UTS Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Action Plan 2026

Safe and Respectful Communities

Acknowledgement of Country

UTS acknowledges the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, the Boorooberongal people of the Dharug Nation, the Bidiagal people and the Gamaygal people upon whose ancestral lands our university stands. We would also like to pay respect to the Elders both past and present, acknowledging them as the traditional custodians of knowledge for these lands.

Acknowledgement of lived experiences

UTS acknowledges that behind every act of gender-based violence is a person whose life has been profoundly affected. We pay respect to all survivors, their strength, their insights, and their ongoing contributions to creating safer, more respectful communities. We also remember those whose lives were taken by violence and the families, friends and colleagues who continue to grieve their loss.

We recognise that lived experience is not uniform. It is shaped by culture, gender, sexuality, disability, age, and migration history. We therefore commit to ensuring that the voices of people with diverse lived experiences are heard, valued and embedded in our work. Through trauma-informed and inclusive engagement, we will continue to listen, learn and act to ensure that UTS remains a place where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

Statement of commitment from the Vice-Chancellor & President

UTS is committed to a future that is free of gender-based violence. This future is only achievable through collective action, collective responsibility and the recognition that any form of violence – physical or non-physical, harassment, abuse or threats – for any reason, is intolerable.

Here at UTS, the safety and wellbeing of every member of our community is paramount. To drive societal change, it is not enough that every member of our community (staff, students and visitors) feels safe, protected, and welcome, they must also feel empowered to call out unacceptable behaviour and be active agents of social change.

The UTS Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Action Plan puts in place the structures to make this vision a reality. It articulates our whole-of-organisation approach to creating a community free of gender-based violence. It is grounded in the years of work already undertaken to create the safe and respectful environment in which we learn, create and share knowledge, live, work and play.

Importantly, our whole-of-organisation approach means every member of the UTS community has a role to play in making us all feel safe, welcome and respected. The success of this Action Plan,

therefore, lies not only with those members of the UTS community charged with implementing the Plan's various initiatives, but also with me and with you.

For my part, I promise to lead with respect and integrity, and to ensure this Action Plan is implemented to meet the needs of the community it seeks to serve.

I invite you to share my commitment to a safe and respectful workplace and to giving life to this Action Plan.

**Professor Andrew Parfitt,
Vice-Chancellor and President**

Message from the Director, Safe and Respectful Communities

Every person has the right to live their lives free from violence, harassment and discrimination. UTS is committed to advancing this aim locally on our campuses and in our UTS community, and globally through our role as thought leaders and innovators.

This Action Plan is one of the ways we can be accountable to our role in preventing gender-based violence, ensuring that people who experience violence get the support they need, and anyone choosing to use violence is held to account. We want UTS to be a place where everyone feels safe, welcome, included and respected.

People with lived experience are essential partners in prevention, policy reform and service design. Their expertise, resilience and insight strengthen our collective capacity to build safe, inclusive and accountable learning and working environments.

My team is dedicated to working collaboratively and ensuring our work translates into community-driven action, with real and measurable outcomes. Preventing gender-based violence doesn't happen in isolation, it is collective work that strives to change societal attitudes and behaviours. We look forward to partnering with

colleagues from all areas of the university, with students, with our affiliates and with the community more broadly.

UTS is striving to build safe, respectful and caring communities for everyone. The priorities and initiatives outlined in the following pages help us achieve that goal.

I look forward to working with the Vice-Chancellor, UTS Council and whole UTS community towards a future that is free of gender-based violence, where every person is safe and can thrive.

Emma Iwinska, Director Safe and Respectful Communities, UTS

Safe and Respectful Communities

The *Universities Accord (National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence) Bill 2025* was enacted in August 2025. The Bill makes way for the implementation of the National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence (**National Code**) on 1 January 2026, which will require universities to prioritise safety and proactively address the drivers that contribute to gender-based violence in our communities.

UTS Safe and Respectful Communities provides an anchor for our approach to preventing and responding to gender-based violence in our university community as we re-focus various existing UTS safety and wellbeing functions programs and initiatives to better align with the National Code's seven key standards:

1. Accountable leaderships and governance

2. Safe environments and systems

3. Knowledge and capability

4. Safety and support

5. Safe processes

6. Data, evidence and impact

7. Safe student accommodation

Principle-based initiatives

The UTS Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Action Plan (**Action Plan**) is underpinned by a set of guiding principles that shape the design (or redesign), development, implementation and evaluation of the University's approach to the prevention and response to gender-based violence and the initiatives articulated in this Action Plan.

Person-centric – taking a person-centric approach guarantees staff and student agency, empowerment and choice.

Intersectionality aware – understanding that a person's identity can expose them to multiple and overlapping forms of discrimination, marginalisation and violence. Applying an intersectional lens ensure gender sensitive and gender inclusive approaches to prevention and response.

Trauma informed – it is not enough to be trauma aware in our response to gender-based violence, we must be trauma informed to ensure that we minimise the risk of re-traumatisation and maximise recovery and healing.

Whole-of-community – our community extends beyond our campus to the workplaces where students develop their professional practice, the partners we work with in our academic endeavours, and the affiliates who work alongside us UTS.

Positive impact through positive change – making a commitment to ending gender-based violence, discrimination in all its forms and marginalisation in the wider society.

Refer Appendix 1 for information about UTS.

> "UTS Safe and Respectful Communities provides an anchor for our approach to preventing and responding to gender-based violence in our university community."
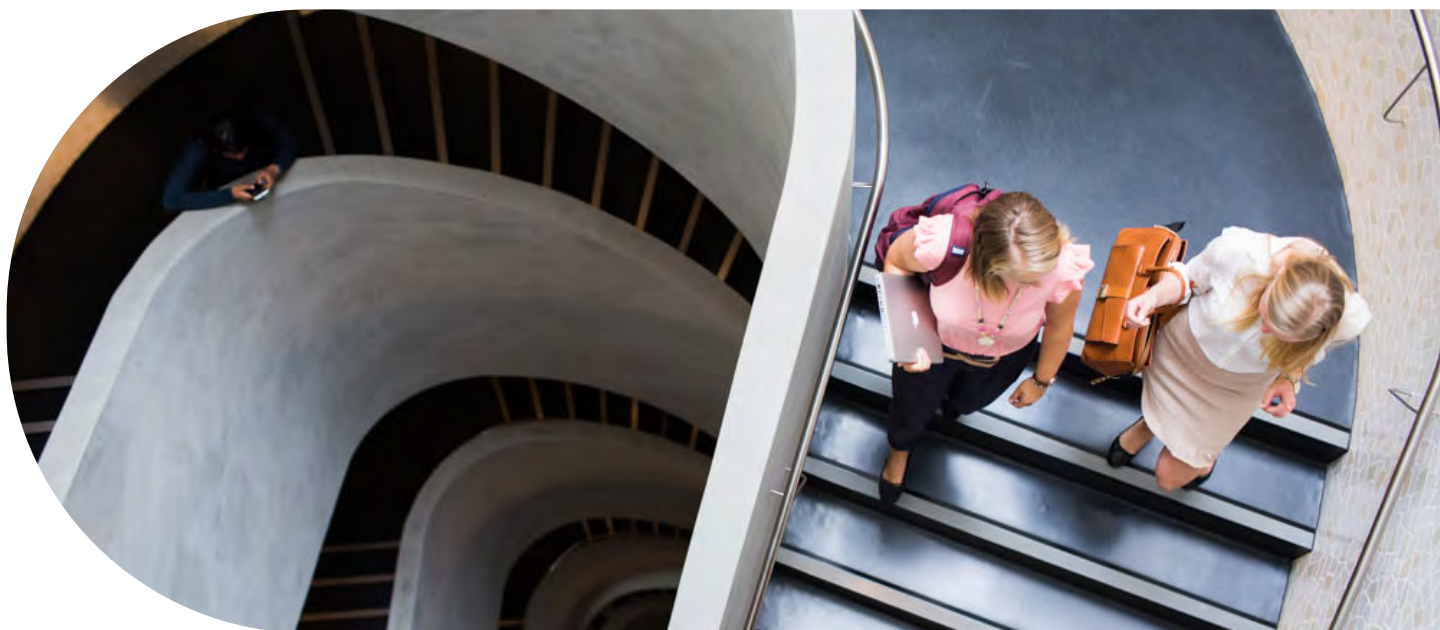
UTS resources that enable

A commitment to preventing and responding to gender-based violence means building the capacity and capability necessary to bring the Framework to life, activate the Action Plan and implement its initiatives.

While dedicated people, systems and processes form the backbone of this Action Plan, several enablers – internal and external – will prove critical to the successful delivery of this Action Plan including:

– Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Policy and Procedure
– Campus Policy
– Concerning Behaviour Assessment and Intervention Policy

– UTS Social Impact Framework
– UTS Student Rules, policies and procedures
– Respect. Now. Always.
– Staff Code of Conduct
– Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy
– UTS Financial Inclusion Action Plan
– UTS Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy
– UTS Ally Network
– UTS Student Partnership Agreement
– ActivateUTS Wellbeing Program [1]
– Gender Equity at UTS and Gender Equity Action Plan

1. Winner of the 2025 Green Gown Awards – Student Engagement Category

Building on strong foundations

The 2026 Action Plan advances key existing initiatives and programs, such as *Respect, Now, Always (RNA)*, which have proven instrumental in building a safer, more respectful, campus community UTS over recent years.

Several initiatives detailed in this Action Plan commenced in 2025. These initiatives have laid the foundations for, and paved the way toward, a step-change in 2026 including:

- Review of internal governance instruments and operating environment and updating of key policies (e.g. replacing the 2022 Sexual Harm Prevention and Response Policy with the 2025 Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Policy) to ensure alignment with the National Code.
- End-to-end process remapping and redesign to improve process safety and transparency for people reporting gender-based violence
- The introduction of safer reporting and case management ecosystem for staff and students who experience gender-based violence and those who support them
- Creation of the Safe and Respectful Communities Team

Refer Appendix 2 for information about the development of this Plan.

Authentic UTS voice

UTS has a long-term commitment to engaging with students and staff on matters related to preventing gender-based violence, through our award-winning *Respect.Now.Always.* program.

For over eight years, the program has focussed on deep listening and co-design methods to understand the staff and student voice, including:

- Understanding student experiences and opinions on sexual assault and harassment
- Developing a Strategic Framework: UTS Community's Recommendations on Preventing Sexual Violence
- Co-design playback
- A practice focused research project - Community Voice: Improving Program Outcomes Through a New Community-driven Theory of Change.

These projects have delivered valuable outputs which have guided our whole-of-institution approach towards addressing and the prevention of GBV within our community since 2018.

2026 Action Plan

At the heart of our Action Plan is our commitment to creating an environment where UTS is a safe place to work, study and live, for everyone.

The 2026 Action Plan (effective from 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2026) initiatives forge a path toward a campus community free of all forms of violence.

To comply with the National Code, this action plan:

- is approved by UTS Council
- will be reviewed in Q4 2026 and findings will inform the development of the 2027-2030 Action Plan (which, in turn, will be subject to review before end-2028)
- updated as needed to meet the requirements of the UTS community; and
- reported to the Secretary of the Commonwealth Department of Education in line with the policy

> "At the heart of our Action Plan is our commitment to creating an environment where UTS is a safe place to work, study and live, for everyone."

A framework for evaluating key outcomes

Good governance includes a practice of continuous review and improvement. Therefore, in addition to meeting our reporting obligations under the National Code, UTS will regularly evaluate its progress against this Action Plan and report its performance to students and staff.

We will know we have successfully implemented this Action Plan if we achieve the following outcomes by the end of 2026:

– Students and staff report feeling safe, respected and supported by UTS.

– Students and staff report feeling equipped (knowledgeable and capable) and empowered to contribute to the UTS community and the prevention of gender-based violence.

– The University's policies, procedures and processes align to the National Code.

– Students and staff are aware of the various support services offered by UTS, and have confidence in people, systems and process available to them should they experience gender-based violence.

Priority areas

There are three priority areas – *prevention, response and leadership*. The priority areas accommodate the National Code's seven standards and serve as reference points for the and its initiatives (detailed from page 7).

Prevention initiatives map to standards *3 – Knowledge and capability and 7 – Safe student accommodation*.

Response initiatives map to standards *2 – Safe environments and systems, 4 – Safety and support, 5 – Safe processes and 7 – Safe student accommodation*.

Leadership initiatives map to standards *1 – Accountable leadership and governance, 6 – Data, evidence and impact and 7 – Safe student accommodation*.

Shared understanding, shared success

Wherever appropriate, UTS has adopted the definitions used in the National Code to demonstrate its commitment, ensure consistency and avoid confusion. The full complement of definitions used by UTS are detailed in the Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Policy, the Gender-based Violence Response Procedure, and the RNA Glossary.

Active bystander means someone who witnesses problematic or harmful behaviour and chooses to intervene to stop harm from happening, rather than remaining a passive observer. The national code also refers to ethical bystanders which means a person who witnesses an event that is disrespectful or harmful behaviour and chooses to intervene in a way that is safe and effective.

Affiliate includes honorary award and title holders, honour name holders, contractors, volunteers, agency staff, members of university/faculty committees (excluding UTS Council and its committees) and any other person appointed or engaged by UTS to perform work, duties or functions for UTS.

Affiliated Organisation means an organisation that uses the Provider's intellectual property in its name, marketing, recruitment, or governance documents.

Bystander (also **witness**) means a person who witnesses an incident of gender-based violence or becomes aware of an incident that has occurred.

Complainant (also a 'discloser' in the national code) means a person who makes a disclosure or a report of gender-based violence. A complainant may be a staff member, a student or another member of the community. In some cases, the complainant may not be the person who has experienced the incident, rather may be an active bystander or trusted individual who acts on behalf of the person who has experienced the incident.

Disclosure means the provision of information about a person's experience of Gender-based Violence to a Provider by the Discloser or another person.

Gender-based Violence (GBV) means any form of physical or nonphysical violence, harassment, abuse or threats, based on gender, that results in, or is likely to result in, harm, coercion, control, fear or deprivation of liberty or autonomy.

Person-centred means ensuring that the Discloser's needs and preferences are at the centre of decisions made in response to the Disclosure. The response systems, Policies and Procedures affirm the Discloser's dignity and support their healing by genuinely considering their wishes and the impact that decisions may have on them, while at all times ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the Discloser and other Students and Staff.

Policies means a document approved in accordance with a Provider's governance framework, which binds the Provider and its Students and Staff, and includes without limitation statutes, regulations, by-laws, policies, procedures and guidelines.

Procedural Fairness in a decision-making context, means the decision is made in accordance with the rule against bias and the hearing rule (i.e., a Respondent is given an opportunity to present their case with knowledge of any prejudicial material that may be taken into account by the decision-maker).

Procedures means Policies that govern a Provider's response to a Disclosure or Formal Report of Gender-based Violence.

Report (also **Formal Report)** means the provision through formal reporting channels of information about their experience of Gender-based Violence by a Discloser to a Provider, which requires the Provider to consider taking steps beyond the offer and provision of support services, including (without limitation) the commencement of an investigation and/or a disciplinary process in appropriate circumstances.

Respondent means a person whom it is alleged has engaged in conduct that amounts to Gender-based Violence.

Staff has the same meaning as 'worker' under the *Model Work Health and Safety Act*. **At UTS, staff means** any person employed by UTS, including professional, academic or senior staff, either full-time or part-time, permanent, casual or on a contractual basis in line with the University's Enterprise agreements.

Student means a person who is enrolled as a student with the Provider or is undertaking a course of study or a unit of study with a Provider. Without limitation, it includes students undertaking higher degrees by research, non-award study, enabling or bridging courses, foundation programs and vocational education and training courses.

Trauma-informed means an approach that applies the core principles of safety (physical, psychological and emotional), trust, choice, collaboration and empowerment. It should minimise the risk of re-traumatisation and promote recovery and healing to the greatest extent possible.

Victim-survivor means any person who has experienced any form of gender-based violence. This term recognises both the immediate and ongoing impact of gender-based violence as well as the strength and resilience of those with lived experience of this (or any other) form of violence.

Whole-of-Organisation means an approach applied across all areas of a Provider's operations, including any Student Accommodation which it directly owns, operates and/or manages, or the operations of a Student Accommodation Provider or Affiliated Student Accommodation Provider as the context requires it, and at all levels that is evidence-informed, uses multiple strategies and is subject to ongoing monitoring and evaluation, including in respect to:

– leadership, culture and environment;
– structures, norms and practices;
– systems and infrastructure;
– service delivery, such as curriculum, teaching and learning;
– Policies and Procedures;
– management and governance;
– community engagement;
– business;
– research; and
– partnerships.

More definitions can be found in the National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Response to Gender-based Violence and the RNA Glossary.

Links and resources

– ACON Say it Loud – Research and Resources
– OurWatch Communicating with Purpose
– OurWatch Educating for Equity
– National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence
– National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence 2025 (legislation)
– National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022–2032
– University's Australia Good Practice Guide
– UTS Gender Equity Action Plan
– UTS Respect. Now. Always Community Voice
– UTS Respect. Now. Always Strategic Framework

"Preventing gender-based violence doesn't happen in isolation, it is collective work that strives to change societal attitudes and behaviours."

Emma Iwinska, Director, Safe and Respectful Communities

2026 Action Plan initiatives

Prevention

National Code Standard Mapping	Focus area	Initiative
Standard 3 – Knowledge and capability	Engagement and Early Intervention	Respect. Now. Always. Program – leading the trauma-informed, person-centred prevention and early intervention program of activities at UTS. – Disestablish the RNA Steering Committee (replaced by the Safe and Respectful Communities (SaRC) Steering Committee (refer Standard 1 – accountable governance and leadership). – Include experts in gender-based violence on the existing Risk and Compliance Community of Practice. – Establish the Student Consultation Group to be the student voice for all compliance work against the national code and contribute the effective implementation of the whole-of-university response. – Add 'GBV Prevention and Response Update' as standing item to key committees of Academic Board (i.e. Teaching and Learning Committee and Research Committee)
Standard 3 – Knowledge and capability	Communication	– Cultural norms, cultural change campaign targeting all members of UTS community (including visitors)
Standard 3 – Knowledge and capability	Capability uplift	**Whole of community capability uplift:** – Respect Matters (replacing Consent Matters) – Development and implementation of trauma awareness training for staff – Development and implementation of trauma informed first responder training – Engagement with existing committees of Academic Board to develop strategies for managing gender-based violence in the classroom and other learning environments and support the embedding of appropriate information in the curriculum to address discipline specific challenges. This could include for example how to address micro-aggression and possible the development of training module that empowers academics to address GBV (and) micro aggressions in learning and research settings. It may also consider graduate attributes as part of this wider project.

Responsible	Timeline	Resources
Implementation leads: – RNA Program Manager – Chair, Teaching and Learning Committee – Chair, Research Committee **Governance:** – SaRC Steering Committee – Academic Board	31 March 2026	Existing capability and capacity (i.e. RNA Team).
Implementation leads: – RNA Program Manager **Governance:** – SaRC Steering Committee	30 April 2026	Existing capability and capacity (i.e. RNA Team).
Implementation leads: – Director, Safe and Respectful Communities – RNA Program Manager – Nominated academics **Governance:** – SaRC Steering Committee – Academic Board	Development complete by 30 April 2026 Implementation complete by 20 July 2026 (start of Spring Session)	Existing capability and capacity (i.e. RNA Team, Office of General Counsel). New capability and capacity (i.e. Safe and Respectful Communities (SRC) Team).

2026 Action Plan initiatives

Prevention

National Code Standard Mapping	Focus area	Initiative
Standard 3 – Knowledge and capability	Capability uplift continued	**Specialist capability uplift:** – Trauma informed investigations training – Risk skills training and development – Trauma awareness training for supplementary support teams identified in the procedure **Leadership capability uplift** – Council, the Vice-Chancellor and the executive – graduate research supervisors – UTS Housing – UTS Security – student leaders, and – other groups identified as part of the ongoing review and risk assessment processes. Work with UTS College and Activate UTS to ensure expectations and requirements are implemented in compliance with the national code.
Standard 3 – Knowledge and capability	On and beyond campus	– Affiliate readiness assessment (to ensure all organisations leveraging the UTS brand have GBV prevention and response action plans. – Affiliate alignment – shared resource initiative (e.g. communication collateral)
Standard 7 – Safe student accommodation	On and beyond campus	– Partner readiness assessments and annual audits • Includes preferred/referred accommodation providers – Includes internship and placement partners

Responsible	Timeline	Resources
Implementation lead: – Director, Safe and Respectful Communities – RNA Program Manager **Governance:** – SaRC Steering Committee – University Leadership Team (ULT) – Governance Committee – UTS Council	Development complete by 30 April 2026 Implementation complete by 20 July 2026 (start of Spring Session)	
Implementation leads: – Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education & Students) – Director, Safe and Respectful Communities **Governance:** – ULT – Governance Committee		
Implementation leads: – Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education & Students) – Director, Student Services Unit – Deans **Governance:** – ULT – Governance Committee	Ongoing	Existing capability and capacity (i.e. UTS Housing, Faculty Placement teams).

2026 Action Plan initiatives

Prevention

National Code Standard Mapping	Focus area	Initiative
Standard 7 – Safe student accommodation	On and beyond campus	**Resident Responsibilities and Training** – The Licence Agreement makes it an essential term that housing students must undertake, attend, and participate in all education and training provided on the prevention and responding to reports of GBV, for which there is zero tolerance in UTS Housing. – All residents are also required to undertake induction training on the use and occupation of the residence, health and safety, wellbeing, prevention and responding to Gender-based Violence, and other matters. – The Response Plan establishes clear disclosure requirements for staff, outlines a rapid response system for reports of Gender-based Violence focused on safety and support, and mandates education and compliance for all residents.

Response

National Code Standard Mapping	Focus area	Initiative
Standard 2 – Safe environments and systems	On and beyond campus	– Protecht Implementation – new GBV Reporting and Case Management System
Standard 2 – Safe environments and systems	Embedding safety	– Child Protection Policy articulates WWCC requirements and child safety measures – Future staff and members of Council and Council committees to declare previous investigations for allegations of gender-based violence as outlined in the Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Policy. – Substantiated allegations of gender-based violence taken into consideration, as a policy and behavioural breach, at promotions, recognition and reward procedures (Academic Promotion Policy, Workplanning process and as per People Unit processes). – Arrangements with industry partners and affiliates who engage with staff and students are reviewed and updated and appropriate arrangements are in place. – Apply behavioural expectations in contractor appointments as part of normal probity screening activities. • Risk assessments and support plans (refer the Procedure) are implemented to action safety for all complainants and the community.

Responsible	Timeline	Resources
Implementation leads: – Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education & Students) – Director, Student Services Unit **Governance:** – ULT – Governance Committee	Ongoing	Existing capability and capacity (i.e. UTS Housing).

Responsible	Timeline	Resources
Implementation leads: – Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) – Chief Operating Officer **Governance:** – ULT – Governance Committee – Infrastructure Committee	Ongoing 31 January 2026	Existing capability and capacity (SRC Project Team, Student Services Unit and ITU)
Implementation leads: – Chief Operating Officer – Executive Director, People and Culture – General Counsel **Governance:** – ULT – Governance Committee	31 January 2026	Existing capability and capacity (People Unit)

2026 Action Plan initiatives

Response

National Code Standard Mapping	Focus area	Initiative
Standard 2 – Safe environments and systems	Conflict management	– UTS requires staff to declare existing or previous intimate personal relationships in line with the Conflict of Interest Disclosures Policy, the Equity, Inclusion and Respect Policy and the Graduate Research Supervision Policy. ● These must be actively monitored and managed in line with a Conflict management plan.
Standard 2 – Safe environments and systems	Implementing governance instruments	– Responsibilities for prevention and response activities are articulated in the policy and the procedure.
Standard 4 – Safety and support	Communication	– Website content uplift project: ● A digital safe space for finding support – A digital safe space for making disclosures and reports and understanding how UTS will respond – Communications strategy targeting all staff and students to raise awareness about gender-based-violence and support paths available at UTS
Standard 4 – Safety and support	Focus on students	– Implementation of Special Consideration recommendations (Academic Administration Working Group project)
Standard 4 – Safety and support	Focus on students	– 2026 Students as Partners Program[2]

2. Assumes a GBV related project is proposed by a student (or students) and supported by the Students as Partners selection panel.

Responsible	Timeline	Resources
Implementation leads: – Chief Operating Officer – Executive Director, People and Culture **Governance:** – ULT – Governance Committee	31 March 2026	Existing capability and capacity (People Unit)
Implementation leads: – Vice-Chancellor – University Secretary and Director, Governance Support Unit (GSU) **Governance:** – Governance Committee	31 January 2026	Existing capability and capacity (People Unit)
Implementation lead: – Deputy Vice-Chancellor, (External Engagement and Partnerships) – Chief Marketing and Communication Officer – Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) – RNA Program Manager **Governance:** – ULT – Governance Committee	31 January 2026	Existing capability and capacity (Marketing and Communication Unit, RNA Team)
Implementation lead: – Pro Vice-Chancellor (Students) – Deans **Governance:** – Academic Board	Ongoing	Existing capability and capacity (Faculties and Student Administration Unit)
Implementation lead: – Pro Vice-Chancellor (Students) – Director, Student Experience and Success **Governance:** – Academic Board	Ongoing	Existing capability and capacity (Student Experience and Success Unit)

2026 Action Plan initiatives

Response

National Code Standard Mapping	Focus area	Initiative
Standard 4 – Safety and support	Focus on staff	– Develop and implement a Care Program that includes provision of Care Management Plans for all staff who disclose or report incidents of GBV. – Implement a Relationship Self-Declaration process for prospective and existing staff. – Revise and update Allegation Self-Declaration process for prospective staff and members of UTS Council.
Standard 4 – Safety and support	Focus on governing bodies	– Bespoke training and engagement for Council members. – Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Disclosures Policy will apply to Council members and committee members. – Audit and Risk to receive reports on GBV for consideration. – Audit and Risk Committee to have a member responsible for staff and student safety.
Standard 5 – Safe processes	Response structures	– Complete the implementation of CARE (Community Assessment and Response Evaluation) Team (replacing CBAIT)

Standard 7 – Safe student accommodation	On and beyond campus	– Immediate Response to Reports of GBV
		  • Upon receiving a disclosure or formal report, the Accommodation will take all necessary actions to ensure the safety of the Discloser, Residents, and Staff.
		  • Immediate measures, such as alternative accommodation for the Respondent, and arranging urgent support for the Discloser, Resident, Staff, or others in place.
		  • Within 48 hours, the Accommodation will undertake a risk assessment and implement a support plan together with the Discloser.
		  • Immediate action proportionate to the risk will be taken, which may include alternative accommodation and support services for the Discloser, Respondent, and Staff, supported by The University Licence Agreement.
		  • The UTS Housing Licence Agreement provides the necessary framework to implement the above.

Responsible	Timeline	Resources
Implementation lead: – Executive Director, People and Culture – Chief Operating Officer **Governance:** – ULT	31 March 2026	Existing capability and capacity (People Unit)
Implementation lead: – Vice-Chancellor – University Secretary **Governance:** – UTS Council	Ongoing	Governance Handbook and existing policy and secretariat
Implementation lead: – Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) – Director, Safe and Respectful Communities **Governance:** – ULT	Ongoing	Existing capability and capacity (Education and Students Portfolio)
Implementation lead: – Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education & Students) – Director, Student Services Unit **Governance:** – ULT – Governance Committee	Ongoing	Existing capability and capacity (i.e. UTS Housing).

2026 Action Plan initiatives

Leadership

National Code Standard Mapping	Focus area	Initiative
Standard 1 – Accountable leaderships and governance	Governance structures	– Implement the Safe and Respectful Communities Unit (SRCU). – The Director, Safe and Respectful Communities a member of the X Committee of Council (Standard 1.2)
Standard 1 – Accountable leaderships and governance	Governance structures	– Replace various working groups and committees with Safe and Respectful Communities (SaRC) Steering Committee – oversight of, decision making for, whole-of-organisation approach. – SaRC Communities Steering Committee to act as an advisory body to Council and the Vice-Chancellor with terms of reference included in the Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Policy.
Standard 1 – Accountable leaderships and governance	Governance instruments	– Review and revise relevant governance instruments including UTS Student Rules, various policies, procedures, to ensure alignment with National Code requirements. – Develop UTS Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Policy (aligned to relevant governance instruments) For approval by Council. – Develop Gender-based Violence Response Procedure to provide transparency over the UTS response responsibilities, mechanisms and pathways. For approval by the Vice-Chancellor. – Documented engagement with staff and students as part of the development and review process for all governance instruments. Governance instruments must be reviewed and amended having regard to the duty of care to students and staff. These must be reapproved by Council. (Standard 1.8). – Development of the UTS Gender-based Violence and Response Action Plan 2026. – Development of UTS Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Action Plan 2027-2030 and Outcomes Framework for approval by Council.

Standard 1 – Accountable leaderships and governance	Risk management	– The risk of gender-based violence is managed as part of the university's risk management processes. Risk assessments are conducted by appropriately qualified staff in line with the policy. Forward Plan mapped to include:
		  • risk assessments and auditing cycle agreed – aligned Audit and Risk Committee Forward Plan.
		  • Risk mitigation requirements are identified and built into this plan, the policy and/or the procedure (aligns with health and safety requirements).
		  • reporting framework and benchmarking review cycle.
		  • establish environmental audits cycle (physical and digital spaces).

Responsible	Timeline	Resources
Implementation lead: – Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) – Director, Safe and Respectful Communities **Governance:** – Governance Committee	Ongoing	New and existing capability and capacity (SRC Team)
Implementation lead: – Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) – Director, Safe and Respectful Communities **Governance:** – ULT	Ongoing	Existing capability and capacity (Education and Students Portfolio)
Implementation leads: – Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) – Pro Vice-Chancellor (Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion) – Director, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion – Director, Safe and Respectful Communities **Governance:** – ULT	Ongoing	Existing capability and capacity (Education and Students Portfolio)
Implementation leads: – Vice-Chancellor – Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) – Director, Safe and Respectful Communities **Governance:** – ULT – Audit and Risk Committee	Ongoing	Existing capability and capacity (Office of the Vice-Chancellor, Education and Students Portfolio)

2026 Action Plan initiatives

Leadership

National Code Standard Mapping	Focus area	Initiative

Standard 1 – Accountable leaderships and governance	Leading and resourcing	– University Leadership Team to endorse resourcing recommendations made by the Safe and Respectful Communities Steering Committee to ensure:
		  • Successful and complete delivery of initiatives in this Action Plan.
		  • Additional resources (including funding) necessary to minimise or mitigate identified risks are made available as needed (e.g. safety improvements to physical campus and accommodation spaces, etc.).
		– Safety and wellbeing initiatives (including skills uplift, cultural change, and engagement initiatives) are appropriately and perpetually funded.

Standard 1 – Accountable leaderships and governance	Leading and resourcing	– Vice-Chancellor accountable for National Code compliance (Standard 1.1) – Council to maintain governance responsibility for the Policy and the Action Plan. – ULT to provide appropriate resources to meet National Code compliance.
Standard 6 – Data, evidence and impact	Data collection	– Establish data collection system, ready data warehouse (if deemed appropriate repository) and develop PowerBI (or alternative) reporting and dashboard capability. – Implement data reporting requirement for all affiliates (as per the definition of the 'affiliates' in the National Code). – Implement data reporting requirement for partners providing internship and placement opportunities to UTS students.
Standard 6 – Data, evidence and impact	Annual reporting	– Establish an annual reporting process to provide data to Council and the Secretary of the Department of Education in line with Standard 6.12 and 6.13.
Standard 6 – Data, evidence and impact	DOE reporting and feedback	– Vice-Chancellor to provide to the Secretary every 2 years, a report on the Action Plan and its outcomes framework (standard 1.7). Where required, UTS will outline how it has complied with Standard 1 (standard 1.10). Feedback will be considered and applied in line with Standard 1.9. – Triennial review of policy, procedure, action plan and outcomes framework.

Responsible	Timeline	Resources
Implementation lead: – Vice-Chancellor – Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) – Director, Safe and Respectful Communities **Governance:** – ULT	Ongoing	Existing capability and capacity (Education and Students Portfolio)
Implementation lead: – Vice-Chancellor – Chief Operating Officer **Governance:** – ULT – UTS Council	Ongoing	Existing capability and capacity (ULT, Finance Unit)
Implementation lead: – Vice-Chancellor – Chief Operating Officer – Chief Data Officer **Governance:** – ULT – UTS Council	Ongoing	Existing capability and capacity (Data Analytics and Insights Unit)
Implementation lead: – Vice-Chancellor – Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) – University Secretary and Director, Governance Support Unit (GSU) **Governance:** – Governance Committee	Ongoing	Existing capability and capacity (SRC Team)
Implementation lead: – Vice-Chancellor – Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) – University Secretary and Director, Governance Support Unit (GSU) **Governance:** – Governance Committee	Ongoing	Existing capability and capacity (SRC Team)

2026 Action Plan initiatives

Leadership

National Code Standard Mapping	Focus area	Initiative
Standard 6 – Data, evidence and impact	Council reporting	– Report to Council every six months against the outcomes framework for the Action Plan. Must include de-identified data on incidents and any trends (standard 1.6). Reports to attend Council via Governance Committee/Audit and Risk Committee provided by the VC/DVC. Report developed by the Director in consultation with ITU and the DAIU.
Standard 6 – Data, evidence and impact	Data reporting	– Internal and external reporting requirements mapped, and reporting templates agreed.

Standard 7 – Safe student accommodation	On and beyond campus	– Staff Vetting and Conflict of Interest
		  • All accommodation staff must declare if they have been investigated for or determined to have engaged in conduct constituting GBV in similar or other positions, or through a legal process.
		  • Staff must declare any existing or previous intimate personal relationship with a Resident.
		  • Staff and residents whose substantive roles in connection with the student accommodation will undertake mandatory disclosure training.

Responsible	Timeline	Resources
Implementation lead: – Vice-Chancellor – Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) – Director, Safe and Respectful Communities – University Secretary and Director, Governance Support Unit (GSU) – Chief Operating Officer – Chief Data Officer – Chief Information Officer **Governance:** – Governance Committee	Ongoing	Existing capability and capacity (DAUI, ITU, GSU, SRC Team)
Implementation lead: – Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) – Director, Safe and Respectful Communities **Governance:** – Governance Committee	Ongoing	Existing capability and capacity (SRC Team)
Implementation lead: – Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education & Students) – Director, Student Services Unit **Governance:** – ULT – Governance Committee	Ongoing	Existing capability and capacity (i.e. UTS Housing).

Outcomes framework

Outcome	Sub-outcomes
Effective governance and a whole-of-organisation approach, prioritising safety and support, in the prevention of and response to gender-based violence.	We will strengthen policy awareness through targeted communications and engagement, ensuring students understand changes in institutional rules and penalty, and can act with clarity and accountability.
Environments are safe, and systems continuously improve to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.	We will strengthen institutional understanding of gender-based violence reporting and incidents to ensure accurate, transparent, and responsive decision-making.
Build knowledge and capability to safely and effectively prevent and respond to gender-based violence.	We will achieve high training and completion and continuous improvement in education programs, ensuring all staff and students are equipped to uphold safety, respect, and institutional delivery.

Indicators	Measures (of impact or progress)
Engagement with communication activities (e.g., emails).	Increasing engagement with communication activities indicates growing awareness and uptake of the new policy.
Clickthrough on relevant webpages.	Increasing click-through rates to relevant webpages indicate growing awareness, interest, and engagement with the new policy and related resources.
Gauge student awareness/understanding of changes (e.g., surveys, workshops).	Increasing levels of student awareness and understanding of policy changes, as measured through surveys and workshop feedback, indicate successful communication and uptake of the new approach.
Number of complaints reported.	Change in number and proportion of complaints reported.
Number of disclosures reported.	Change in number and proportion of disclosures reported.
Ratio of anonymous / identified reports.	Change in the proportion of anonymous to identified reports over time. A decreasing ratio may indicate growing confidence/trust.
Gender breakdown; Percentage of reports from at-risk communities (i.e., LGBTQIA+, First Nations, those with disabilities).	Change in proportion from at-risk communities, relative to their representation within the broader student/staff populations
Training completion rate for all staff and students.	An increasing training completion rate across staff and students indicates improved engagement and institutional prioritisation of gender-based violence prevention.
Training completion rate for new staff, and commencing students (ongoing).	Consistently high completion rates among new staff and commencing students indicate effective onboarding processes and sustained institutional commitment to prevention training.
Track average scores on knowledge questions at the end of training.	An increase or maintenance of high average knowledge scores over time indicates improved understanding and retention of key concepts covered in training.
Average number of days for staff / students to complete.	Decreasing average completion time suggests stronger engagement with training and clearer communication of its importance.

Outcomes framework

Outcome	Sub-outcomes
Responses and support services are safe and person-centred.	We will embed integrated support across relevant services at UTS, enabling staff and students have access to care that fosters satisfaction, trust, and ongoing wellbeing.
Gender-based violence responses are safe and timely.	We will monitor and strengthen the timeliness and adequacy of institutional responses to gender-based violence, ensuring all cases are managed with consistency and care.
Use evidence to approach, measure change and contribute to the national evidence-base.	We will develop a culture of safety and respect by regularly assessing perceptions, values, and trust, and using these insights to inform inclusive practices and response service delivery.
Gender-based violence responses are safe and timely.	We will monitor and strengthen the timeliness and adequacy of institutional responses to gender-based violence, ensuring all cases are managed with consistency and care.

Indicators	Measures (of impact or progress)
Satisfaction with relevant UTS services.	Overall, how satisfied were you with the service you received from <UTS Service>?
Percentage of staff / students who accessed relevant UTS services.	An increasing proportion of staff and students accessing relevant UTS services indicates improved awareness, accessibility and trust in available support pathways.
Percentage of staff / students who were given referrals to relevant UTS services.	Comparison between number of referrals provided and number of staff and students who subsequently accessed services indicates effectiveness of referral pathways and follow-through support.
Percentage of cases not resolved in 45 days.	Reduced percentage of cases unresolved after 45 days reflects greater efficiency, accountability, and responsiveness in case management.
Average response time (in days).	Shorter average response times demonstrate increased institutional capacity to act promptly and supportively following reports.
Key reasons for cases over 45 days.	Listed reasons for delays (list here), and open-text responses.
Feelings of safety on campus, and awareness of relevant UTS safety services.	Brief Student Safety Survey (for students); equivalent version developed for staff.
Long-term monitoring of changes in values, attitudes, and beliefs.	To be developed post-implementation.
Percentage of staff / students accessing relevant services.	Higher engagement with support services reflects a more open and supportive culture where seeking help is understood and encouraged.
Percentage of cases not resolved in 45 days.	Reduced percentage of cases unresolved after 45 days reflects greater efficiency, accountability, and responsiveness in case management.
Average response time (in days).	Shorter average response times demonstrate increased institutional capacity to act promptly and supportively following reports.
Key reasons for cases over 45 days.	Listed reasons for delays (list here), and open-text responses.

Outcomes framework

Outcome	Sub-outcomes
Use evidence to approach, measure change and contribute to the national evidence-base.	We will develop a culture of safety and respect by regularly assessing perceptions, values, and trust, and using these insights to inform inclusive practices and response service delivery.
Student accommodation is safe for all students and staff.	We will create safe, respectful, and well-supported residential environments by ensuring that all university-wide gender-based violence initiatives are localised and sustained within UTS Housing.

Indicators	Measures (of impact or progress)
Feelings of safety on campus, and awareness of relevant UTS safety services.	Brief Student Safety Survey (for students); equivalent version developed for staff.
Long-term monitoring of changes in values, attitudes, and beliefs.	To be developed post-implementation.
	Higher engagement with support services reflects a more open and supportive culture where seeking help is understood and encouraged.
Percentage of risk assessment & report plans not conducted within 48 hours.	A decreasing proportion of risk assessments and report plans not completed within 48 hours indicates improved responsiveness and adherence to safety protocols in student Housing.
Key reasons for delays in risk assessment & report plans not developed in 48 hours.	Tracking and categorising the key reasons for delays enables identification of systemic barriers and informs strategies to improve timely completion of risk assessments and report plans in student Housing.
	Differences in indicators between Housing residents and the broader student population are monitored over time to identify emerging trends or periods of heightened risk.

Appendix 1 – About UTS

UTS has a long-term commitment to engaging with students and staff on matters related to equity, inclusion and respect.

As Australia's #1 young university, we thrive in the heart of vibrant central Sydney. At UTS, we're not just a university we're a community, and our community is made up of staff and students committed to academic endeavour.

At a glance:

– The UTS City campus encompasses a variety of precincts and buildings catering to teaching, learning, research, social and administrative activities. Three of the City campus's precincts – Haymarket, Broadway and Blackfriars – are located at the southern gateway to Sydney's cosmopolitan central business district (CBD) and surrounded by local attractions. The newest precincts are situated within the elite sporting zone at Moore Park and on an industrial park at Botany.

– UTS prides itself on its porous campus – we are open to the communities that surround us and we welcome visitors. Our Campus Policy articulates how we maintain a safe and well-functioning campus and outline our requirements for:

- the appropriate use of, and access to, public and restricted spaces;
- the distribution of material and advertising;
- the organisation of demonstrations;
- the organisation of public and private events and activities; and
- the behavioural expectations of all campus users, including visitors.

– UTS has a community of around 48,000 coursework students, which includes almost 14,000 international students from more than 40 countries around the world.

– UTS has a thriving community of more than 2,000 higher degree research students.

– We offer more than 400 courses and some 2,000 subjects.

– Our alumni community is more 300,000 strong (not including some graduates from antecedent institutions).

– We have around 4,000 full-time equivalent staff (including casual staff).

– The University's on-campus accommodation – Yura Mudang – provides housing to 720 students.

– Our affiliated organisations are:

- UTS College (our pathways provider) has over 4,200 students destined to undertake degrees at UTS; and
- ActivateUTS (our student guild) is a student led organisation that supports more than 180 clubs and societies, and owns and operates a range of campus facilities and retail outlets.

– The University's governing body is UTS Council. Our nine Council committees are focused skills-based bodies with the necessary technical expertise to deal with matters efficiently and effectively, and promote discussion of the relevant strategic issues at Council meetings.

– The University Leadership Team is led by the Vice-Chancellor and President.

Appendix 2 – About the development of this plan

UTS began work on its response to the Department of Education's *Action Plan Addressing Gender-based Violence in Higher Education*, the precursor to the National Code, in early-2024. That work was formalised with the establishment of the Safe and Respectful Communities (SaRC) Project in 2025.

Complementing the work of the long-standing Respect. Now.Always Steering Committee (RNA SteerCo), the work of the SaRC Project has focused on the University's readiness for, and compliance with, the National Code.

Seven workstreams were established and have been advancing our efforts towards key deliverables aligned to the National Code's seven (7) standards including (but not limited to):

1. **New and updated governance instruments** – new policy and procedure, prevention and response action plan and outcomes framework, amendments to existing instruments such as UTS Student Rules, etc.;

2. **An accessible and person-centred reporting portal** – a single reporting portal to capture, record and support the management of all GBV disclosures and reports (hereafter complaints);

3. **Capability and capacity** – an appropriately resourced, structured and empowered team to drive a whole-of-institution approach to preventing, and where necessary responding to, gender-based violence; and

4. **Training, engagement and community capability uplift** – a prevention-led training approach suited to diverse cohorts within the UTS community (i.e. staff, supervisors, students, contractors, and the broader community).

Governance Instruments

The code requires all providers to have a policy on preventing and responding to gender-based violence (standard 2.3). The UTS Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Policy [hyperlink] addresses this requirement and together with the Gender-based Violence Response Procedure [hyperlink], which were endorsed by UTS Council in November 2025, provide a governance and response framework for UTS that outlines responsibilities and actions for the seven standards.

Reporting Portal and Response Management

The Gender-based Violence Response Procedure [hyperlink] articulate the University's approach to managing and responding to disclosures and reports of GBV. In 2025, a new reporting portal – complete with in-built response management workflows – was implemented. While a person-centred approach was taken to its front-end design, care has been taken to ensure we capture the data necessary to support a trauma-informed approach to managing each report to resolution and still comply with the National Code.

Capability and Capacity

The newly created Director, Safe and Respectful Communities is a keystone position – not only does the position lead the team dedicated to the proactive management of the Action Plan, it evidences to the University's commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all members of the UTS community.

In building the Safe and Respectful Communities Unit (SRCU), which is situated in the Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion (CSJI), UTS is centralising existing capacity and capability as appropriate, as well as adding additional resource where necessary. For instance, three existing Safety Caseworkers will join the Director in the SRCU, along with those responsible for leading the University's prevention activities, while a further five positions have been created in various teams dedicated to supporting the response process, including two internal investigators.

Capacity will be closely monitored throughout 2026 with additional resources added as required.

Appendix 2 – About the development of this plan

Community education and engagement

We believe everyone has the right to live, study and work safely. UTS is proud to be an active member of the national Respect.Now.Always. initiative, dedicated to a whole-of-institution approach to preventing gender-based violence, which include translation action into policy, strategy, programming, and processes at an institutional level.

A recognised sector leading program, the RNA Program at UTS has been guided by a cross-sectional working group, bringing together people with context- and content-specific expertise. UTS has delivered across several key action areas since the establishment of RNA – including capacity-building, engagement activities, and policy change. With a new home in the SRCU, the RNA Program Team will refresh and lead the University's prevention initiatives as articulated in this Action Plan.

The Journey to 2026 – the UTS SaRC Project

While much of the work of the SaRC Project was to ensure the University's compliance with the National Code by 1 January 2026, the team, led by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education and Students, recognised that compliance is just the first of many milestones on the journey to a future free of GBV.

Importantly, key project deliverables were implemented well before end-2025 to ensure the appropriate scaffolding for successful implementation was in place. For instance, in October 2025, the Concerning Behaviour Assessment and Intervention Team (CBAIT) was replaced by Community Assessment and Response Evaluation (CARE), and the Concerning Behaviour Intervention Policy was updated. Smaller, more agile and responsive, CARE is chaired by the Director, Safe and Respectful Communities, who ensures matters (such as, but not limited to, GBV) are considered by the team within 24 (business) hours.

Project Leadership

The SaRC Sponsors Committee was the Project's key decision making body. Responsible for the project's strategic oversight, budget and outcomes delivery, the Sponsors Committee ensured project activities aligned with other university priorities through active engagement with community stakeholder at all levels.

The SaRC Working Group reported to the Sponsors Committee and consisted of the leads of all seven workstreams as well as subject matter experts from areas such as the Governance Support Unit, UTS Security, the Office of General Counsel, People and Culture, Marketing and Communication, CSJI and the Students Portfolio.

Operating in parallel, the seven workstreams were:

1. Technology
2. Holistic Complaints and Misconducts Reporting
3. Governance Alignment (Policies, Procedures and Student Rules)
4. Operating Model to Support UTS Safe and Respectful Communities Approach
5. Education and Training
6. Communication
7. Student Housing

The work of all seven streams aligned with specific standards to ensure the scope of the project encompassed the breadth the National Code.
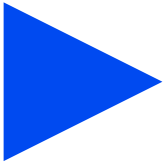
Informed decision making

A number of tools have informed the decisions of the Sponsors Committee including:

– The National Code and its seven standards.

– The Community Voice Project and the Theory of Change research project, undertaken and published by the Respect.Now.Always. (RNA)Team in 2023.

– The Angela Hill External Reviews of UTS Sexual Harm Response (2023) and Student Rules (2024).

– Feedback and input from staff, students and external subject matter experts provided to the RNA Steering Committee and through trauma-informed training, and workshops (including a workshop on 26 September 2025 facilitated by an external expert).

– Feedback provided during the consultation process from staff, students and subject matter experts (refer below) as part of an open consultation process (refer section 1.3 of this document).

– Issues and solutions identified during a Process and Training Needs Analysis workshop on 14 October 2025 and from discussions with external legal counsel on the student misconduct rules on 17 October 2025.

– Feedback from the Student Council Liaison Group (28 October), a special meeting of the Teaching and Learning Committee and the RNA Steering Committee (both on 30 October 2025)

Extensive consultation

The consultation processes for the development of the policy, procedure and consequential change were extensive. In addition to consultation with various committees (e.g. RNA Steering Committee), staff, students and subject matter experts across UTS (and its affiliates) were invited to participate in ideation sessions and provide feedback (including feedback that informed decisions as mentioned above) as we developed assets (such as governance instruments, process maps, etc.).

Participants ranged from members of the UTS Senior Leadership Group (e.g. University Secretary, University Librarian, Director, Student Services Unit, Director, Risk, Director, Graduate Research School, Director, Strategy and Operations, Indigenous, Learning and Engagement, etc.) to business area leads (e.g. Head of Security and Emergency Management, Head of Business Operations Technology, Head of Communication, Deputy Director, Corporate Governance, RNA Program Manager, Student Complaints, Manager, Student Misconduct and Appeals, etc.), representatives from our affiliates UTS College and ActivateUTS (our student guild) and, of course, student representatives (elected representatives and more broadly).

Investing in a GBV-free future

In 2025, UTS has committed more than $320K to the SaRC Project (excludes ongoing cost of new positions) and anticipates investing a further $260K in project costs in 2026 (excludes costs associated with most initiatives articulated in this Action Plan), and expects it will be necessary to invest approx. $200K year-on-year in program monies to maintain compliance with the National Code, with related salary costs between $1.5m and $1.8m year-on-year for those positions dedicated to delivering the 2027-2030 UTS GBV Prevention and Response Action Plan.

Everyone deserves to feel safe, respected and valued, free to learn, work and thrive as their fullest selves. This Action Plan reflects our shared responsibility in building a community where safety, respect and inclusion are lived realities.

Safe and Respectful Communities