



# 2022-2023 Title IX Annual Report

## Report on Sexual Harassment and Violence at Virginia Tech



**EQUITY & ACCESSIBILITY**  
VIRGINIA TECH.

## From the Title IX Coordinator

Dear Community,

Transparency regarding the student experience of gender-based harassment and violence is an important step toward a culture that leaves no room for it.

In publishing the Title IX report annually, the Office for Equity and Accessibility (OEA) intends to provide insight into the impact of harassment and violence on our Virginia Tech community and the ways we are working together to address it.

This report shares information about reports involving students received by OEA, including the types of experiences students reported, the ways they interacted with the Title IX team and received support, and the outcomes of the formal complaints they filed.

It is important to note that this report only reflects matters formally reported to the university. Sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking generally are significantly underreported. We continue to work to remove barriers to reporting, support students in need of help, and prevent the occurrence of sexual harassment and violence.

There are many ways, big and small, that each member of our community can help: Employees should report students in need of help to the Title IX team, everyone can learn more about ways to support a friend who experiences harm, and students can get involved with efforts to prevent violence and build a culture that protects against it.

Take care,

**Katie Polidoro**

Title IX Coordinator



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## Reporting Sexual Harassment and Violence

When students report their experiences of sexual harassment and violence to the university, their needs are as varied as their reasons for reporting. Our obligation under Title IX is to limit the impact of those experiences and ensure that students continue to have the opportunity to fully participate in campus life. For some, that might mean accessing resources and support measures. Others might choose to participate in an investigation process aimed at ensuring accountability and addressing the behavior that harmed them. In all cases, this means meeting students where they are, respecting their choices, and working with them to find the help they need.

### Reports, 2022-2023

During the 2022-23 academic year, the Title IX team in the Office for Equity and Accessibility (OEA) received 364 reports of incidents of sexual harassment or violence – a 16 percent decrease from the previous year in which there was a sharp increase to 435 reports. When compared to reporting rates over time, the number of reports received this year is high.

As in past years, the most reports occurred during the fall semester. At 222 reports during the academic year, the most common type of incident was sexual harassment. The second most common incident type was sexual assault with 100 reports.

Of reported sexual assault incidents, 38 occurred during the fall semester and 24 occurred during the spring. Ten occurred in previous years, including prior to the reporting student's attendance at Virginia Tech. In the remainder of cases, the reporting student chose not to share information about their experience.

The Title IX team also received 19 reports of intimate partner violence and 23 reports of stalking.

### University Response

While the Title IX team contacted every identified individual who reported harm or was the subject of a third-party report, some individuals chose not to engage with the office. As the goal is to meet students where they are, no student is ever required to meet, share details, or participate in any Title IX process.

Of those students who reported, 131 were provided with support measures and referrals to resources both on and off campus. Twenty-five students filed formal complaints against other students.

#### 2022-2023

**364** new reports of harassment or violence

**16%** decrease in reports year over year

For resources on sexual harassment and assault prevention, visit [safe.vt.edu](https://safe.vt.edu).

## Support Measures

One of our guiding principles is to acknowledge that sexual harassment and violence causes significant disruptions in the lives of those who experience it. Those in our community who experience these incidents deserve our care and support to ensure that their work and goals are not derailed. Support measures are an important part of limiting disruption to students' participation in academic life.

Of the students who reported experiencing harm, 131 received support measures. The most common measures provided included academic assistance, no contact orders, referrals to other resources, and housing assistance. In many of those cases, support was provided over a sustained period of time, with some students receiving assistance over the course of a semester or the school year. Ninety-seven percent of students provided with support measures continued on to future academic semesters or graduated.

**131** students received support measures

**25** students filed formal complaints

**97%**

of students who received support measures **continued their studies** at Virginia Tech

## Investigations and Their Outcomes

The decision to pursue a formal complaint is a deeply personal one. Individuals often weigh their wellbeing, desired outcomes, and ability to participate in an investigation before deciding how to proceed. In many cases, a student received support measures and met multiple times with Title IX team members and confidential resources before they were ready to file a complaint. On average, students took more than one month to move forward with a complaint.

The 25 formal complaints filed during the academic year involved the full spectrum of behaviors that fall under Title IX and the gender-based violence policies outlined in the [Student Code of Conduct](#). In five cases, due to the seriousness of the allegations and the threat to the safety of individuals or the community, students received interim suspensions, pending the investigative outcomes.

The Title IX team works together with the [Office for Student Conduct](#) to resolve Title IX cases, with Student Conduct holding required live hearings and deciding the outcomes, including sanctions, in each case. During the 2022-23 academic year, 13 students were found responsible for violating university policies related to sexual harassment and violence, and seven students were found not responsible. For cases in which a student was found to have violated university policy, sanctions included dismissal from the university (3 cases), suspension (4 cases), and deferred suspension (6 cases). All suspensions and deferred suspensions also included additional educational sanctions, which includes assignments or activities designed to provide opportunities for reflection, learning, and growth.

The remainder of the complaints were closed before a hearing. Cases are closed in this manner for limited reasons, including: closure at the request of the reporting party, closure if the respondent was removed from the university due to another conduct matter, or closure when the allegations in the complaint would not meet the definition of a sexual harassment or violence policy violation, even if proven true. In the latter category, cases are referred to another appropriate office. For instance, a case may be referred to Student Conduct if the alleged behavior may constitute a violation of a portion of the Code of Conduct other than gender-based or sexual misconduct.

## Trends

Each year, it is important to review reports made to OEA for arising trends and themes. This review helps us better understand our students' experiences, assess whether our current practices meet their needs, and identify areas to improve prevention, awareness, and education efforts.

Consistent with previous years, August and September saw more reports and incidents of sexual violence than any other months, again indicating the increased risk for experiencing violence during the early weeks of the academic year. Another trend that should be highlighted is a rise in sexual violence cases involving alcohol use in the latter part of the spring semester. While the majority of all reported incidents, including sexual harassment, occurred on campus, sexual assault specifically was reported to have occurred off campus more frequently than on campus. More than 70 percent of reported sexual assaults occurred off campus. During the year, information about these specific themes was shared with university partners engaged in prevention work to ensure that prevention efforts and messaging included these important issues.

## Culture and Climate

In 2021, President Tim Sands charged the Sexual Violence Culture and Climate Work Group (SVCC) with developing a framework for sustainable climate and cultural transformation that establishes sexual violence prevention as a shared responsibility of the entire university community.

During the 2022-23 academic year, SVCC continued its efforts toward transforming Virginia Tech's culture into one that protects against sexual violence. Building on its inaugural year, the group expanded its membership to include more undergraduate and graduate students as well as academic faculty. This year, SVCC:

- **Hosted several community events to engage students, faculty, and staff in conversations related to sexual violence prevention, including:**
  - Two “Deconstructing Sexual Violence” workshops, in collaboration with Hokie Wellness and open to all community members. A total of 42 students attended.
  - Outreach tabling events on the Blacksburg campus.

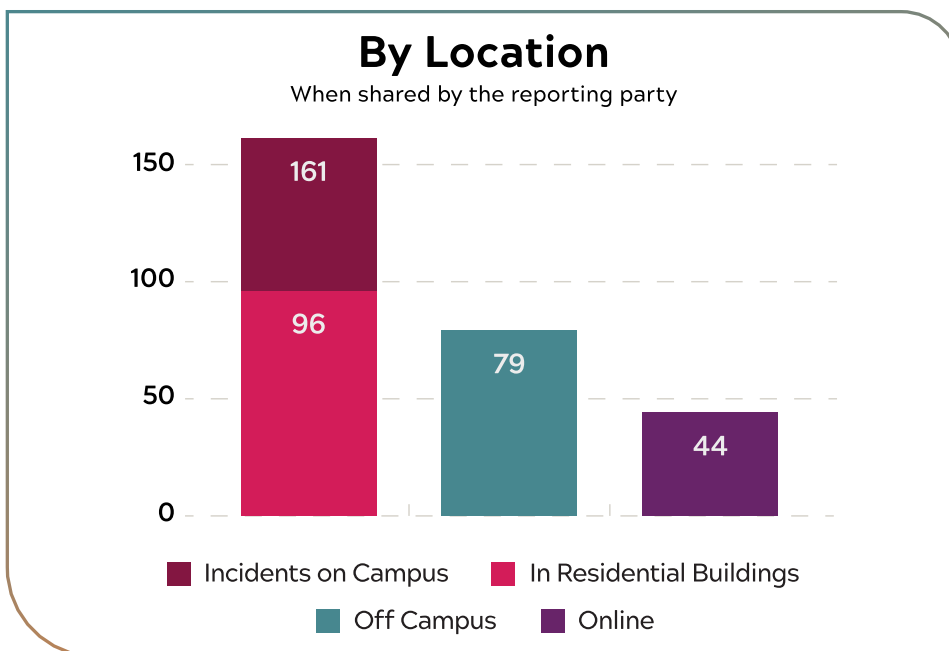
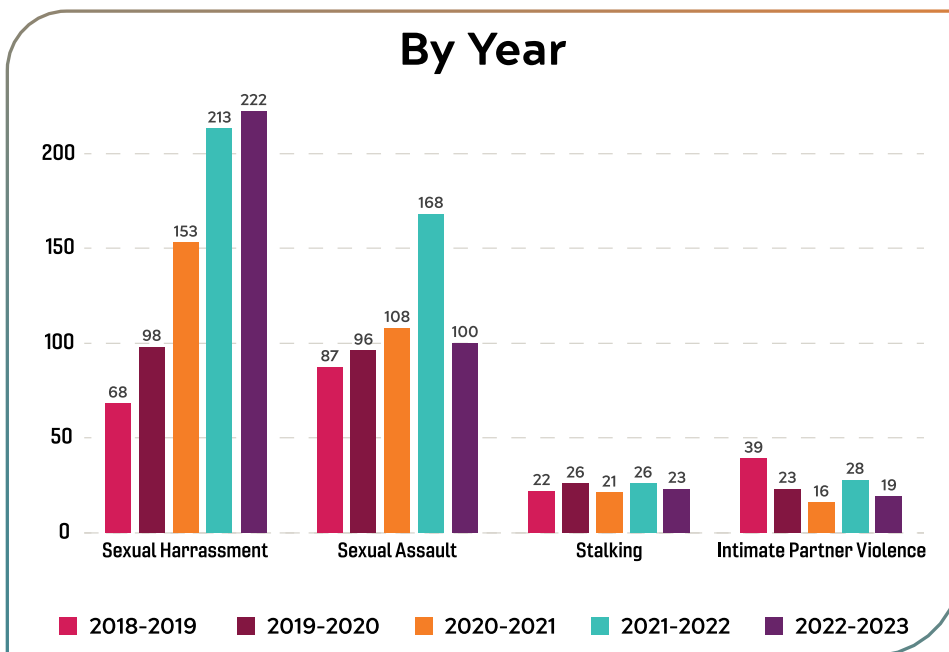


- A Day of Service with End Rape on Campus to improve access to information and resources related to campus sexual assault for students.
  - An SVCC summit featuring Drs. Jennifer Hirsch and Shamus Kahn, authors of *Sexual Citizens: A Landmark Study of Sex, Power, and Assault on Campus*. The summit consisted of a meeting with the President’s Council and a keynote lunch with the authors and a panel of Virginia Tech students. More than 120 people attended in person. Another 85 viewed a live stream of the panel.
  - A student facilitator training event focused on holding conversations about *Sexual Citizens*, attended by 16 students.
- **Made recommendations for creating a sustainable structure, including the formation of standing committees, including:**
    - A Policy and Practice committee dedicated to regularly reviewing and updating university policies and procedures related to sexual harassment and violence.
    - The Sexual Violence Prevention Initiative (SVPI), dedicated to moving forward the university’s prevention efforts.
    - Two undergraduate and graduate student committees that will inform SVPI’s work.
- **Created and implemented a progressive universitywide prevention campaign, SAFE at VT, consisting of:**
    - Monthly educational messages related to sexual violence, intimate partner violence, and stalking.
    - Distribution of messaging via flyers and digital signage in areas frequented by students and on the Cassell Coliseum jumbotron.
    - Events recognizing Denim Day on April 26 to raise awareness of sexual violence.
- **Increased communications with the Virginia Tech community to improve transparency and share the university’s efforts to address and prevent sexual violence.**
    - Messages and articles related to sexual violence, SVCC, and prevention work are compiled on the SAFE at VT website.

SVCC as a committee concluded at the close of the 2022-23 academic year. The ongoing shared work to foster a safer and more inclusive Virginia Tech community will continue, in part, through SVPI.

## Sexual Harassment and Violence Fact Sheet

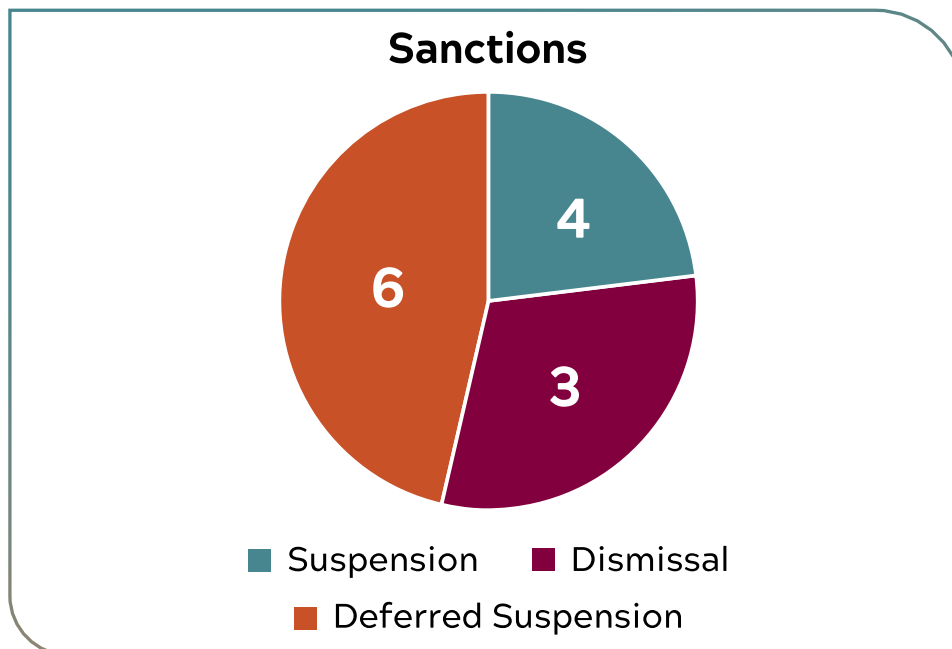
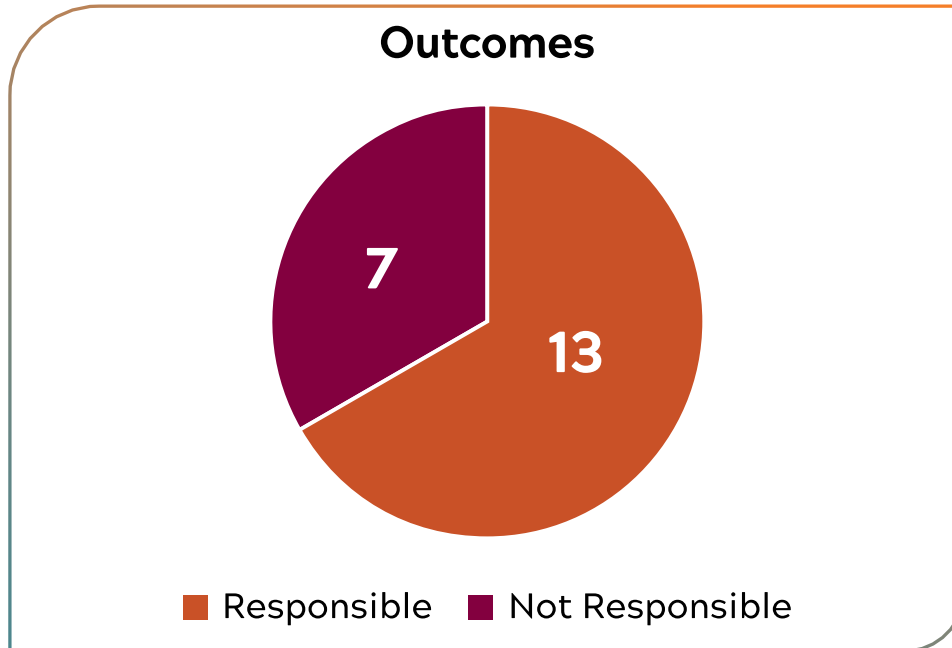
The Office for Equity and Accessibility received 364 reports of gender-based harassment and violence involving students. Of those reports, 222 were of sexual harassment, 100 of sexual assault, 23 of stalking, and 19 of intimate partner violence.





## Outcomes

Of the reports that resulted in formal complaints and investigations, a student was found responsible for gender-based harassment or violence in 13 cases. In seven cases, the respondent was found not responsible. For cases in which a student was found to have violated university policy, sanctions included dismissal from the university (3 cases), suspension (4 cases), and deferred suspension (6 cases).





**Katie Polidoro, Title IX Coordinator**

Office for Equity and Accessibility

P: 540-231-1821

[polidoro@vt.edu](mailto:polidoro@vt.edu) ▪ [safe.vt.edu](http://safe.vt.edu)

**Every member of our community has the right to live in an atmosphere free from sexual harassment and violence.**

Virginia Tech is committed to providing a safe environment, consistent with our [Principles of Community](#), free from harassment and violence of any kind. If you have experienced sexual harassment or violence, we encourage you to reach out for support. Advocacy and assistance, including measures through Title IX, are available to you – whether you choose to report or not and no matter where you are located.

## Report to the University

Scan this code to report gender-based harassment and violence.



### Office for Equity and Accessibility

220 Gilbert Street, Suite 5200

540-231-2010

[equityandaccess@vt.edu](mailto:equityandaccess@vt.edu)

### Virginia Tech Police Department

911 ▪ 540-382-4343

[police.vt.edu](http://police.vt.edu)

Calling 911 from a Virginia Tech landline in Blacksburg will reach the Virginia Tech Police Department. Calling 911 from a cell phone will connect with the local off-campus police department.

## Confidential Resources

Confidential resources cannot share identifying information about you without your consent. They can support and advise you as you make decisions.

### Cook Counseling Center

[ucc.vt.edu](http://ucc.vt.edu)

### CARES Program for Survivors

[womenscenter.vt.edu/advocacy](http://womenscenter.vt.edu/advocacy)

### Schiffert Health Center

[healthcenter.vt.edu](http://healthcenter.vt.edu)

### Office of the Ombudsperson - Graduate School

[graduate.ombudsman.vt.edu](http://graduate.ombudsman.vt.edu)

### TimelyCare Virtual Mental Health Counseling

[timelycare.com/virginiatech](http://timelycare.com/virginiatech)

## Private Resources

Private resources are required to report some information about incidences to the Title IX Coordinator. Other university departments may also be involved to help survivors or protect the campus community.

### Office of Student Conduct

[studentconduct.vt.edu](http://studentconduct.vt.edu)

### Dean of Students Office

[dos.vt.edu](http://dos.vt.edu)

### Cranwell International Center

[international.vt.edu](http://international.vt.edu)

## Get Involved

Each member of the community can help the university in the ongoing work to transform our culture and protect against sexual violence.

Visit [safe.vt.edu](http://safe.vt.edu)

to access resources and learn how you can be part of Virginia Tech's culture of change.

## Resources

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Accessibility Portal	<a href="https://vt.edu/accessibility">vt.edu/accessibility</a>
Accessible Technologies	<a href="https://assist.vt.edu">assist.vt.edu</a>
Cook Counseling Center	<a href="https://ucc.vt.edu">ucc.vt.edu</a>
OEA Glossary	<a href="https://oea.vt.edu/about/glossary">oea.vt.edu/about/glossary</a>
Report a Barrier	<a href="https://vt.edu/accessibility/barrier">vt.edu/accessibility/barrier</a>
SAFE at VT	<a href="https://safe.vt.edu">safe.vt.edu</a>
Services for Students with Disabilities	<a href="https://ssd.vt.edu">ssd.vt.edu</a>

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Scan the QR code or click the link below for the Gender-Based Harassment and Violence Reporting form.

[bit.ly/TitleIX\\_Reporting\\_Form](https://bit.ly/TitleIX_Reporting_Form)



**EQUITY & ACCESSIBILITY**  
VIRGINIA TECH.

220 Gilbert Street  
Suite 5200  
Blacksburg, VA 24061

540-231-2010  
[equityandaccess@vt.edu](mailto:equityandaccess@vt.edu)  
[oea.vt.edu](http://oea.vt.edu)