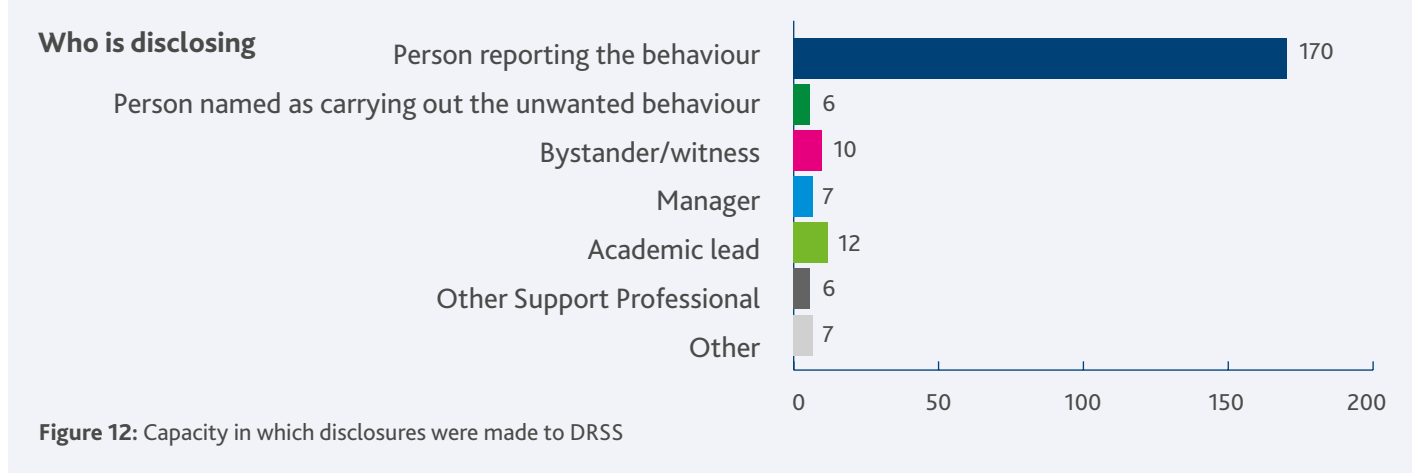


**Figure 9:** Disclosures made by month from 1 September to 31 August year on year (includes Bullying (88), Harassment (54), Sexual misconduct (42), N/A ((D&R issue specifics not given) (7), Other (inappropriate behaviour) (27) in 2023/24)



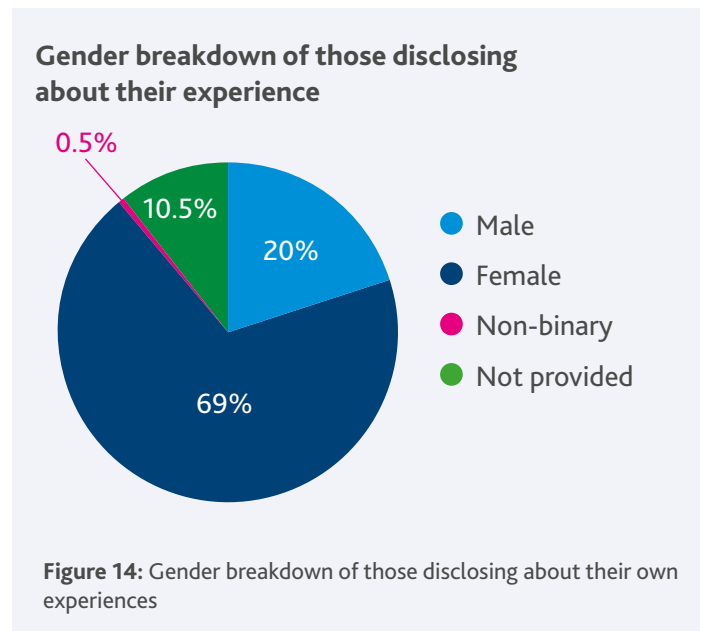
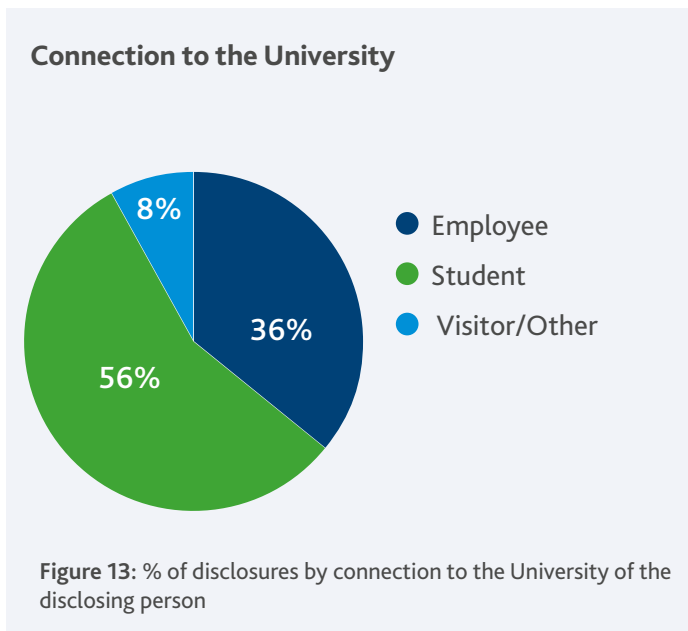
**Figure 10:** Number of incidents of a D&R nature disclosed to the D& R Support Service broken down by gender (includes Bullying (88), Harassment (54), Sexual Misconduct (42), N/A ((D&R issue specifics not given) (7), Other (inappropriate not yet repeated behaviour) (27))

**Figure 11:** Number of follow-up support interactions provided by D & R Support Service on the foot of a disclosure.

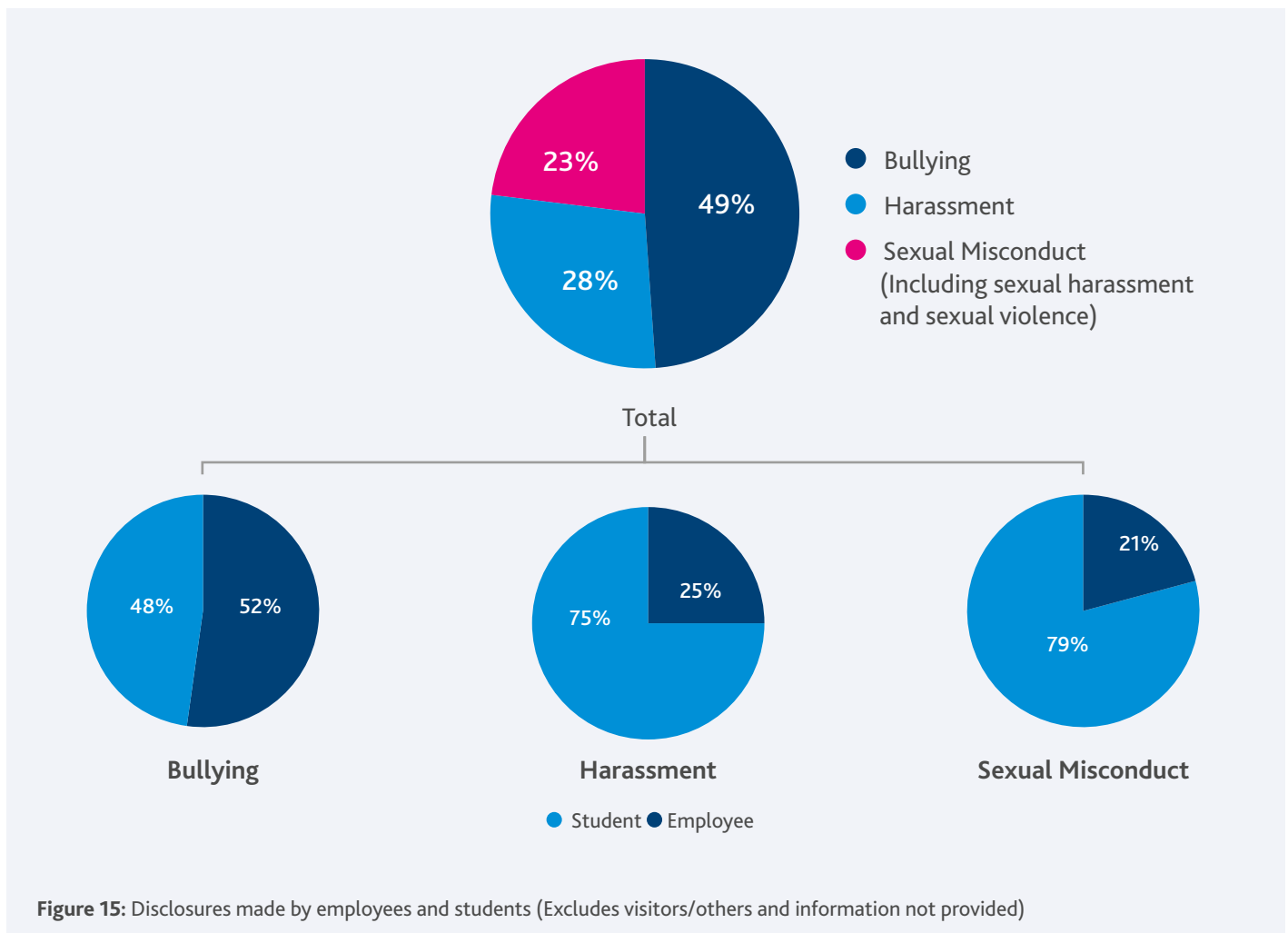


**Figure 12:** Capacity in which disclosures were made to DRSS

The majority of those disclosing misconduct to the D&R Support Advisers are the individuals experiencing the unwanted behaviour (78%); however, those named as carrying out unwanted behaviour (3%) and bystanders/witnesses (5%) also disclose to the D&R Support Advisers. 11% of those disclosing did so on behalf of someone else and in their capacity of manager, academic lead/adviser or university support professional.



The most common type of bullying behaviour identified amongst employees was verbal (95%). From those disclosing bullying, data suggests that female employees disclose this behaviour four times as much as male employees (77% F and 18% M), while female students disclose bullying three times more than their male counterparts (65% F and 17.5% M). Amongst students, 75% of those disclosing bullying identified the behaviour as verbal.



## Detailed behaviour

Race was the most common ground under which harassment was disclosed (35%), followed by Gender (26%). Employees disclosed harassment on the grounds of race (50%) in greater numbers than on the grounds of gender (33%). Students also disclosed harassment on the grounds of race (33%) more often than on the grounds of gender (25%).

Community members disclosed physical and verbal sexual misconduct in equal numbers (33%). Physical misconduct was the most common categorisation of sexual misconduct disclosed by students (42%), while employees disclosed verbal misconduct (50%) more often than physical misconduct (13%). Students disclosed sexual misconduct four times more often than employees

(67%:17%). Those identifying as female disclosed incidents of sexual misconduct (77.5%) six times more than those identifying as male (12.5%). There were no disclosures of sexual misconduct from an individual identifying as gender non-binary.

- 10% of disclosures were related to incidents that had taken place at a club or society-related event or meeting
- 24% of disclosures related to incidents in a classroom or learning environment
- 31% cited office/work as the location where the inappropriate behaviour took place

## 3.2 Anonymous Reporting Tool

Introduced in 2020, UCD Report and Support is the University's tool that enables members of the community to report incidents of bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct anonymously. The collation of data from anonymous reports helps to make the University aware of the nature of incidents experienced by staff and students. The tool also provides the reporting party with information about how to access available support and facilities and a direct contact to the Dignity and Respect Support Service.

The total number of anonymous reports made during 2023/24 was 114, representing an increase of over 50%

compared with 60 reports received in 2022/23. However, this figure closely aligns with the number of reports made in 2020/21 (111). Figure 16 shows the number of reports received by month. The month with the most reports was November 2023, when 35 people reported incidents. This represents the most reports received in a single month since the tool was launched in January 2020. Of the reports made in November, 80% cited harassment, and 78% of reports of harassment cited race, ethnicity or religion as the basis for the harassment. Notably, 22 reports were made after 23 November which may be indicative of an increase in incidents (or reporting of incidents) following the Dublin city riots.

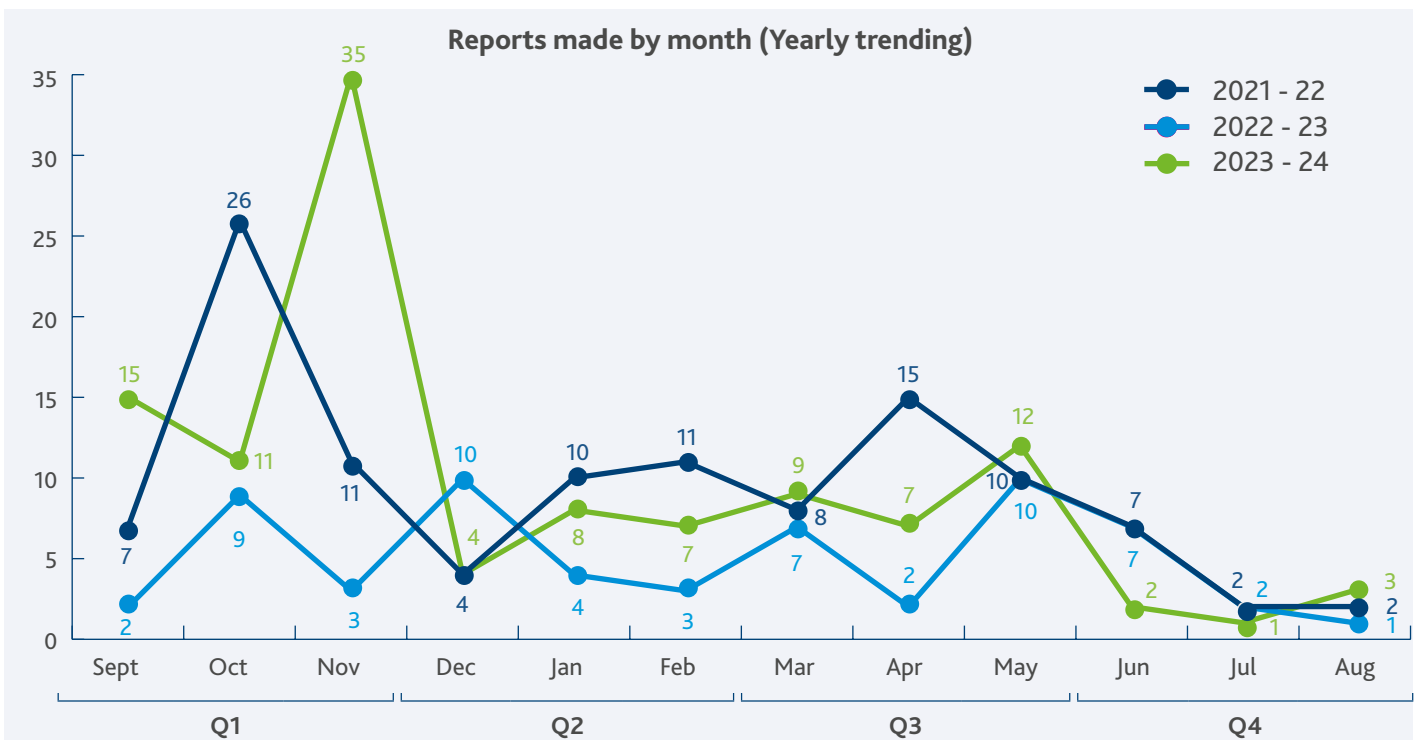
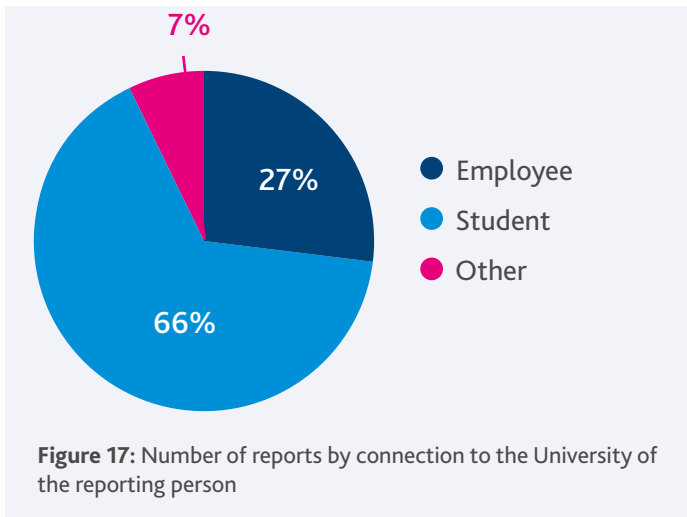


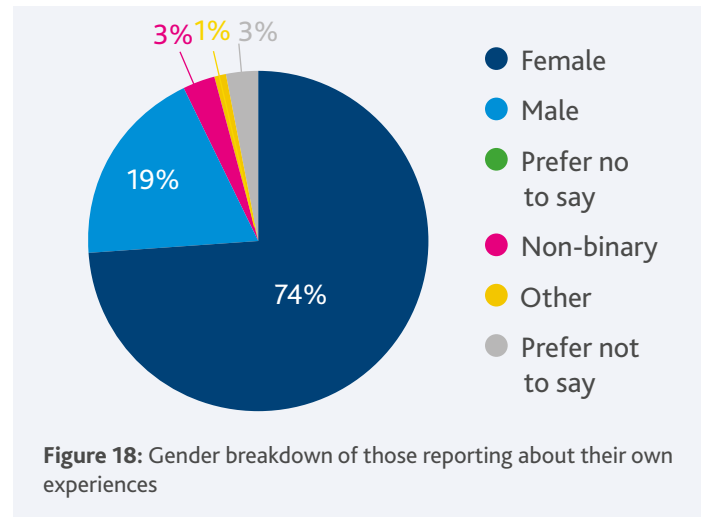
Figure 16: the number of reports received by month during the reporting period compared with 2021/22 & 2022/23

### 3.2.1 Breakdown of categories of those reporting

During 2023/24 students reported most, accounting for 66% of all reports, while employee reports accounted for 27%. This is a reversal of the breakdown of reports made in 2022/23, where employees represented a higher proportion of reports submitted at 63% while student reports accounted for 32%. It is noted that the overall number of reports for 2023/24 is significantly higher in this reporting period.



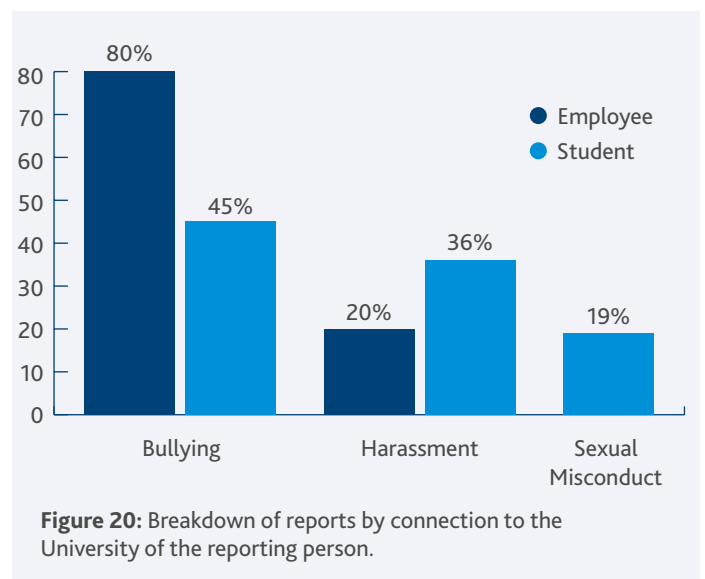
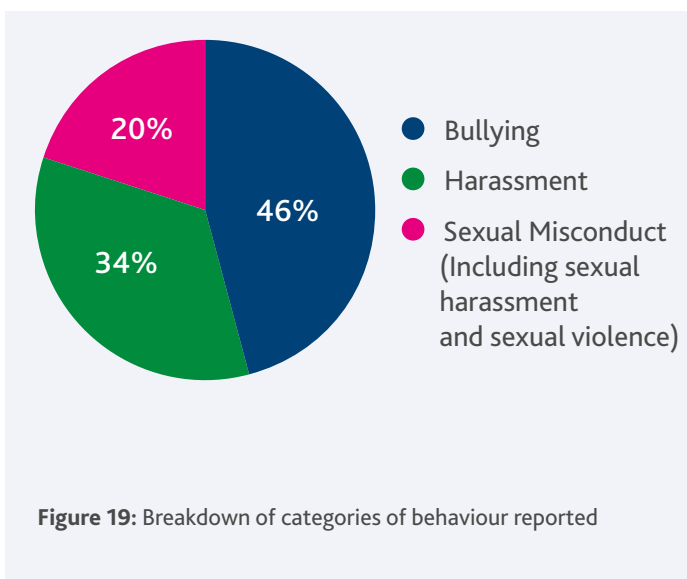
Of 114 reports, 73 people reported about their own experiences. UCD Report and Support also facilitates reporting by bystanders, those who have witnessed incidents, or by those who wish to report on behalf of someone else. 41 bystander reports were received. **Figure 18** provides the gender breakdown of those who reported about their own experiences. Women reported the most incidents (74%).

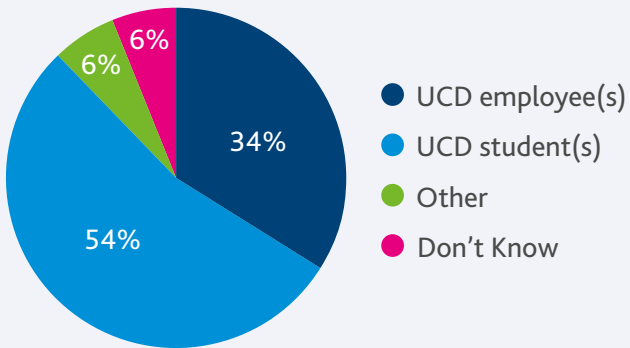


### 3.2.2 Types of behaviour

Incidents may involve behaviour that spans the categories of bullying, harassment, and sexual misconduct, and therefore UCD Report and Support enables those reporting to select more than one type of behaviour. Bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct were cited 140 times across 114 reports. Bullying continues to be the behaviour reported most frequently and accounted for 46% of the total number of reported categories. Bullying

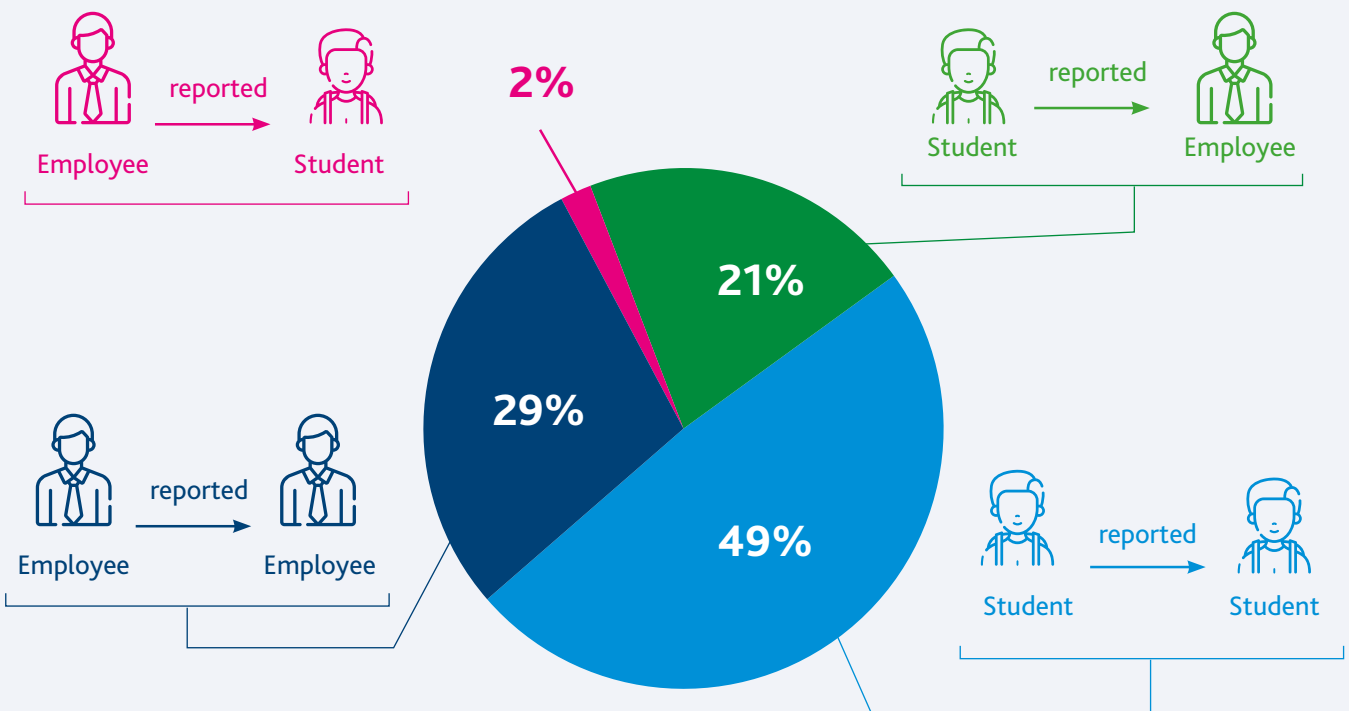
accounted for 80% of all reported behaviour made by employees and 40% of reported behaviour made by students. Harassment represented 34% of all reported behaviour and sexual misconduct accounted for 20%. Employees reporting sexual misconduct continues to be very low with no reports during 2023/24 (0% in 2022/23 and 7% in 2021/22).





**Figure 21:** Connection to the University of the person whose behaviour is being reported

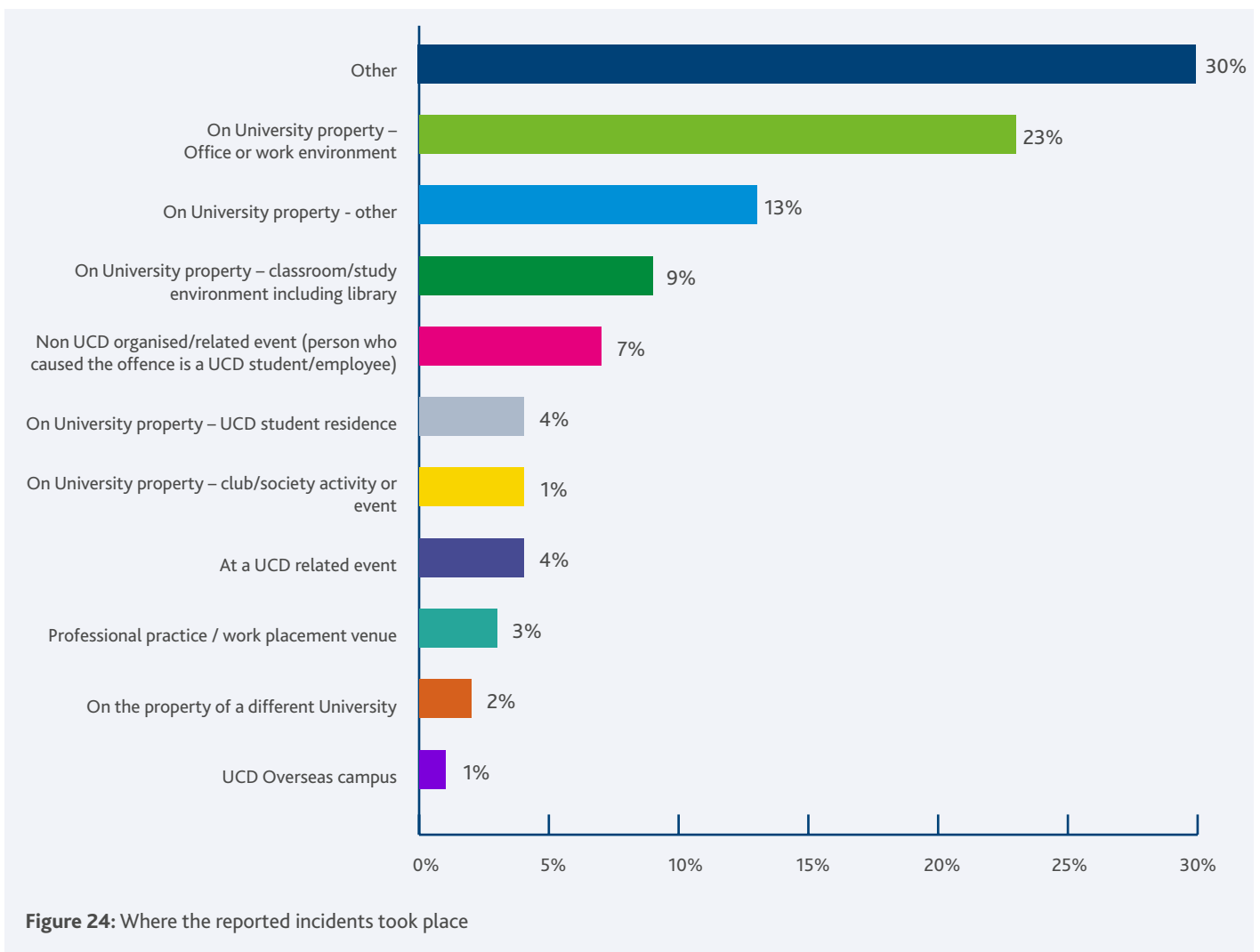
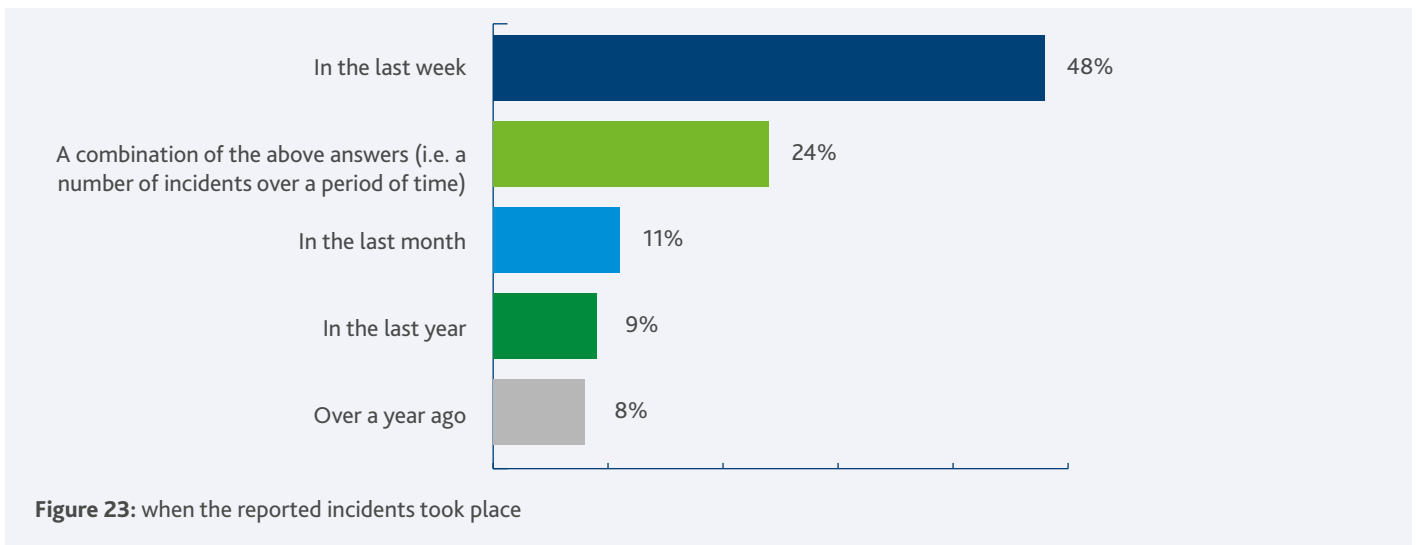
**Figure 21** shows the connection to the University of the person whose behaviour is being reported and **figure 22** shows the reporting person's connection to the University. 54% of all reports related to student behaviour, and 34% of all reports related to employee behaviour. Reports by students about the behaviour of other students accounted for almost half of all reports.



**Figure 22:** Connection to the University of the reporting person and the person they are reporting

### 3.2.3 When and where incidents occurred

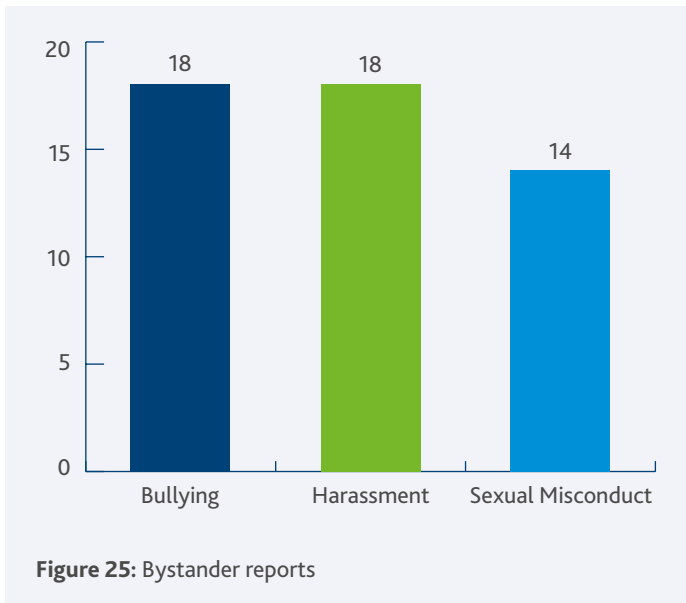
More than half of all reports (59%) related to incidents that happened recently, within the previous week or month of being reported. 24% of those reporting indicated that the behaviour was repeated 'over a period of time'. Just 8% reported incidents that had occurred 'over a year ago'. 49% of incidents took place 'on university property'.



## 3.3 Detailed Reported Behaviour

### 3.3.1 Bystander reports

50 behaviours were reported across 41 bystander reports.



### 3.3.2 Categories of behaviour

Those making reports through UCD Report and Support select from statements that best describe their experience. More than one category of behaviour can be selected when reporting.

#### Bullying

Bullying was the most reported category of behaviour and was cited 65 times.

The most selected descriptions of the behaviour were:

- “Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, open aggression, threats, shouting”
- “Humiliation”
- “Undermining behaviour”

#### Sexual Misconduct (including sexual harassment and sexual violence)

Reports under this category included 5 reports of sexual assault / coercive sexual intercourse or rape.

The most selected descriptions of behaviour were:

- “Physical contact such as unnecessary touching, patting or pinching or brushing against another body”
- “Unwanted remarks of a sexual nature, either directly, or via text or social media apps”
- “Stalking behaviours whether online or offline”

#### Harassment

Those reporting incidents of harassment were asked which aspect of their identity or status motivated the behaviour. Race / Ethnicity (including membership of the Travelling Community), Religion and Gender (including Transgender) were the identities reported most.

The most frequently selected descriptions of behaviour were:

- “Written harassment – including text messages, emails or notices”
- “Verbal harassment – jokes, comments, ridicule or songs”
- “Inappropriate scrutiny of the activities of others”

### 3.3.3 Reasons for reporting anonymously

As more reports are made over time, analysis of the reasons why people are choosing to report anonymously will guide the University in tailoring and targeting its awareness-raising activities to reassure and support staff and students to raise concerns. The most cited reasons for reporting anonymously are provided in Figure 26. More than one reason may be cited in each report.

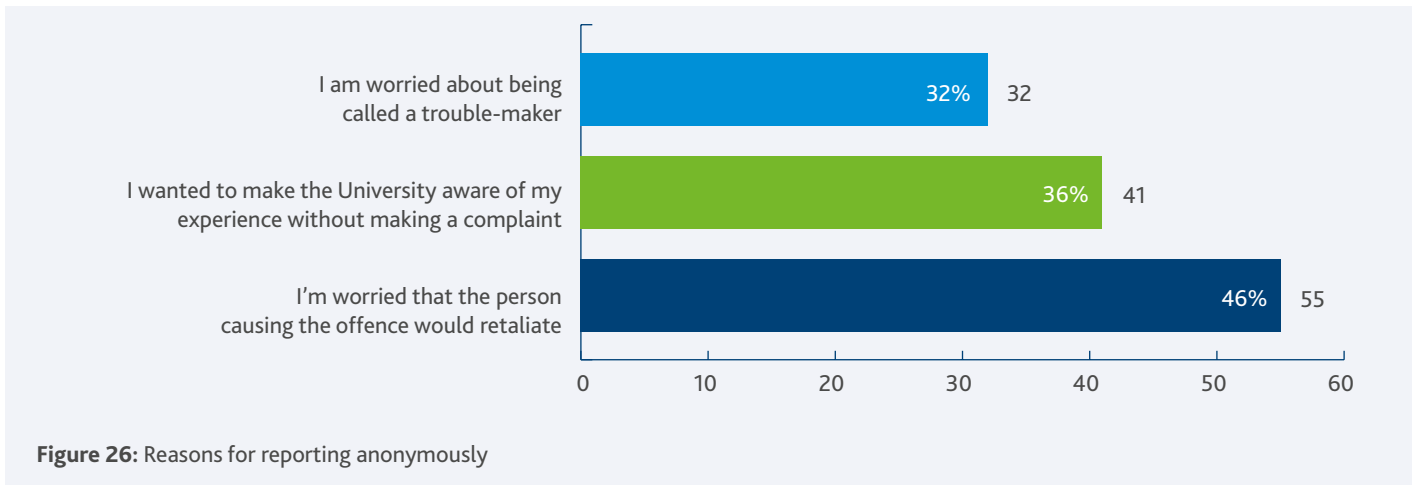


Figure 26: Reasons for reporting anonymously

### 3.3.4 Support

UCD Report and Support tool ensures that individuals who make a report are directed to internal and external support services. To understand whether those who are reporting are being supported they are asked to identify which supports they have accessed.

**65%** of those reporting about their own experiences indicated that they had already sought support

**16%** of those reporting indicated that they did not want to seek support

**8%** of those reporting selected "having been made aware of the supports available through this tool I will seek support soon".

**29** contacts with the Dignity and Respect Support Service were made directly through the reporting tool.

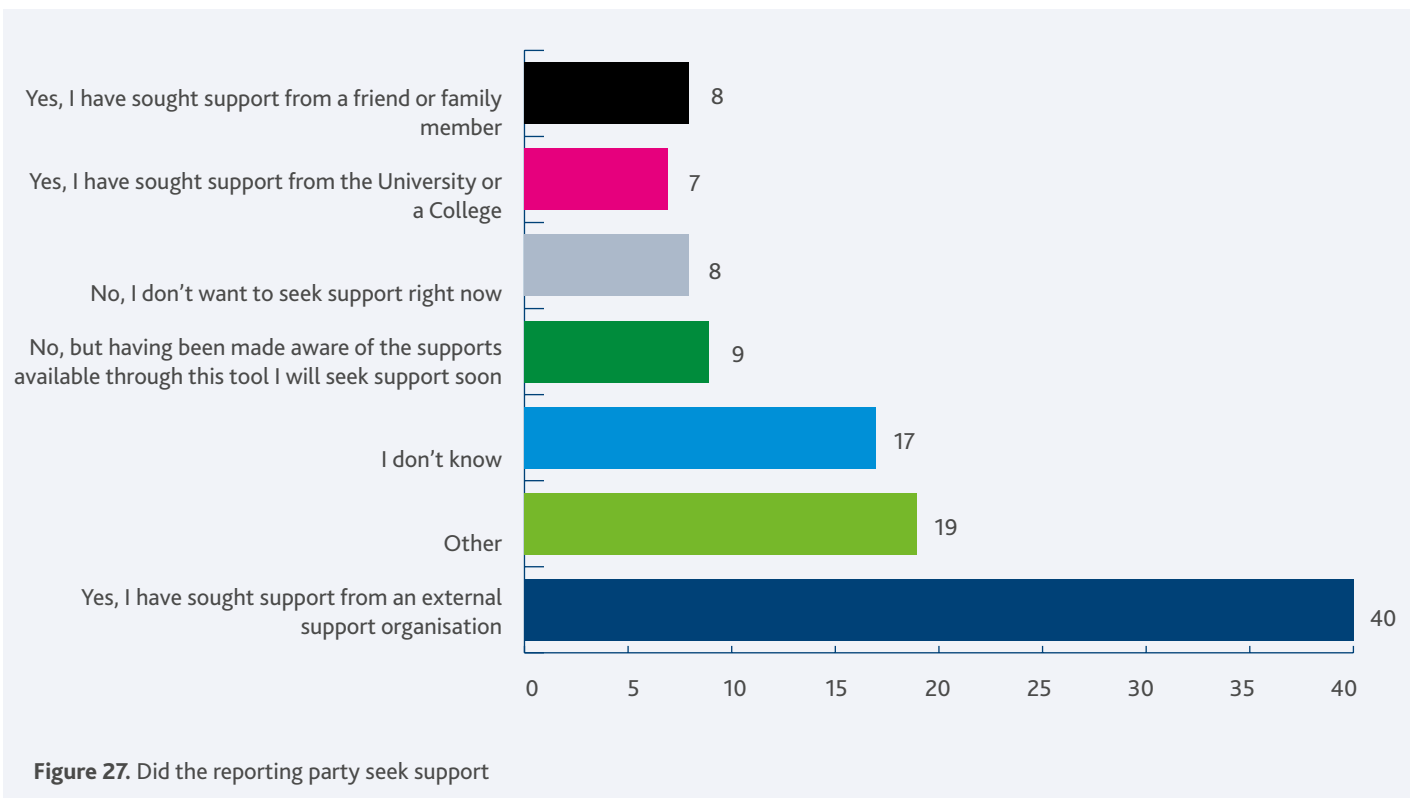


Figure 27. Did the reporting party seek support





### 3.4 Formal Complaints

The following section provides data on Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct formal complaints. As the numbers are fewer than other D&R related data that is collected, the data is presented at university level currently to protect anonymity and as a result, the data provided is not as granular as other data that is collected. Whilst formal complaints require the completion of a formal complaint form, much of the content is free text to enable the complainant to describe the incidents that have occurred and the impact of the alleged behaviour. Formal complaints are tracked from the time of submission through to the investigation stage so that there is transparency in relation to formal complaints.

Formal complaints are submitted to the EDI Unit which processes these complaints up to and including the Screening Panel stage. Since the launch of the Bullying and Harassment policy and Sexual Misconduct policy in 2021, the number of formal complaints has remained steady ranging between 26 and 28 complaints. This is almost three times the number of formal complaints being made prior to the launch of the new D&R policies in September 2021 (Figure 29).

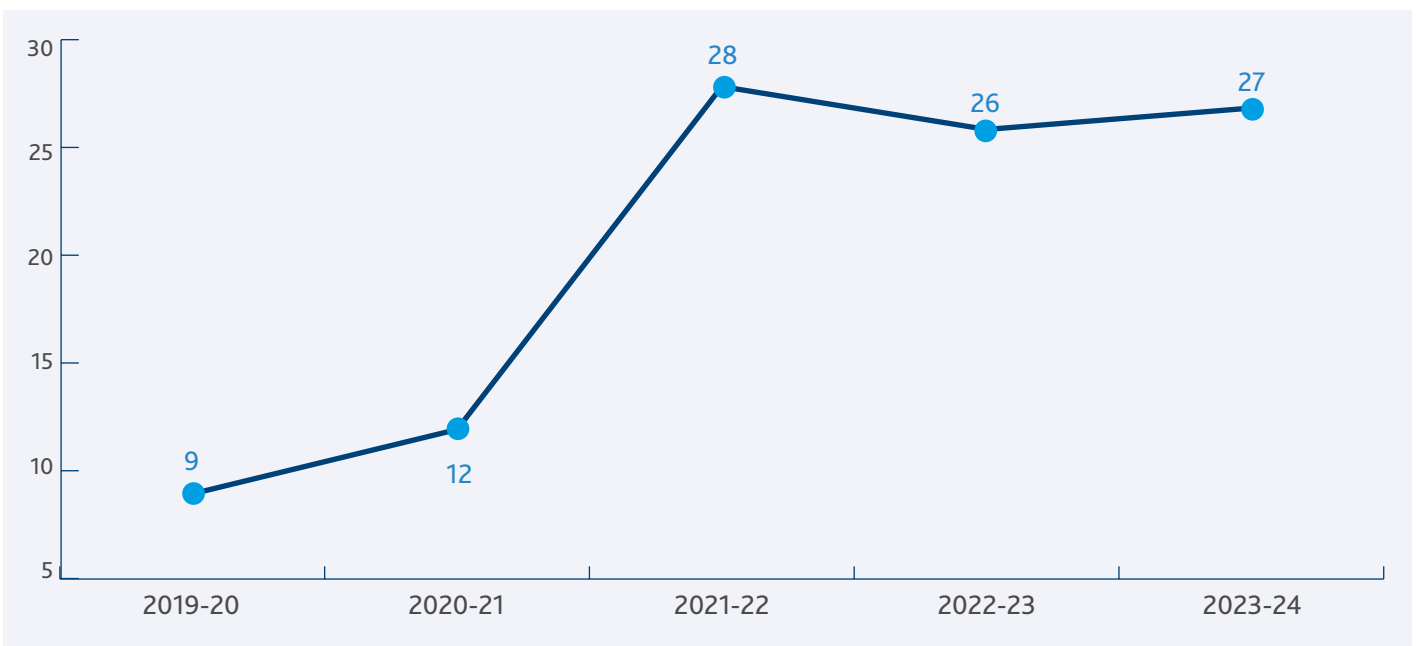
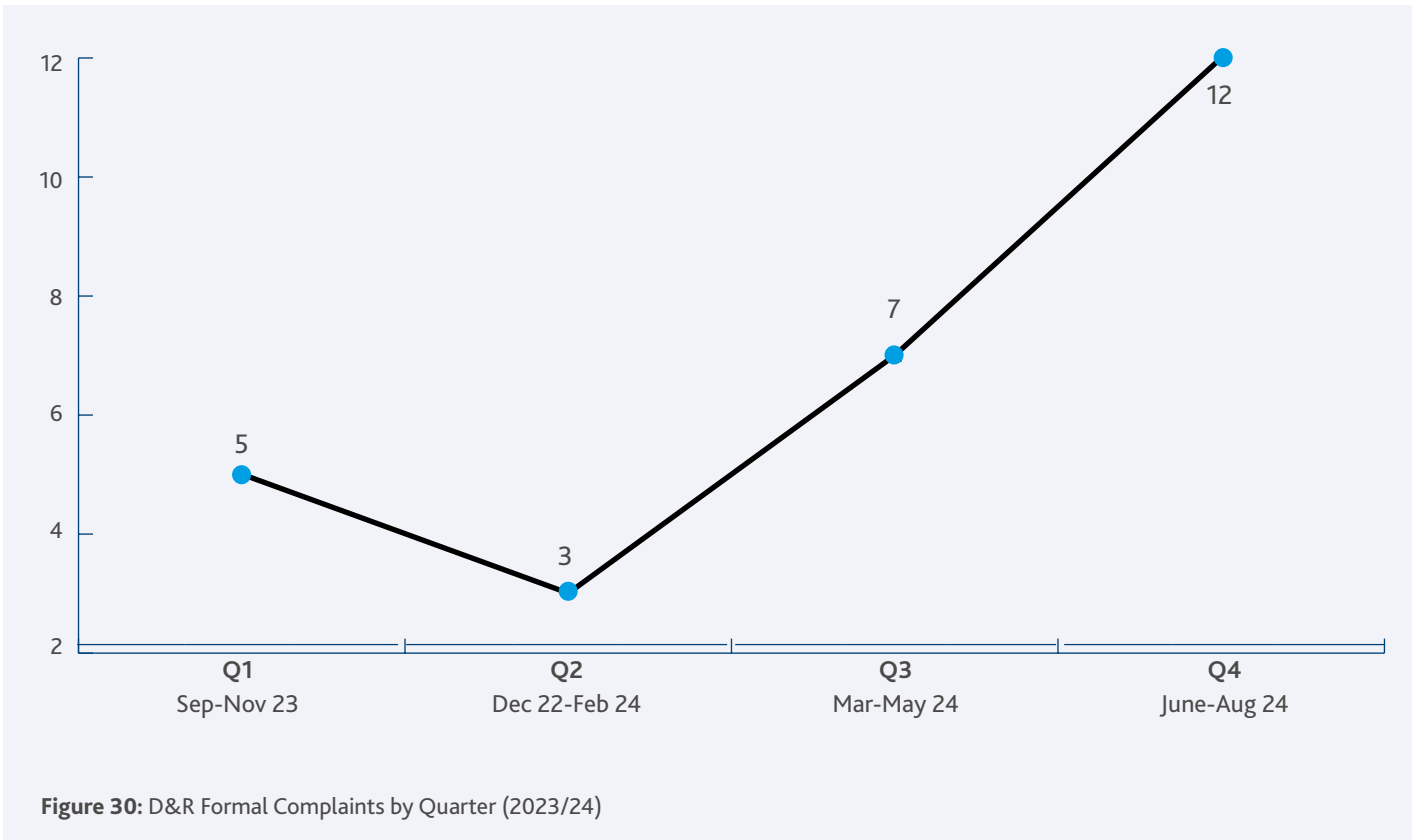
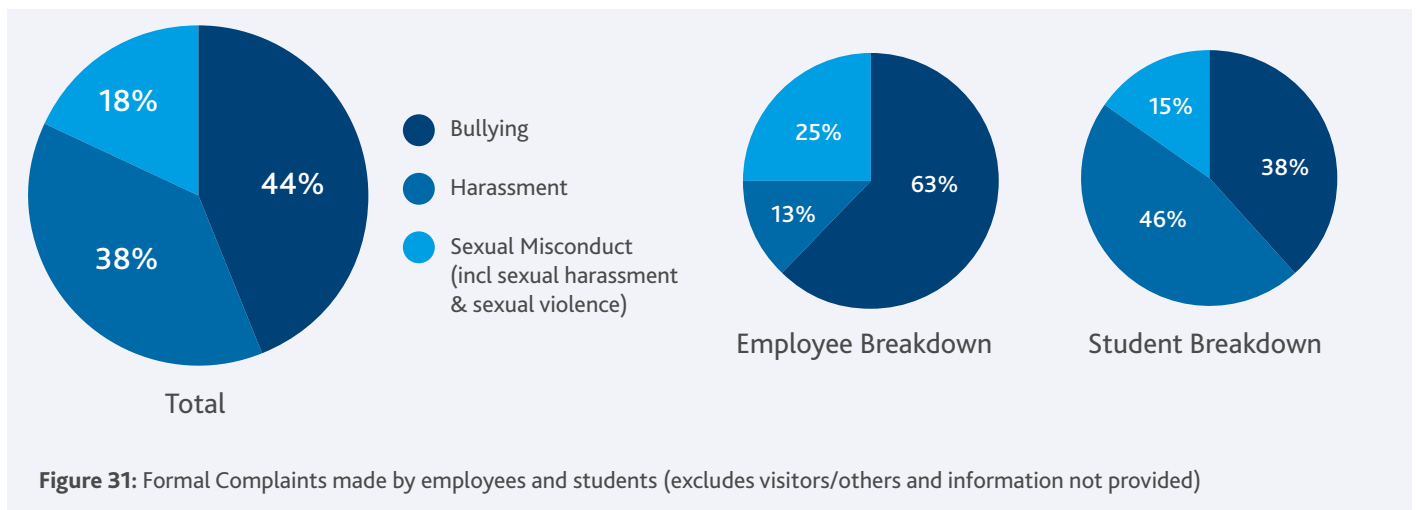


Figure 29: Formal Complaints Trend (2019/20 – 2023/24)

The majority of formal complaints in 2023/24 were made in Q3 and Q4. The number of complaints peaked around the same period in 2021/22 but in 2022/23 the highest number of complaints received was in Q2 (December – February).



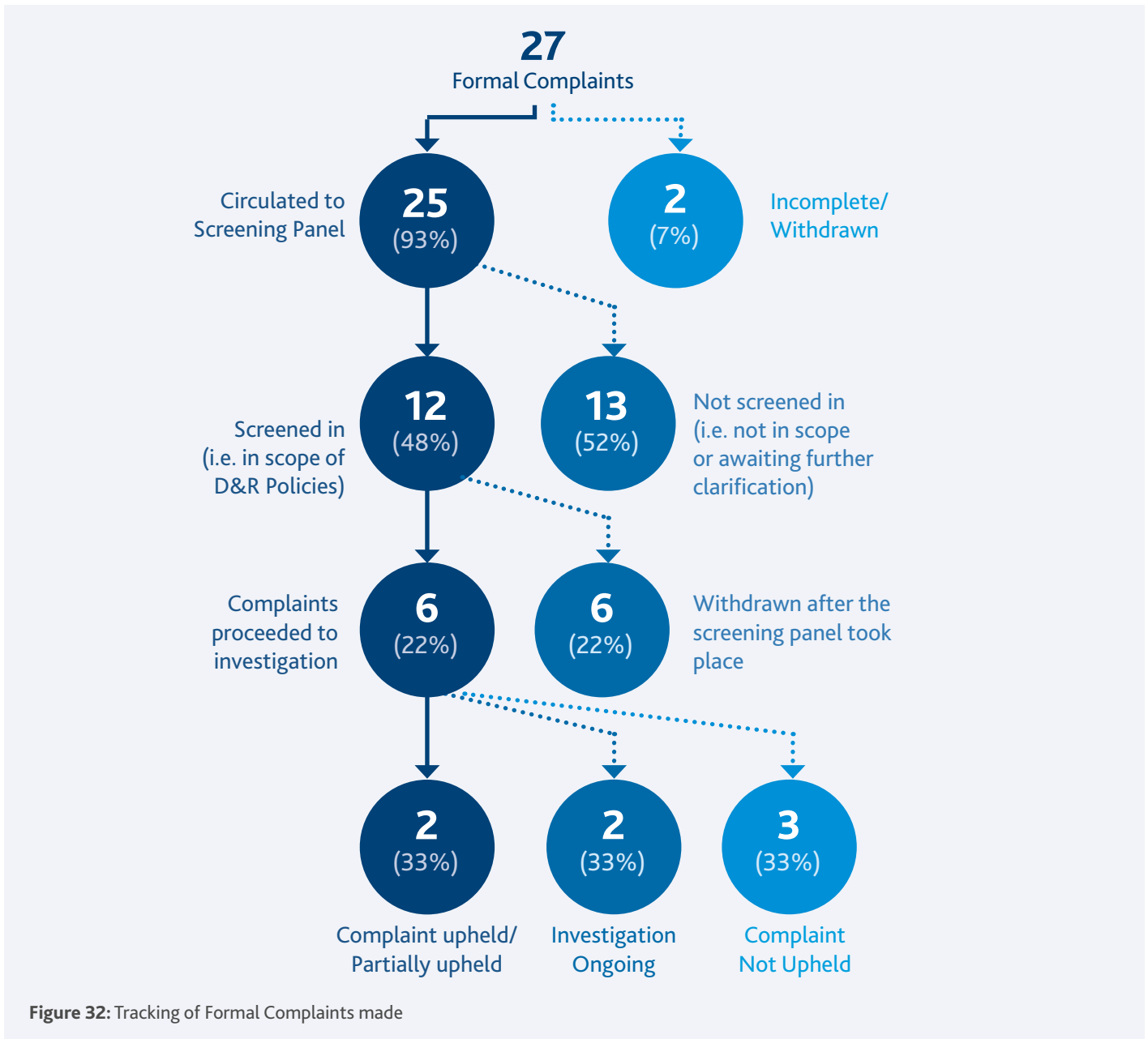
The majority of complainants are students (19 students compared to 6 employees, and 2 external to the UCD community). The number of complaints across all categories (bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct) are also higher amongst students. The most common form of behaviour complained about amongst employees was bullying (5) and amongst students was harassment (12). More male employees made complaints compared to female employees and more female students made complaints when compared to male students. Three complaints were made by those who are not employees or students.



15 complaints were submitted under harassment. The most common grounds for complaints of harassment were under Race/Ethnicity (6 complaints) and Disability (5 complaints). More students than employees reported harassment.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The number of complaints under the various categories is higher than the number of people making complaints as some complainants ticked more than one category of behaviour when submitting their complaint.

Out of the total number of formal complaints made (27), 25 were circulated to the Screening Panel and 12 were screened in i.e. were deemed to fall under the scope of Bullying and Harassment and/or Sexual Misconduct policies and therefore moved to the next stage of the process. 13 were not screened in as they were either not in scope of the policies or further clarification was required to assist the panel with the screening. Of those screened in, 6 continued to the investigation stage. Reasons for not progressing yet to the investigation stage can be due to the parties exploring mediation as an alternative means of resolution or a complaint may be paused for various other reasons.



Upheld complaints made against students are referred to the Student Discipline Procedure, and where a subsequent breach of the Student Code of Conduct is found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties outlined in the Student Discipline Procedure are applied, including activities or actions intended to satisfy the University that respondent students understand the consequences of their conduct. Penalties that have been applied by student disciplinary committees since the introduction of the new Dignity and Respect policies include: formal reprimands, fines (fines are donated to the Student Welfare Fund), written reflections, apologies (apologies are only shared with complainants if they agree to receive them), no contact directives, completion of consent education, suspensions from University activities or facilities and suspensions from the University.

As regards employees, when outcomes of investigations find that the incidents complained of have occurred in whole or in part, and the investigator has established that there has been a breach of the Policy, then the matter will proceed to consideration under the University's Disciplinary Statute. Since the introduction of the Bullying and Harassment Policy and Sexual Misconduct Policy in September 2021, disciplinary processes have been instigated in accordance with stages 1 -3 of the disciplinary statute and sanctions have been issued accordingly.



# 4

## Other Key Activities



Pictured at the UCD Dignity and Respect conference (l-r): Catherine Tormey, Dignity and Respect Response Manager, Prof. Maeve Eogan, National SATU Clinic Lead, Marcellina Fogarty, Senior EDI Manager, Prof. Orla Feely, UCD President, Minister Jennifer Carroll MacNeill, Rory Carey, Director Culture and Engagement, Louise Walsh, Dignity and Respect Support Adviser, Prof. Aoife Ahern, UCD Vice-President for EDI

## 4.1 Dignity and Respect Assessments

In November 2022, work commenced to develop a pilot Dignity and Respect Assessment Framework for use across the Irish University sector. A Dignity and Respect culture is defined as one where:

- Individuals are physically and psychologically safe in their work and studies.
- No one is expected to tolerate any bullying, harassment, or sexual misconduct.
- If there are any incidents of bullying, harassment, or sexual misconduct these are appropriately addressed in a timely and proportionate manner.

The purpose of the framework was envisaged to assess the Dignity and Respect culture in an area of a university/institution and to identify where improvement opportunities existed to inform an action plan. The project was sponsored by the Higher Education Authority, led by UCD and monitored by a Project Oversight and Coordination Group composed of representatives from UCD (Rory Carey and Marcellina Fogarty), University College Cork (UCC) and the Irish Universities Association.

The Project Oversight and Coordination Group recommended a further phase of piloting of the revised Dignity and Respect Assessment Framework with the emphasis on testing all aspects of the framework. This phase has now commenced with three Higher Education Institutions committed to undertaking a Dignity and Respect Assessment during 2024/25 academic year.

## 4.2 UCD Dignity and Respect Conference

A significant milestone in 2023/24 was the hosting of a national UCD Dignity and Respect Support Service conference on the UCD campus in May 2024. Led by the Vice-Principal for EDI, Prof Aoife Ahern, the conference underscored UCD's commitment to fostering a safe and supportive environment. Minister of State Jennifer Carroll MacNeill TD, who was warmly welcomed to campus by President Orla Feely, delivered an inspiring opening address and emphasised the critical role of the Dignity and Respect Support Service in offering trauma-informed support and expert guidance. President Feely reiterated UCD's commitment to eliminating sexual misconduct, harassment, and bullying on campus.

The conference's central theme, 'Building Capacity to Provide Support in Irish Higher Education,' was explored through insights from speakers across the Health, Justice, and Higher Education sectors, both nationally and internationally. These discussions significantly contributed to capacity building in the sector. The event attracted 200 national delegates and members of the UCD community, underscoring the collective commitment to creating a safe and respectful environment for all.

D&R Support Colleagues and D&R Student Ambassadors also played an instrumental role in the conference, highlighting the vital voluntary contributions made by community members in this essential area.

# Conclusion

The University continues to build on activities to enhance the culture of respect and inclusion. The impact of our activities will continue to emerge over time as dignity and respect becomes more embedded into our daily work and lives. However we can see that progress and culture change is happening through the increasing numbers of students and employees who are coming forward to seek support and we are confident that they are getting the dedicated support and guidance required. UCD will continue to raise awareness through training and communications campaigns and other planned activities to ensure that the message that bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct is not tolerated is always visible. We will also continue to partner and work with other HEIs across the sector to ensure that our students and employees can study and work in a respectful and inclusive environment.





UCD Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

[www.ucd.ie/equality](http://www.ucd.ie/equality)