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University of East London Sexual Misconduct Annual Report 2024-25

This report summarises the University of East London's activity during 2024/25 to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct, harassment and domestic abuse. It highlights progress in support, reporting, training, governance and regulatory compliance, and demonstrates the University's continued commitment to creating a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for all students.

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2024-25 Sexual Misconduct Annual Report

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Executive Summary

Submitted to the Board of Governors in December 2025, the 2024/25 Sexual Misconduct Annual Report summarises the University's work to prevent and respond to sexual harassment and misconduct, highlighting progress in prevention, reporting, support, training and case management. It outlines preparations for the new OfS regulatory requirements, emphasises the importance of accessible reporting and trauma-informed support, and showcases sector-leading practice through the Emily Test Charter pilot and Culture Shift Award nominations.

Context

Where episodes of harassment, hate crime, or sexual violence occur, the University has a duty to act and respond effectively. In line with our overall student support services framework, our work is targeted across the themes of promotion and prevention, identification, intervention, postvention and reflection.

Since 2019 UEL has invested in sector leading approaches to tackling sexual misconduct and harassment within our community as an early adopter of Culture Shift's reporting system 'report and support'. We launched training for counsellors to be Sexual Violence Liaison Officers (SVLO) in the wellbeing service and expanded this to staff within Student Conduct and Residential Life and were one of the first universities in England to employ a full time Independent Sexual and Domestic Violence Advisor (ISDVA) in 2021.

We work in partnership with our students' union and with local safeguarding teams in Newham and have continued to evolve what we do, taking a trauma informed approach. Student leaders are trained by the ISDVA, Residential Life (accommodation) and Student Conduct teams in being an active bystander, receiving disclosures, and reporting and support processes within the university. This in person training is also run throughout the year to key frontline staff as an addition to our mandatory staff e-training.

University wide training on sexual misconduct and content has been in place since 2023. The launch of a separate sexual misconduct policy in September 2021 enabled an improved trauma informed approach to ensuring that investigators, panel members, reporting and responding parties all had appropriate support.

Where we are now: We employ two full-time ISDVA staff within the wellbeing team, we have 5 SVLO trained staff in student conduct and residential life, having increased this number in 2024/25. These staff work with a preventative and restorative approach. In the last year we have really started to see the impact of this planned culture change with many more students feeling confident to report unacceptable behaviours.

UEL's Compliance with OfS E6 Regulations

The Sexual Misconduct and Harassment Advisory Group (SMHAG) was established to advise the University Executive Board on policies, actions, and activities that promote best practice and ensure regulatory compliance in addressing sexual misconduct and harassment. The SMHAG includes representatives from key university departments, including Student Services, People and Culture, Academic Staff, Legal and Compliance, and the Students' Union. During 2024/2025, the Group met three times to maintain a proactive and coordinated approach to develop the plan to comply with E6 regulations.

To ensure a whole university approach to gaining full compliance the OfS Condition of Registration E6 we developed a comprehensive action plan that outlined both mandatory and suggested actions, timelines, and responsible teams and owners. To date all mandatory actions have been completed.

The University had 141 actions aligned to the E6 regulations, with a majority needing to be completed prior to the 1st of August. Student Services had 85 of these actions, with all 82 actions required to be completed by the 1st of August being delivered on time. This included actions such as launching the new single comprehensive source of information on our website in July 2025. The remaining three actions have a clear timescale; for example, the action relating to mandatory training for students will not be complete until we have delivered this to the new cohort in the 25/26 academic year. This project is on track for success.

The University is now in the process of ongoing monitoring of actions, gathering data and keeping audit trails of activity relating to the regulation.

The University's Health and Wellbeing Committee now has the lead responsibility for overseeing this area and ensuring ongoing compliance with the OfS condition.

Reporting Trends and Cases Over Time

We have aimed to increase the number of reports (staff and students) as a whole, due to sector awareness of under reporting, and anecdotal feedback from the Students Union that students at UEL were nervous about reporting incidents. In 2018/19 there were 22 reports, 11 of which were anonymous, representing 50% of cases. In 2024/25 we received 235 reports through our 'report and support' process, where 92 were anonymous, representing 39% of cases. A number of additional cases are referred through police, the NHS or direct to our specialist services. Given our student numbers, we believe there is still significant underreporting, particularly for incidents off campus where students may feel this is not for the University to be involved in. Our focus continues to be encouraging disclosure so that appropriate support can be provided. Each case is managed through and beyond resolution with longer term ongoing support and follow-up for the remainer of the student's time at UEL; we recognise the life-changing aspects of incidents on survivors.

Governance

The Sexual Misconduct and Harassment Advisory Group has had responsibility for maintaining executive and senior management awareness and oversight of sexual violence and harassment issues throughout 2024/2025. Within Student Services we also have a sexual misconduct and harassment working group, chaired by the Associate Director of Student Services (Strategic Projects). This group includes representatives from key services such as residential life, wellbeing, ISDVA, student conduct, projects and communications, and meets monthly to ensure that all projects related to this work are joined up and meeting the overall university objectives.

Risk Assessment

Student Services continues to conduct risk assessments as required for incidences or reports where the student is the responding party. In 2024/25 36 cases were brought to this group. The Risk Assessment Group comprises of senior leaders within the Student Services Directorate who all have experience and skills (including safeguarding,

clinical, regulatory) to ensure risk assessments consider the risk to the UEL Community, the reporting party and the responding party themselves.

Student Discipline Procedure

The Student Conduct Team leads the process for student discipline. Changes to processes in 2024/25 based on OIA recommendations and OFS requirements were as follows.

Non-Academic Misconduct Policy:

- Minor revisions made to enhance clarity and ensure a more compassionate and supportive approach within the procedure.
- More focus on early Intervention / Restorative action
- Local level processes incorporated into the policy for transparency
- Penalty tariff for Category 1 and Category 2 added
- Simplified appeals process for Category 1 and clarified lead officer
- Completion of Procedures (CoP) stage added
- Added a clause emphasising the importance of early disclosure of any support needs by the student and outlining the University's commitment to providing reasonable adjustments to ensure fair and equitable participation in the academic misconduct process

Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy:

- Revisions made to the Risk Assessment process to improve clarity and ensure a more transparent and consistent approach
- Added - Chair will remind the student(s) that the proceedings are an internal University process and that the outcome should not be regarded as a legal ruling. This addition supports compliance with OfS E6 conditions
- Tariff of Penalty Outcomes Penalty tariff structure has been added for consistency and transparency
- Responding students to provide consent to share the outcome with the reporting party, with support offered to help them understand the implications. This addition supports compliance with OfS E6 conditions
- Definitions – Harassment and Sexual Harassment added - This addition supports compliance with OfS E6 conditions

Information, Disclosing and Reporting

In 2024/25 Student Services continued to invest in keeping our community safe by maintaining support available for students who disclose sexual misconduct and harassment via our ISDVA service, SVLO trained staff, and ensuring the service achieved all actions relating to the OFS condition of registration.

Until very recently there has not been national benchmarking data available about rates of experiencing sexual misconduct, or experiences of reporting sexual misconduct within Higher Education. In 2024 the Office for Students piloted a survey with a number of HEI's and in 2025 launched this survey alongside the NSS. Response

rates for this survey in 2025 were very low, with 12.1% of the NSS population (final year undergraduates) responding. The full data set is public and available via Sexual misconduct survey 2025 data - Office for Students.

UEL is working with sector groups on the implications of the survey, particularly regarding underreporting, through our involvement with sector groups including AMOSSHE (Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education) and others. The new OfS Condition of Registration is in part a sector response to long standing concern about this area, and our work ensuring compliance and beyond with the Condition should also assist with both prevention and reporting.

For UEL, less than 10% of the NSS population responded to the survey. Whilst this data is limited given the small number of respondents and as no further details are provided, we are triangulating where we can with our casework and reported experiences and will utilise the national data and any further national work to inform our approach.

We continue to focus on raising awareness of reporting processes and support options, taking into account the demographics, cultural backgrounds and expectations of out student body, which has become more international and more postgraduate over time. For example, in 2025, Report and Support posters were permanently placed on the back of toilet doors across the majority of staff and student toilet facilities in Docklands, Stratford and USS campus, and posters were provided to The Source to increase awareness of reporting options to students and staff.

Benchmarking data is available for some universities who have started to publish data more publicly around reporting. Our Report and Support data suggests that in the period 2018-2024 we had slightly less reports than some universities. However, in 2024/25 we were more in line with their average reporting figures.

This year data evaluation has been improved to include a new ISDVA dashboard within Power BI for the practitioners and Head of Service to identify trends. Additionally, a new organisational dashboard has been produced to include reports across services (Wellbeing, ISDVA, Conduct) to more accurately report on total number of unique students who have reported, accessed support, or initiated the sexual misconduct policy.

Training and Workshops

GoodCourse was an external provider that developed mobile-first micro-learning built to reach and engage university students. We piloted this course in 2022 and had three years of full cohort roll out. In April 2025 we were notified that the provider was going to cease trading, despite UEL and many other universities planning to use this approach for their all-student mandatory training to meet the OFS conditions. The engagement with Good Course was consistently high, and due to UEL previously using other sector leading providers of consent training with very low uptake (below 5%) we decided to build our own training that could be sent to a student's phone, with a nudge communications strategy. We identified that this approach was likely to be the most impactful in terms of engagement after speaking to students in focus groups.

A rapid build approach was utilised, with student participation and specialist expertise from the ISDVA and Conduct team in writing the content. The first pilot of the course was sent via email in July 2025 to a test group. We

sought student feedback on the content to ensure changes could be made ahead of the September cohort. We have built an opt out option, with the ISDVA team leading on communications to these students, so all students, including survivors, are supported to complete the course or have equivalent training provided.

Prior to Good Course ceasing operations, The Sexual Harassment & Misconduct course was sent to 11,873 learners in 2024/25, with a course completion rate of 51% and 89 Opt-outs. We will aim for a majority of students to complete our replacement mandatory course in 25/26. Early indications are that we will meet or exceed this level (through the three entry points). We will continue to refine the training based on feedback, engagement, student union input and ongoing learning and reflection from our cases.

Student Workshops

Students in positions of responsibility: In 2024/25 we delivered workshops for students in positions of responsibility, including residential life scholars, sports leaders and SU society leaders. We had 144 signups, with 73 actual attendees. This is similar to the previous year, and we will continue to aim to increase the attendance rates in 2025/26. Those who don't attend initially are followed up. Students who attend continue to provide very positive feedback on the content of the training, the delivery mode, and their confidence in being an active bystander, and signposting peers to appropriate reporting pathways and support.

Other training opportunities: throughout the year additional workshops, briefing events and opportunities to discuss key themes are arranged for students, both open / drop-in, and as part of specific courses or development programmes, for example induction events for those living in Halls. We are currently evaluating these alongside our new online training, to identify how we can reach more students. We recognise that training is only a part of the approach. Follow-up with participants on impacts on their experiences, and wider engagement in other settings (for example, briefings to meetings of different student societies, engagement with our course representatives, are planned for 2025/26.

Staff Training

The 2024/25 academic year was the third academic year that the ISDVA team and Residential Life welfare team jointly facilitated the 'How to manage student disclosures of abuse and harassment' an online staff training. The team offered 4 workshops across the year. Sign-ups were slightly higher than the previous year, and attendance increased slightly to 85 staff members attending. Feedback for this course is consistently positive from staff who attend.

The Student Conduct Team delivers a general Student Conduct process training, as well as a Student Disciplinary Chair and Panel Training. In 2024/25 three sessions of the general student conduct process were held with a total of 88 attendees, two sessions of the chair and panel training were held, with a total of 15 attendees. For the 2025/26 academic year the team will also promote this training via the Learning and Development team calendar which we hope may increase engagement. Other staff training is detailed in the Staff section below.

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Student Disclosures and Reports 2024/25

Reports via the ISDVA service

The ISDVA service received a total of 132 referrals in 2024/25, an increase of 27% on the year before, with a significant increase coming from Report and Support. Over time we can also see an increase in referrals from academic staff which shows knowledge of the service and confidence in supporting students to access it. The majority (63%) of incidents occurred off campus, in line with previous years.

Table 1. ISDVA Referrals by Staff Referral Source (2022/23–2024/25)

Referral source	Number of ISDVA referrals 2022/2023	Number of referrals 2023/24	2024/2025
Academic staff	9	16	19
Professional Service staff	70	88	113
Total	79	104	**132**

Note: Referral figures represent referrals to the ISDVA service received through staff referral pathways.

The majority of incidents (75) involved alleged perpetrators with no connection to the university. In 44 cases the alleged perpetrator were also students, and in two cases were staff. Not all students share this information and therefore these numbers do not equate to total referrals.

Reason for referral: The leading reason for referrals was domestic abuse, similarly to previous years. This demonstrates the importance of our team having specialist skills relating to domestic violence as well as sexual violence and harassment and is one of the reasons we have applied for the EmilyTest Charter which focuses on this area.

Report & Support disclosures

Report and Support is the University's secure online platform that can be used by students, staff and members of the public/visitors to report incidences of inappropriate behaviour that occurred to themselves, or that they witnessed, by members of the University of East London community. Reports can also be made on behalf of someone. Examples of inappropriate behaviour that can be reported using this platform include but are not limited to bullying; harassment; discrimination; sexual assault and sexual harassment. The report can either be submitted 'anonymously' or with 'contact details.' If a report is submitted with contact details, both relevant support staff and the team that will process the report will contact the reporting individual.

Once a report is received, it is triaged to the appropriate team who will action the report, based on who it is that is reporting, who it is they are reporting against and what type of incident they are reporting. The Student Conduct Team process any report that is made where the reported individual is a student at the University of East London, which is the majority of all reports made. The Complaints and Appeals Team process reports made by a student

against a staff member. People and Culture process any report made by a staff member against a staff member, and any sexual misconduct reports made by a student against a staff member.

In addition to this, support services such as the Wellbeing and Independent Sexual and Domestic Violence Advisory Team will support any student who has made a report against a visitor (non-staff/non-student), or support reporting students alongside the appropriate team/s who are processing their report. The Wellbeing Team offer support to responding parties for the duration of the process.

It is important to note that reporting parties can opt out of providing demographic data and therefore, accurate representation can only be supplied of individuals who chose to disclose this.

In summary we see:

- more reports from students from an Asian background, particularly Indian. This reflects our student population
- reports from students from a Black or mixed background, and from the LGBTQIA+ community appear to be under-represented and this is an area we are focusing on.

Reports where the responding party was a student

In 2024/25 a total of 235 reports were made, of which 166 were made by students, and 155 were made against students. There has been not only an overall increase in reporting, but clear increases in relation to bullying, harassment and sexual harassment this year. We believe that this is not reflective of an increase in incidents, but an increased awareness of the reporting process through targeted campaigns. In February 2025 we ran a specific sexual harassment/misconduct R&S campaign with new materials including posters and plasma screens, and we also ensured all new students in January and May cohorts were sent the Good Course training module.

Student reports where the alleged perpetrator was a student

Table 2. Student Reports by Incident Type and Academic Year

Incident Type	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024/25
Bullying	6	19	31	35	82
Discrimination	>5	8	11	20	31
Harassment	>5	21	45	47	90
Hate Crime	>5	5	16	22	20
Relationship Abuse	0	>5	>5	>5	8
Sexual Assault	>5	9	5	10	12
Sexual Harassment	>5	7	8	8	23
Stalking	>5	9	9	17	26
Spiking	0	0	0	7	>5
Total	12	41	62	**94**	**155**

Note: The data in this table provides a breakdown of the types of allegations recorded against responding students. As the categories are broad, a reportee may include multiple allegations. Consequently, more than one allegation type may be recorded against an individual responding student. The figures therefore represent the number of allegations recorded by type and should not be interpreted as the total number of reports received or the number of individual responding students involved.

Sexual Misconduct Cases considered in line with the Student Misconduct Procedures and Outcomes

The overall number of breaches reported under the Sexual Violence and Misconduct policy in 2024/25 was ten, a slight increase on the previous year where eight breaches were reported.

Table 3. Subcategories of misconduct breaches 2024/25 and outcomes.

	Sexual Harassment	Sexual Assault	Sexual Misconduct	Stalking	Domestic Violence
2024/2025	5	>5	>5	>5	>5

Note: A single incident may involve multiple students and, as a result, may generate more than one case outcome

Outcomes - Cases were considered individually, with some investigations completed and others remaining ongoing or on hold due to external factors, including ongoing police investigations a

Outcomes in sexual harassment cases included First Warnings, Student Conduct Team Accountability Agreements and cases where there was insufficient evidence to substantiate the allegations. Some allegations were also withdrawn.

In certain cases, formal disciplinary action was not pursued following the reporting student's decision not to proceed.

Throughout the process, the University continued to prioritise safeguarding, appropriate risk management and fair procedures, recognising the importance of supporting all students involved.

Key Initiatives delivered in 2024/25

Police Liaison Officer

Despite successful appointment of a police liaison officer in 2024, the role was removed by London Metropolitan Police force in 2025 due to their changes in priority for community policing. For the short period the post was filled we noticed significant improvement in information sharing across organisations, improving prompt interventions to keep students safe, and increasing student confidence in reporting to statutory services. We have noticed that despite a willingness from the local safer neighbourhood team to work collaboratively, where we have incidents that occur outside the borough we have challenges with communication from the police force even around very serious cases. We continue to work with local teams to see whether and how this role can be relaunched.

Other Initiatives not already included in this report:

- 16 Days of Activism (November-December 2024)
- Denim Day (April 2025)
- Creation of a Student Services Sexual Misconduct and harassment working group
- Development of our own training module for students around consent and active bystander
- Involvement in the Emily Test English Charter Pilot
- New trauma informed training and guidance for investigators, panel members and chairs

Conclusion

During 2024/25, the university continued to strengthen its approach to preventing and responding to sexual misconduct, harassment and domestic abuse through enhanced support, training, reporting mechanisms and governance. The University successfully delivered all mandatory Student Services actions required under the OfS Condition of Registration E6 and has established robust arrangements to support ongoing compliance. Reporting and disclosure rates increased across several areas, reflecting growing awareness of reporting routes and confidence in accessing support. Alongside regulatory compliance, key developments included the expansion of trauma-informed practice, increased specialist support capacity, the development of a new student training programme, and participation in the EmilyTest Charter Pilot.

In 2025/26, the University will focus on embedding the new OfS requirements, evaluating the impact of its prevention and training activities, improving data and insight, and continuing to foster a safe, respectful and inclusive environment where students feel confident to seek support and report concerns.

Appendix A: Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym	Definition
AMOSSHE	Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education
CoP	Completion of Procedures
E6	Office for Students Condition of Registration E6 (Harassment and Sexual Misconduct)
HEI	Higher Education Institution
ISDVA	Independent Sexual and Domestic Violence Adviser
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual and Other Identities
NSS	National Student Survey
OfS	Office for Students
OIA	Office of the Independent Adjudicator
R&S	Report and Support
SCT	Student Conduct Team
SMHAG	Sexual Misconduct and Harassment Advisory Group
SU	Students' Union
SVLO	Sexual Violence Liaison Officer
UEB	University Executive Board
UEL	University of East London
USS	University Square Stratford