

# **Sexual Harassment in Experiential Learning: A Price Students Shouldn't Have to Pay**

The First National  
Research-to-Action Project on  
Sexual Harassment in Experiential  
Learning at Post-secondary  
Institutions in Canada



**COURAGETOACT.CA**  
#IHaveTheCourageToAct

# Land Acknowledgement

This work is taking place on and across the traditional territories of many Indigenous nations. We recognize that gender-based violence is one form of violence caused by colonization that is still used today to marginalize and dispossess Indigenous Peoples from their lands and waters. We must centre this truth in our work to address gender-based violence on campuses and in our communities. We commit to continuing to learn and take an anti-colonial inclusive approach in all our work. One way we are honouring this responsibility is by actively incorporating the [Calls for Justice within Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#).

## About Possibility Seeds

[Courage to Act](#) is a national initiative to address and prevent gender-based violence at Canadian post-secondary institutions. It is led by *Possibility Seeds*, a social change consultancy dedicated to gender justice, equity, and inclusion. We believe safe, equitable workplaces, organizations and institutions are possible. Learn more about our work at [www.possibilityseeds.ca](http://www.possibilityseeds.ca).

We hope this document will be a valuable resource to those seeking to address and prevent campus gender-based violence. As this is an evolving document, it may not capture the full complexity of the subject matter. The information provided does not constitute legal advice, and is not intended to be prescriptive. It should be considered a supplement to existing expertise, experience, and credentials; not a replacement for them.

We encourage readers to seek out training, education, and professional development opportunities in relevant areas to enhance their knowledge and sustained engagement with this work.

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## Introduction

In 2014, news broke that Jian Ghomeshi, Canadian broadcaster and former host of the popular radio show "Q" on CBC (the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation), was facing numerous reports of sexual harassment and assault, which ultimately led to his termination from CBC.

One media story stood out to us at *Possibility Seeds*. It was about journalism schools across the country reassessing their internship placements at "Q." Media reports following the 2014 news uncovered that some post-secondary institutions (PSIs) had been cautioning students and discouraging them from participating in internships with the radio show as far back as 2008. One PSI had even stopped allowing these internships (News Staff, 2014; CBC News, 2015). All of this revealed significant gaps in institutional policies and practices to address sexual harassment and/or violence in experiential learning (EL) settings and prevent further harm.

The story sparked broader national conversations about sexual violence, including sexual harassment in the workplace and sexual violence on post-secondary campuses. It also served as a catalyst for other students to publicly share their experiences of sexual harassment and violence in EL opportunities.

In 2014, a former intern courageously shared her story of being sexually harassed while working for an MP on Parliament Hill. It was an experience she chose to share to name the culture of sexual harassment on Parliament Hill, but that she only felt comfortable coming forward with nearly a decade later in the wake of the Ghomeshi case (Iverson, 2014). In 2018, Laurie Bissonnette, a former social work intern shared her experience of sexual harassment to shed light on the issue and how it manifests for students (particularly female students) in mandatory, unpaid internships (Enos, 2018). And most recently, in 2022, medical resident Sophia Duong publicly discussed her experience of being subjected to sexual misconduct, the failures of her university and the hospital to investigate her complaint, and her current experience being sued for defamation by the supervisor who she filed her complaint against (Doolittle, 2022).

These are the profoundly impactful stories that drove *Possibility Seeds* to undertake a comprehensive exploration of the issue of sexual harassment in EL. Our Sexual Harassment in Experiential Learning Research-to-Action Project is the first national study dedicated to this pressing matter. It was launched out of the recognition of substantial gaps

in existing research and a recognized need for support, resources and tools to address this prevalent but often hidden issue.

In the first phase of our project, we focused on research to help us better understand the issue and identify needs and promising practices. We ran two national, bilingual surveys, conducted interviews and led focus group discussions. We also held consultations to gain a holistic understanding of the diverse perspectives, needs and concerns held by individuals affected by this issue. The insights we gathered were both heartbreaking and instructive. They gave us a deep understanding of the challenges at hand, as well as a wealth of valuable information on actionable measures to enhance safety for students in EL environments.

## About This Report

This report shares findings from the Sexual Harassment in Experiential Learning Research-to-Action Project, including:

- two national surveys: one of students, staff, and faculty; and one of employers and EL providers;
- a case study conducted at a Canadian PSI; and
- environmental scans of the legislative and policy landscape.

It also offers promising practices and recommendations for PSIs; EL providers; and government bodies at the provincial, territorial and federal levels.

Part one of this report introduces the issue of sexual harassment in EL and the urgent need to address it. This part also includes an overview of how *Possibility Seeds'* Research-to-Action Project has taken up this work, including who we've engaged with and learned from, our project timeline and milestones, and the tools and resources we've developed.

Part two provides a summary of the key insights gleaned through our research, consultations and conversations with stakeholders (including students, staff, faculty, EL providers and organizations across the country). In this part, we discuss the prevalence of sexual harassment in EL, what it can look like and the significant impacts it has. Additionally, we discuss key gaps and challenges identified in our work. This discussion is organized into three categories: barriers to disclosing and reporting sexual harassment in



EL settings; lack of institutional responsibility and accountability and harmful institutional responses; and prioritization of EL opportunities over student safety and wellbeing.

In part three, we offer key recommendations to address sexual harassment in EL. Addressing this issue demands an active commitment and leadership efforts from all stakeholders, including PSIs, EL providers, industries, professional and regulatory bodies, and government bodies. The recommendations are tailored and organized to speak to each of these audiences, acknowledging their distinct roles and responsibilities.

In part four, we highlight areas where further work or attention is needed. Acknowledging that this work is merely beginning, we identify where additional research and targeted exploration is still required. There are also a number of ideas for potential tools and resources suggested by students, staff and faculty. These areas are highlighted in the hopes that they will be taken up by PSIs, governments, EL providers and organizations as we continue to pursue safe and harassment-free EL opportunities for students.

This report also includes five appendices that detail the methodologies and findings for each component of the research we conducted.

- [Appendix A](#) details the outcomes of our literature review on the issue, along with the findings from the environmental scans we undertook to understand the legislative and policy landscape.
- [Appendix B](#) outlines the legislative and policy-based frameworks for workplace protections against sexual harassment and/or violence and illustrates how each piece of legislation aligns with the recommendations in this report.
- [Appendix C](#) provides the methodology and findings from our bilingual national survey of students, staff and faculty at PSIs across Canada.
- [Appendix D](#) presents the methodology and findings from our bilingual national survey for employers and EL providers.
- [Appendix E](#) shares the methodology and findings from a case study conducted at a Canadian PSI where we held interviews and focus group discussions with students, staff and faculty.



# Part 1



# Why it Matters: What We Know about Sexual Harassment in Experiential Learning

## Highlighting the Importance of Experiential Learning

There is a near-universal acknowledgement of the importance of EL. Among other benefits, it's "an effective way to prepare young people for the labour market and address youth unemployment and underemployment" (May, 2018, p. 10). Students in EL are typically in the age group (15 to 24 years) that has unemployment rates approximately twice as high as those of the broader population (May, 2018). They often face daunting prospects upon graduation, as they look to secure a foothold in the labour market to begin their careers.

**"68.8% of students who take part in experiential learning secure jobs after graduation compared to only 47.6% of those who do not take part in experiential learning." – Martin and Rouleau, *An Exploration of Work, Learning, and Work-Integrated Learning in Canada*, as cited in Smith, Rizk, and Kumah, 2022, p. 10**

The value of EL, however, extends beyond a gateway into the labour market. It's seen by students as a way to complement their education and as a means to achieve their career aspirations and future academic pursuits (Chatoor, 2023, p. 11; Edwards, 2021). It "contributes to student engagement, deeper learning, improved academic outcomes and enhanced work and life skills" (Carleton University, 2022), and is a way to "buil[d] network connections, practical knowledge and professional relationship development" (Chatoor, 2023, p. 11).

For PSIs, EL can mean "improved recruitment and retention [and] enhanced relationships with stakeholders" (Chatoor, 2023, p. 6). And for employers, it allows "access to students who bring fresh and innovative ideas to the workplace and to a high-quality employee pipeline, reducing costs and risks during recruitment" (Chatoor, 2023, p. 6).

Due to all these benefits, students, employers, PSIs and governments continue to push to make EL widely available.

- Student associations have made EL an advocacy priority, urging provincial and territorial governments to broaden access for all students. For instance, Students Nova Scotia included investments in EL as one of their advocacy priorities in 2022

(Students Nova Scotia, 2022) and the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance advocates for increasing work-integrated learning opportunities across all disciplines (Chahal et al., 2022).

- PSIs across the country have embedded EL into their strategic frameworks and objectives. One example is the University of Calgary's 2020–2025 Experiential Learning Plan, which sets a target for “all undergraduate students [to] participate in two EL activities, and all graduate students [to] have the opportunity to participate in at least one EL activity” by 2025 (Stowe et al., 2022, p. 6).
- EL providers and organizations are pushing for enhanced access. Members of the Business/Higher Education Roundtable (BHER), for example, have a goal “for 100 per cent of students in their first degree, diploma or certificate at Canadian post-secondary institutions to benefit from some form of meaningful work-integrated learning (WIL) experience before they finished school” (May, 2018, p. 24).
- Governments at both the federal and provincial/territorial levels have demonstrated their support for EL. In recent years, the federal government has allocated substantial funds towards augmenting work-integrated learning experiences for post-secondary students, and provinces like Ontario have channeled resources into additional “research and upskilling opportunities,” introducing EL metrics in their strategic mandates (Chatoor, 2023).

With the growing interest and investments in EL, there's been a corresponding increase in attention to the inequities that exist in current EL frameworks. Student associations have been advocating for paid opportunities and labour protections for those participating in EL. Notably, in Quebec, this advocacy has led to government investments to compensate students in designated EL fields and the enactment of legislation to protect the rights and working conditions of interns and trainees (Government of Quebec, 2023; *An act to ensure the protection of trainees in the workplace*, 2022). These conversations have also focused on dismantling barriers to participating in EL and making recommendations to ensure more equitable access to these important career-building opportunities (see Smith, Rizk, and Kumah, 2022; May, 2018; R. A. Malatest & Associates Ltd., 2018; Stowe et al., 2022).

## The Prevalence of Sexual Harassment in Experiential Learning

Unfortunately, conversations about expanding access to EL almost always leave out sexual harassment as a concern for students. This oversight prevents the full realization of safe and equitable access to EL.

If we're going to work on increasing opportunities and access, it's imperative to make sure these are safe spaces for students to go into. Only then will students be able to fully engage, learn and thrive.

“[Learning about sexual harassment in EL] has been eye-opening for me, and not something I have considered in the past. Where possible we try to hire underrepresented groups in STEM. Since we are hiring more female students into a male-dominated workplace, it is good to be more aware of this possibility.” — employer/EL provider participant



See [Appendix A: Findings from Possibility Seeds' Literature Reviews and Environmental Scans](#) for a more in-depth exploration of the issue.

While there is little research available on sexual harassment against students in EL, the research that does exist points to the fact that it's all too common. For instance, a study on the prevalence of sexual harassment among 515 social work students in the United States found that 55% of participants were subjected to at least one incident of sexual harassment during their field placements (Moylean & Wood, 2016). Moreover, research shows that students face the same risks as employees in the workplace, including sexual harassment and physical and emotional intimidation (Newhook, 2016).


Alarming figures from 2019 also show how common unwanted sexualized behaviours in post-secondary settings are, with 71% of students surveyed reporting that they have either witnessed or experienced such behaviours on- or off-campus (Burczycka, 2020). While this statistic alone can't paint a full picture of sexual violence within PSIs, it aligns with what students and advocates have been saying for decades: that “sexual violence is an epidemic on Canadian campuses” (Kemeni et al., p. 7).

Thanks in large part to the activism of student survivors, advocates and leaders (alongside unions, organizations, researchers and grassroots survivor-led groups) recently there's been “an unprecedented conversation in North America on gender-based violence on post-secondary campuses” (Khan, Rowe and Bidgood, 2019; see also Kemeni et al., 2022).

These efforts have sparked action, leading to initiatives such as the federal government's \$5.5 million commitment in 2018 to develop a National Gender-Based Violence Campus Draft Framework and the development of *Possibility Seeds'* seminal report, [\*Courage to Act: Developing a National Draft Framework to Address and Prevent Gender-Based Violence at Post-Secondary Institutions in Canada\*](#) [Courage to Act Report], a call to action for PSIs to take proactive measures against campus gender-based violence (Khan, Rowe and Bidgood, 2019). Since then, *Possibility Seeds'* Courage to Act Project has engaged 4800 stakeholders from across the country to develop over 70 free, evidence-based tools and resources to address campus gender-based violence. We've also seen incredible sustained efforts from student leaders and other advocates on this issue. For example, in the summer of 2022, student leaders from more than 20 universities, colleges, CEGEPS and various national organizations representing over 1.2 million students, gathered to build 10 comprehensive evidence-based calls to action for both PSIs and governments to meaningfully address campus sexual violence in [\*Our Campus, Our Safety: Student Leaders' Action Plan for Institutions and Governments to Address and Prevent Sexual Violence on Campus\*](#) [Our Campus, Our Safety Action Plan] (Kemeni et al., 2022).

**However, despite the attention to the issue and the work being done to address it, incidents across the country highlight the pressing need for further action. The important work that remains to be done goes beyond post-secondary campuses and must encompass all aspects of the post-secondary experience, including EL.**

Like post-secondary spaces, workplaces are also settings where people are subjected to gender-based violence, including sexual harassment. A 2018 survey by the Angus Reid Institute found that a staggering 52% of female respondents had been sexually harassed at work (Kurl & Holliday, 2018). This resonates with subsequent research on the issue. In 2020, the federal government, through the Department for Women and Gender Equality (WAGE), funded Statistic Canada's first Survey on Sexual Misconduct at Work which reported that "47% of workers in the provinces either witnessed or experienced some sort of inappropriate sexualized or discriminatory behaviour in a work-related setting in the previous year" (Burczycka, 2021). Most recently, the Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children and the Canadian Labour Congress published their Respect at Work Report, sharing that 43.9% of survey respondents had directly experienced sexual harassment in the workplace (Berlingieri et al., 2022). Research on workplace sexual harassment has also identified industries and professions with disproportionately high



rates of sexual harassment. These industries and professions tend to be male-dominated, characterized by precarious work or require working directly with the public.

Over the past few years, there's been increasing attention paid to the issue of workplace sexual harassment, as seen in research studies like those cited above, as well as policy and legislative amendments, such as *An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (harassment and violence)*, *the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act* and *the Budget Implementation Act (2017)*, alongside the introduction of the *Work Place Harassment and Violence Prevention Regulations (2020)*.

**However, like the ongoing efforts to address campus gender-based violence, this work must continue and expand to attend to the unique realities faced by students participating in EL.**

Addressing the needs of students in EL means recognizing that they live in a grey zone where they're both students of a PSI and also acting as employees (or quasi-employees) in their EL setting. The result is that they're often treated as neither, inadvertently overlooked in research, policy, legislation, training and support. Where they are considered, students in EL are often classified as either students or employees, which fails to recognize the challenges and concerns that come with their unique position. These challenges include reliance on EL to complete their education and gain meaningful employment; the power differential between students and employers, supervisors and instructors; and the lack of clear options for disclosing and reporting sexual harassment and accessing supports.

## About Our Project

In 2022, *Possibility Seeds* launched the Sexual Harassment in Experiential Learning Research-to-Action Project. This vital initiative was spurred by the concerns that were echoing through the media, and which we were continually hearing about in our work with students, staff, faculty, academics and community organizers through the Courage to Act project. Our goal was to begin to address gaps in research and to respond to the pressing need for support, resources and tools to address this prevalent but often hidden issue.

As the first research-to-action project on this issue, we sought to generate a baseline understanding of the nature, pervasiveness and impact of sexual harassment in EL contexts across Canadian PSIs. We wanted to learn directly from students, staff, faculty and EL providers to glean insights into their experiences and observations of sexual harassment, as well as their knowledge of (and barriers to accessing) available resources, supports and reporting options.

Our end goal was not only to better understand the issue, but to take action by developing resources for students, faculty, staff and workplaces that would foster awareness and bolster support and prevention efforts. Moreover, we sought to identify legislative gaps, formulate policy recommendations and provide guidance on developing protocols to contribute to safer EL.

### Project Objectives

1. Better understand students' experiences of sexual harassment in EL, as well as their experiences with reporting and accessing supports and resources.
2. Identify promising practices in addressing sexual harassment in EL.
3. Propose legislative amendments to address gaps in protection for students in EL.
4. Develop policy and protocol recommendations for PSIs and employers related to sexual harassment in EL.
5. Produce tools and resources for students, PSIs and EL employees and EL providers related to sexual harassment.



## What We've Done

6

person  
research  
team

6

person  
advisory  
committee

12

community  
partners

100+

students, staff  
and faculty  
consulted with

438

research  
participants

3

tools

1

final report

23

recommendations

To meet our project objectives, we engaged in extensive research, consultation and resource development activities.

- **2020:** We conducted a preliminary environmental scan and literature review on the issue.
- **February 2022:** We held Sexual Harassment in Experiential Learning Design Jam where we met with staff and faculty members who worked in career development or EL spaces from PSIs across Canada. These stakeholders helped to inform our research strategy and assisted us in identifying key areas of focus.
- **Summer 2022:** We met with students, staff, faculty and organizations across Canada to introduce the project and learn about needs and promising practices.
- **Fall 2022:** We ran a national survey of students, staff and faculty at PSIs to learn about students' experiences and observations of sexual harassment. We also asked

about their experiences reporting or seeking support regarding sexual harassment, and about their institutions' responses to sexual harassment in EL.

- **Fall 2022:** We held interviews and focus groups with students, staff and faculty at one PSI as part of a case study to help us understand the issue in more detail.
- **2023:** We conducted environmental scans of the legislative and policy landscape related to sexual harassment in EL.
- **Winter 2023:** We ran a national survey of employers and EL providers to gather information about their understanding of the issue and their needs and perspectives on sexual harassment experienced by students.
- **Winter 2023:** We held consultations with students, staff and faculty to gather input and feedback on proposed tools and resources to be developed.

Through this work, one thing we heard about consistently was the need for tangible tools and resources. **Responding to this call, we developed three tools and resources that address key needs and gaps, available [here](#).**

### **Responding to Sexual Harassment in Experiential Learning: A Toolkit for Staff and Faculty at Post-secondary Institutions**

- This toolkit is designed to help staff and faculty who work with students in EL to better understand sexual harassment and what it might look like and to respond appropriately when they receive a disclosure. The toolkit includes a workbook with reflection questions, educational resources and templates.

### **Building a Protocol for Post-secondary Institutions to Respond to Sexual Harassment and/or Violence in Experiential Learning**

- This workbook offers a structured roadmap for PSIs to build a robust institutional protocol to address sexual harassment and/or violence in EL. The workbook gives reflection questions and walks readers through developing key steps and putting them into practice.

### **Policy and Legislative Recommendations to Protect Students from Sexual Harassment in Experiential Learning**

- This document gives recommendations for ways PSIs, EL providers and provincial and territorial governments can build more robust policy and legislative frameworks

to address discrepancies across the country and support a comprehensive approach to addressing sexual harassment and/or violence against students in EL.

There were also many ideas for tools and resources that students, staff and faculty shared that would be beneficial, but that fell beyond the scope of our project. We've included these in the final part of this report in the hopes that they will be taken up by PSIs, governments and EL providers and organizations as we continue to work towards safe, harassment-free EL opportunities for students.

“[We should be thinking about] action items so all this hard work does not just sit on a shelf — research in action!” — PSI staff/faculty participant

## A Note on Scope and Language

We recognize that this project does not provide a complete understanding of the sexual harassment students are subjected to while participating in EL opportunities in all fields, at all institutions and types of organizations, and across all provinces and territories. However, we hope that we've provided a broad and inclusive foundation from which work to understand and address this issue can continue.

### Experiential Learning

EL can be broadly understood as an engaged process where you learn by doing. There are many types of EL, including internships, co-op, practicums, placements, service learning, field exercises, labs and career exploration (e.g., job shadowing, mentorship). EL can be paid or unpaid. It can be voluntary or a requirement for a course, program or professional designation.

Note that in this report we use the term “experiential learning,” (EL) except where it is necessary to specify the type, or where it is referenced in quotes or in relation to research studies. In these cases, we use terms like “work-integrated learning,” “co-op,” “internship” or a variety of other terms, as applicable.<sup>1</sup>

While each type of EL has its own nuances and challenges, we've chosen to look at EL as a whole. To that end, all types of EL that students might participate in with a relationship to a PSI are included in the scope of this project.

We've also focused our project on EL that occurs within Canada. This includes international students who are participating in EL opportunities in Canada but does not include Canadian students completing EL programs or courses outside of Canada.

### Sexual Harassment

While students can be subjected to any form of gender-based violence in their EL settings, our project focuses specifically on sexual harassment. We therefore use the term “sexual harassment,” but in some instances where it's appropriate to use more inclusive language,

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<sup>1</sup> To learn more about the different forms of EL and how each is defined, see Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning Canada's “What Is Work-Integrated Learning (WIL)?” page: [cewilcanada.ca/CEWIL/CEWIL/About-Us/Work-Integrated-Learning.aspx](http://cewilcanada.ca/CEWIL/CEWIL/About-Us/Work-Integrated-Learning.aspx).

or for accuracy of quotes or research findings, we may use language such as “sexual harassment and/or violence,” “sexual violence,” or “gender-based violence.”

**There is no standard definition for sexual harassment. How sexual harassment is defined depends on legal, policy, institutional and social contexts.**

For the purposes of this project, we define sexual harassment as any unwanted comment or behaviour against a person because of their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression that makes them feel intimidated, humiliated or offended (see LEAF, n.d.; Government of Canada, 2023). Sexual harassment is about power. It can be persistent and ongoing or one serious incident. It isn't always obvious, and can be a pattern of more subtle boundary crossing. It can happen in-person or online. Anyone can be affected, but students are especially vulnerable to sexual harassment in EL environments.

Furthermore, although we recognize that students can cause harm to others in EL settings, this project looks only at the sexual harassment that students are subjected to.



# Part 2

## Sexual Harassment in Experiential Learning



See [Appendix A: Findings from Possibility Seeds' Literature Reviews and Environmental Scans](#) for supporting background research on the topics discussed in this part.

See Appendices [C](#), [D](#) and [E](#) for detailed findings from our research with students, staff, faculty, and employers or EL providers.

### Sexual Harassment is Prevalent in Experiential Learning

When we began exploring sexual harassment in EL, we knew that it was a prevalent concern, but we were still heartbroken to see just how common it is. One in two students who participated in our national bilingual survey have been subjected to sexual harassment at least once during an EL opportunity. While this isn't statistically generalizable, it aligns with existing knowledge of sexual harassment and violence in the post-secondary and workplace contexts. This on its own—but especially when coupled with what we've been hearing from students, staff and faculty for years—is cause for concern.

**1 in 2 students  
were subjected  
to sexual  
harassment  
and/or violence  
during their EL  
opportunity.**

— Data from *Possibility Seeds' 2022 National Sexual Harassment in Experiential Learning Survey*

The stark reality of the prevalence of sexual harassment in EL—combined with the knowledge that there's very little being done about it— makes it clear that there are significant barriers that need to be overcome to simply acknowledge the issue. One such barrier is the troubling normalization of sexual harassment in EL. Sexual harassment is often seen as a “price to pay” for entry into an industry or career. This prevailing attitude deprives society of talent, shatters dreams and goals, and can have lasting impacts on student careers, lives and general well-being.

“While I value the work experience from my co-op terms and I understand that it’s just the nature of life that a lot of people are unpleasant, my co-ops have been very depressing at the same time. With each new comment, look or joke I ask myself why did I pursue a degree where I’d be a minority as a woman and why is it just a normal part of work life that I need to accept? To feel degraded and disrespected at work. Maybe I’m hypersensitive but I’ve been told some disgusting things all from men 10-20 years older than me. **I don’t understand why putting up with that is a part of my degree.**” — student participant

It doesn’t have to be this way. Challenging this deeply ingrained acceptance is paramount. We need to dismantle the idea that sexual harassment is something students need to put up with as they pursue their education and explore their career pathways. Acknowledgment of the issue is the first step to ensuring we’re centering students’ safety throughout every aspect of their academic experience.

“I am glad that this survey was created and that I responded to it. It makes me aware that I am not as knowledgeable as I should be on what supports outside of my workplace exist in sexual harassment or, for that matter, harassments in general.” — employer/EL provider participant

It’s important to acknowledge the disproportionate rates of sexual harassment students face when we account for their field of study, industry or profession; the type of EL they’re participating in; and the EL setting or makeup of the organization. So while one in two students is a heartbreaking statistic, this number may be much higher depending on the space or situation in question.

“Sexual harassment is a thing that is expected in some industries for women, so I think we just accept it.” — student participant

Industries and professions that are male-dominated, characterized by precarious work, or require working directly with the public have disproportionately high rates of sexual harassment. Our research revealed similar trends for students in EL. For example, student survey participants whose EL opportunity was with a male-dominated organization reported higher rates of sexual harassment (73.7% had been subjected to at least one behaviour of sexual harassment) compared to student survey participants whose EL was not in a male-dominated space (44.0%). The percentage of student participants who had been subjected to at least one behaviour of sexual harassment was highest for students in



engineering, architecture, and related technologies (typically male-dominated professions) at 58.6%, and in health and related fields (which are typically characterized by precarious work and/or require working directly with the public) at 59.0%.

“Institutions and employers don't say anything about it, but they know that women are being harassed on construction sites.” — student participant

“There are too many workplaces within engineering with no support for women, and the university should do a better job of ensuring that it is a safe place for them before allowing the companies to participate in the co-op program.” — student participant

“I think there's still a lot of very, very old school kind of thinking [in the business workplace]. It tends to still be a space where it is white-male-dominated.” — PSI staff/faculty participant

We also have to acknowledge that while anyone can be subjected to sexual harassment, Black, Indigenous and racialized students; international students; 2SLGBTQIA+ students; and disabled students are especially vulnerable. This requires naming the ways in which sexual harassment is fueled by patriarchy, misogyny and other forms of oppression, and systems of power. Students, staff and faculty who participated in our surveys, interviews, focus groups and consultations shared how the following contributed to or were present in the sexual harassment they experienced or witnessed: homophobia, queerphobia, biphobia, aphobia, lesbophobia; heteronormativity, cisheteronormativity; transphobia; racism, misogynoir, anti-Black racism, colourism, anti-Indigenous racism, Islamophobia; white supremacy, ethnocentrism, xenophobia; ageism; ableism; classism; fatphobia; and colonialism.

“I was lucky in my experience to not deal with sexual harassment or to really witness any. However, I dealt with harassment related to my disability which made it very challenging to fully participate.” — student participant

## Manifestations of Sexual Harassment in Experiential Learning

One thing that became clear as we started to explore this issue was a widespread lack of awareness regarding what constitutes sexual harassment. Many people—including students, staff, faculty and EL providers—did not know whether something they'd experienced, witnessed, heard or were told about was considered “serious enough” to be

sexual harassment, or in some cases, whether “anything actually happened.” This gap in understanding is exacerbated by the absence of a standard definition for sexual harassment, as well as a lack of education to help people understand what sexual harassment actually is.

However, an even bigger concern is the tendency to downplay or normalize instances of sexual harassment, relegating them to “what happens” or “how people act,” rather than recognizing them as a form of sexual violence. Numerous accounts from students underscored how regularly sexual harassment happens in subtler forms. Having internalized things like intrusive questions, degrading comments, offensive jokes or workplace rumors as part of a normal EL opportunity, students often failed to identify these experiences as forms of sexual harassment, despite the impact they had on them.

“My experience wasn’t actual sexual assault, just really terrible emotional abuse because of my gender and working in a place where everyone made racist, sexist and homophobic comments. On site, I did get some weird looks and comments, but again, nothing actually \*happened\* to me.”  
— student participant

“There's little things that happen that you just kind of brush off, mostly because your clinical instructors tell you that it's not a big deal.” — student participant

“I don't think it was sexual harassment where, like, it was like physical, but it was to the point where I would avoid working with him sometimes, just because I didn't want to be subjected to listening to things that I found uncomfortable.” — student participant

The complexities of experiences like these, compounded by their insidiousness, make it hard for individuals to accurately name the source of their distress.

“I think those little micro aggressions kind of built up, and it takes a while for the students to identify.” — student participant

“So [students] have a hard time identifying what is actually happening, but the external things impact the student and then they get to a place where they're burnt out and don't know why.” — PSI staff/faculty participant

When we asked students to describe the ways they were sexually harassed, the most common experiences they shared were being subjected to unwelcome sexual teasing, jokes, comments or questions (29.5%); being subjected to unwelcome invasion of their personal space (26.6%); people having sexually oriented conversations in front of others (26.6%); and being insulted, mistreated, ignored or excluded because they were a woman (26.2%). Notably, these were among the most common forms of sexual harassment staff and faculty shared they were aware students had been subjected to. These are also the behaviours and comments that are often minimized, not considered “serious enough” or ignored.

Other common experiences of sexual harassment that students, staff and faculty shared included suggestions that the student didn’t “act” like a man, woman or trans person is “supposed to act”; being subjected to unwelcome sexually suggestive looks or gestures; being subjected to unwelcome communications of a sexual nature; being insulted, mistreated, ignored or excluded because of their sexual orientation (or assumed sexual orientation) or gender expression, or because they are (or are assumed to be) transgender; and being pressured for dates or sexual favours.

Although we focused mainly on sexual harassment, students, staff and faculty also shared their experiences, observations or knowledge of students being subjected to other forms of sexual violence, including stalking, sexual assault and rape.

## Impacts of Sexual Harassment on Students and their Institutions

The toll sexual harassment can have on students’ mental, emotional and physical wellbeing is well documented in the literature and was also identified in our research. The emotional aftermath is undeniable, with half of student respondents reporting negative emotional impacts (e.g., feelings of depression, anxiety, fear or anger) as a result of the sexual harassment they were subjected to. Students also reported negative impacts on their personal or social life (29.3%) and sleep difficulties (19.1%).

“It went on for two months, but it’s still in my head even now.” (translated from French) — student participant

For students juggling academic pressures alongside the stress and anxieties that come with their EL opportunity, the cumulative mental, emotional and physical impacts can be especially difficult to navigate.

“I think, like, the physical and mental and emotional toll is there as well. I’m having a hard time differentiating that from the lack of sleep and the general stress that accompanies clinicals. I think it’s all very closely tied together.” — student participant

“I think [sexual harassment] combines with other stressful factors for sure. Or maybe it even amplifies the stress that you feel in the program.” — student participant

How the institution responds to sexual harassment can either mitigate or exacerbate the adverse effects it has on a student’s mental, emotional and physical wellbeing. “Recent research suggests that harmful institutional responses to reports of wrongdoing—called institutional betrayal—are associated with additional psychological and physical harm” (Smidt et al., 2023). This can also include responses intended to support the safety of the student, such as removing them from an EL opportunity against their wishes. Despite being well-intentioned, this can amplify the distress experienced by the student.

The toll taken by sexual harassment can also interfere with students’ access to education and career opportunities. Students shared that they had difficulty focusing, which impacted their ability to learn or do their work. A quarter of student survey participants said that their learning opportunities were hindered by their experience of sexual harassment, and a third said that their productivity was reduced. Students also became disengaged from work and school, decreasing their participation. This led to becoming avoidant, having low morale, being absent more often or thinking about quitting (and in some cases choosing to quit). Students in our survey shared that, because of the sexual harassment, they stopped showing up to their EL opportunity, decreased their hours, and/or asked for a new EL opportunity.

“I can’t wait to be done with the internship to stop seeing him every morning and stop reliving bad memories.” (translated from French) — student participant

“I lost trust in my workplace, including my co-workers and supervisors, and my school. The work experience term destroyed my confidence and made me consider quitting engineering. During the co-op term, I applied to be removed from the co-op program (and be placed in the regular non-co-op stream).” — student participant

The immediate and long-term impacts of sexual harassment in EL can have serious implications for a student's educational journey and future career. Changes to an EL opportunity or removal of a student for their safety, if not adequately attended to, can cause delays in them obtaining the hours they need to meet the requirements of a professional program, for example. This can delay their graduation, jeopardizing their academic success and career pathway.

Furthermore, the ways institutions or EL providers respond to these situations can have a profound impact on students' professional opportunities. Students who disclose or report their experience might be labeled or ostracized in industries or professions where there's a culture of silencing survivors and protecting harassers. Even in cases where students don't report their experience, rumours can impact their careers, especially in small industries and professions. A common comment we heard from students was that their experiences of sexual harassment were a factor in their decisions to change their career path and exit their preferred industry.

**“[As a] woman in engineering, [in] most of the companies I worked at, really strongly implied that to speak out against harassment meant I was sensitive or a problem starter.” — student participant**

**“It definitely can cause several of us to either leave the program or have something lined up right after graduation. I know quite a few of my peers are applying to Masters' programs that are not nursing or applying to professional programs like law, rather than staying in nursing, which is unfortunate.” — student participant**

**“I don't think I want to work in engineering anymore. It's been four different co-ops at four different companies in totally different industries. I feel unsafe and not respected at all my workplaces.” — student participant**

Sexual harassment can negatively impact institutions as well, with consequences that include a potential decline in retention rates as students choose to leave programs or institutions. Institutional reputation can also suffer; and when left unchecked sexual harassment can increase liability and risk. In our survey, only half of student, staff and faculty respondents agreed that their institution takes sufficient steps to prevent sexual harassment from occurring in EL. This, coupled with inadequate and sometimes harmful responses from the institution when sexual harassment does occur, can result in students losing trust in their institution. In fact, a third of student respondents in our survey said

they lost trust in their institution because of sexual harassment and how it was (or was not) addressed. Effective prevention, support and response strategies from institutions are imperative to ensure inclusive and secure EL environments that safeguards both students and institutional integrity.

“My trust in my institution to verify living and working conditions when working on site was shattered. My confidence as a woman in science was impacted. My trust in the labourers was gone, even though they were initially very respectful. My trust in company structure is gone.” — student participant

“I’m angry at [my institution]. I resent my institution.” — student participant

## Gaps and Challenges to Addressing Sexual Harassment in Experiential Learning

Our research, consultations and conversations revealed gaps and challenges when it comes to addressing sexual harassment in EL, including:

- Barriers to Disclosing and Reporting Sexual Harassment in EL
- Lack of Institutional Responsibility and Accountability and Harmful Institutional Responses
- Prioritization of EL Opportunities Over Student Safety and Wellbeing

## Barriers to Disclosing and Reporting Sexual Harassment in Experiential Learning

Gender-based violence remains significantly underreported in both post-secondary and workplace contexts. According to a Statistics Canada report on students’ experiences of unwanted sexualized behaviours and sexual assault, only 9% of female students and 4% of male students who were subjected to gender-based violence disclosed to a member of their post-secondary community (Burczycka, 2020). Similarly, only 11.8% of students in *Possibility Seeds’* survey said that they reported their experience of sexual harassment to their institution.

“I haven't received a lot of disclosures of sexual harassment. Does that mean I think they don't happen? No. I think it's very underreported in general, and I'm sure in experiential learning activities is no exception.”  
— PSI staff/faculty participant

There are many commonly cited reasons why a person might choose not to report sexual harassment. These include:

- feelings of shame;
- fearing what other people might think or say;
- worries about not being believed;
- not thinking the incident was “serious enough;”
- not wanting to label an experience as sexual harassment, or not knowing what behaviour constitutes sexual harassment;
- a lack of support (or not knowing what supports are available); and
- not knowing who to report to or a lack of reporting options.

(Wood & Moylan, 2017; Bigras-Dutrisac et al., 2020; Lynch, 2019; Government of Canada, 2020).

Students in EL are faced with many of these same barriers, as well as additional barriers that arise given the nature of EL, including power dynamics and positions of authority.

The most common reasons for not reporting that we heard in our research, consultations, and conversations were:

### **They didn't think it was “serious enough.”**

“At first I didn't want to make something big out of it. I thought that he just wanted to be nice.” (translated from French) — student participant

### **They didn't believe reporting would make a difference.**

“Other students had shared that they had reported supervisors in the past, but nothing happened as a result. The supervisors remained on the list for future placements. I believed that it would re-traumatize me for no actionable outcome.” — student participant

## They were afraid of negative consequences.

“One main reason for not reporting any sexual harassment was that I could not afford to lose my job for the remainder of the four months.” — student participant

## They didn't know where to go.

“I have no idea what to do if sexual harassment occurs or who to reach out to.” — student participant

## They didn't trust their institution.

“I have no confidence in my educational institution. I prefer that they don't get involved.” (translated from French) — student participant

For some students, reporting an experience of sexual harassment might not seem “worth it” given the short time that they participate in EL. Instead, students often choose to ignore the sexual harassment until they can move on from their position. And when students do disclose or report, the high turnover rates make it easy for organizations and institutions to shirk responsibility.

Another significant challenge has to do with the power dynamics at play. This not only includes the relationship between a student and their supervisor or someone in a higher position in the organization, but also the relationship between the student and the staff or faculty member at the PSI who has provided the opportunity or is responsible for grading them.

“We need to provide more safeguards for students to come forward — their grades and often degrees are tied to their successful completion of EL so they are incentivized to keep it quiet or fear they will have reprisal.” — PSI staff/faculty participant

There are also significant concerns from students about how their disclosure or report will be received and whether they will be believed and supported.

“The co-op office likes to front that ‘We care about the mental health and safety of our students,’ while the real message that I feel from them from their actions is ‘If you're not mentally tough and able to accept the harassment that you will unavoidably receive as a woman in STEM then maybe you're just not cut out for it.’” — student participant



“[Students have] legitimate concerns of sexual assault being dismissed as ‘overreacting and misinterpreting’ by supervisors, then being secondarily ‘punished’ by not being provided opportunities and not given support, etc., and the offender receiving no discipline.” — student participant

Students who are underrepresented in their programs, industries and professions are faced with unique challenges around confidentiality. For example, if a student is subjected to sexual harassment that’s layered with racism and they’re one of the few people (or maybe the only person) in the space who is racialized, others may easily be able to tell who made the report, leaving the student vulnerable to retaliation.

“So, I didn’t want to report it because I’m the only one who is not white in the unit. It’d be very obvious who [made] the report.” — student participant

International students may not disclose or report sexual harassment due to a lack of knowledge or understanding of sexual harassment and/or a lack of information of available disclosure, reporting or support options. International students may also fear the impact that disclosing or reporting could have on their study permit or work visa.

### **Lack of Institutional Responsibility and Accountability and Harmful Institutional Responses**

Students in EL live in a grey-zone — straddling the boundaries between students and employees. This creates confusion around their rights and entitlement to services and supports. This ambiguity has also led to significant gaps in institutional policies and practices to address sexual harassment in EL settings, allowing PSIs and EL providers to avoid responsibility.

“[W]ho is responsible for addressing [the issue]? (Employer? University? Student?) Like [the] bystander effect —everyone thinks the others will deal with it.” — PSI staff/faculty participant

“I work in a university co-op office. When students participate in experiential learning, they are in a grey area: are they treated as students or as employees? If they are employed outside the university, our university policies often do not apply: they are in the employer’s jurisdiction. This makes it challenging for us to adequately protect them. I worry that their dual role, as both students and employees, will often make them a hot potato and [they’ll] never receive services, rights, etc.” — employer/EL provider participant

This has raised many concerns, a fundamental one being that protections and supports for students are inconsistent between and within institutions and EL settings. Commonly, we heard that sexual harassment is either not addressed at all, or is only addressed in a reactionary way, except for the efforts of small pockets of committed staff and faculty. In all cases, what's missing is an institutional approach where the PSI fulfills its responsibility for fostering safe working and learning opportunities for students. This leaves staff, faculty and students underprepared and under-supported.

Staff and faculty shared their feelings of abandonment due to the lack of resources and training provided to them, as well as the lack of an institutional framework to guide their efforts. Many felt unprepared (or under-prepared) when it came to sexual harassment and felt anxiety around their ability to respond appropriately.

“We have a sexual violence policy, but I don't know if that extends to students on EL opportunities.” — PSI staff/faculty participant

“It seems to be very program level. I'm not aware of a centralized policy for experiential learning, so as administrators we are navigating through it as these situations come up.” — PSI staff/faculty participant

“There's a lot of anxiety or nervousness about how to do this well and appropriately.” — PSI staff/faculty participant

Gaps in training and resources can mean that staff and faculty in EL spaces may not know how to respond or be properly trained or educated in the best and safest ways to support students.

“We even have students that will go to professors for help or to staff members in different departments, and a lot of them don't know where to refer students or what to do in that kind of scenario.” — PSI staff/faculty participant

“[We need to be]aware that our faculty members and staff members aren't experts in this area, right? And so [we need to make] sure that we're not asking things of them that are outside of their expertise and that they're referencing experts at the institution when it's needed.” — PSI staff/faculty participant

Recognizing this gap, some staff and faculty shared how they sought out their own training and education. While this is commendable, it isn't ideal as it relies on individual initiative

rather than on comprehensive institutional guidance. It also leaves behind staff who haven't identified this gap and sought to address it. Furthermore, this approach creates inconsistency in how students are responded to and the level of care and support they receive and raises concerns about liability and responsibility.

“There isn't anything for me currently if a student discloses something that I can say, ‘Hey, do you want to fill out a report so the university's aware?’ or, you know, just like, ‘There's an individual that can talk through some of these things.’ And, so, a lot of it does come from experience and doing coaching, training or participating in professional development or having supportive colleagues and things like that.” — PSI staff/faculty participant

Another concern that arises when staff and faculty are filling in institutional gaps is that these efforts are often reliant on a set of unwritten and implicit values and practices. In these cases, there is no assurance that these efforts will continue if and when staff and faculty move on from their positions.

“You know, the difficulty is: a lot of this is there. There are best practices, but they're not necessarily codified anywhere. And [...]even in terms of our processes for how we deal with problematic employer partners, we understand that this is what we do, but I don't know that it's actually written down anywhere.” — PSI staff/faculty participant

Students also expressed concern that staff and faculty efforts were undermined by a lack of institutional frameworks, and how this gap was a factor in their decision not to report the sexual harassment and/or violence they were subjected to.

“The teachers and staff are all on our side. They are trying to help and address terrible behaviour within their classes, but they are powerless because of our institution and the bureaucratic process they use removes all accountability and justice.” — student participant

“I only feel safe because my teachers make sure I feel safe.” — student participant

“The only people who took me seriously are my teachers and I will be forever grateful to them for that.” — student participant

Students also expressed concerns about the lack of preparation and support they received from their institution.

“I don’t know [...] we had meetings to decide who would go to which workplace... they did not explain anything besides the requirements of the internship.” (translated from French — student participant)

“[I received] no information, training or resources on sexual harassment.” (translated from French) — student participant

Some students shared that they knew what to do or where to find support only because they had already been through a similar situation or knew someone who had.

“I know where to go in case of sexual harassment because I have a friend who was subjected to it and she had to find and follow the procedure.” (translated from French) — student participant

### Prioritization of Experiential Learning Opportunities Over Student Safety and Wellbeing

PSIs are increasingly committed to providing EL opportunities to students, often tied to funding and in strategic mandates. However, in some fields— especially where all students need to partake in EL—it's difficult to find enough EL providers for all students. This has meant that relationships with EL providers may be prioritized as PSIs feel beholden to them to take on students. This mentality raises concerns about how sexual harassment is responded to, one major concern being that sexual harassment may be ignored if it means preserving a relationship with an EL provider. We see examples of this in accounts of students being met with resistance—or even dismissal—when seeking to report sexual harassment where the EL provider is considered “reputable” or valuable to the PSI in some way. This is of particular concern with EL providers that take students on a recurring basis, those that take large volumes of students in a variety of capacities, and those that are considered to be prestigious or may be seen as a positive relationship for the PSI.

“We have a huge volume of students and they're just trying to look to increase that volume next year. It's very difficult to track.” — PSI staff/faculty participant

“[On] one level I want to , well, good riddance. If they're not actually implementing their sexual violence policies, that's not a place where I want my students to be working, it's not a safe space. But for many of our staff they're, like, well we don't have other places to put our students.” — PSI staff/faculty participant

“[It’s a] general problem that the university wants to increase experiential learning opportunities for students, and [there’s] concern that this may mean prioritization of preserving the relationship with external employers/partners over accountability when incidents occur.” — PSI staff/faculty participant

“A multi-site healthcare employer, for instance, you can’t “blacklist” them or this one site where this happened because then what if we lose, like, the entire multi-site employer? We’ll be losing access to placements for hundreds of our Healthcare students.” — PSI staff/faculty participant



# Part 3

## Key Recommendations to Address Sexual Harassment in Experiential Learning

PSIs, EL providers and governments all have a role to play in addressing sexual harassment in EL. The most effective efforts will be collaborative, with a shared goal of providing safe working and learning opportunities for students.

This work requires that we acknowledge, learn from and build on broader efforts to address sexual and gender-based violence at PSIs and in the workplace. Sexual harassment in EL has specific challenges that need attention, but we don't have to reinvent the wheel. *Possibility Seeds'* Courage to Act project has a number of resources stakeholders can use to address sexual and gender-based violence on campus. These are free to download on the Courage to Act [Knowledge Centre](#).

The following recommendations are built out of research, consultation and conversations with students, staff, faculty, and EL providers and organizations across the country. They are written for PSIs, EL providers and governments and serve as a foundation from which we hope to see continued efforts to address sexual harassment in EL.

Importantly, these efforts require “institutional courage”—a concept first explored by Jennifer Freyd (Smidt & Freyd, 2023). Institutional courage involves “accountability, transparency, actively seeking justice, and making reparations where needed” (Smidt & Freyd, 2018). It can buffer against institutional betrayal and foster organizational commitment following workplace sexual harassment (Smidt & Freyd, 2023). The recommendations below offer opportunities for PSIs, EL providers, and governments to demonstrate this type of courage in their efforts to address and prevent sexual harassment in EL.

We also recognize that much of this work lands on the shoulders of students, staff and faculty who work tirelessly to fill the gaps in institutional frameworks. These recommendations are also written to serve them in their efforts.

Where available, we've highlighted promising practices to show how this work is already being taken up. We recognize that there's often more work happening below the surface, and we therefore encourage you to connect with your networks to learn from one another and to explore opportunities to advocate together. We've also identified areas that we were unable to address or that require further attention. We hope this will serve as a roadmap for continued work in this area.

## Key Recommendations for Post-secondary Institutions

1. Ensure experiential learning contexts are clearly included in the scope of institutional sexual violence and other relevant policies.
2. Ensure institutional experiential learning policies clearly articulate how sexual harassment and/or violence will be addressed.
3. Develop a specific protocol for how the institution will respond to sexual harassment and/or violence in experiential learning.
4. Provide staff and faculty with tools to respond to disclosures.
5. Ensure staff and faculty are adequately supported.
6. Assess experiential learning providers' policies, protocols and practices to address sexual harassment before starting or continuing a relationship.
7. Be clear about expectations for the experiential learning provider to ensure a safe working and learning environment.
8. Monitor experiential learning providers and hold them accountable when expectations aren't met.
9. Develop a procedure for recordkeeping and information-sharing within your institution about potentially unsafe experiential learning providers.
10. Ensure students are adequately prepared to participate in experiential learning.
11. Ensure students are adequately supported during their experiential learning opportunities.
12. Check in with students throughout their experiential learning opportunity.
13. Provide academic and workplace considerations to students affected by sexual harassment and/or violence.



## Key Recommendations for Experiential Learning Providers, Industries, and Professional and Regulatory Bodies

1. Ensure students completing experiential learning opportunities are explicitly included in organizational policies around sexual harassment and/or violence.
2. Develop a specific protocol for how the organization will respond to sexual harassment and/or violence against students completing experiential learning opportunities.
3. Ensure experiential learning providers, employers, employees, supervisors and members are appropriately trained.
4. Provide students with information about sexual harassment.
5. Provide workplace or professional considerations to students affected by sexual harassment and/or violence.
6. Champion amendments to workplace harassment and violence legislation that will strengthen protections for students in experiential learning positions.

## Key Recommendations for Governments

1. Invest in paid experiential learning opportunities.
2. Introduce or strengthen existing provincial and territorial legislation to specifically protect students in experiential learning from sexual harassment and/or violence.
3. Strengthen provincial and territorial legislative and regulatory frameworks on workplace harassment and violence to protect students in experiential learning positions.
4. Provide legislative and regulatory guidance to post-secondary institutions on addressing and preventing sexual harassment and/or violence in experiential learning.

## Key Recommendations for Post-secondary Institutions

PSIs must take a comprehensive approach to addressing sexual harassment in EL, rooted in an institution-wide commitment to prioritizing the safety of students as they pursue their academic and career goals. The recommendations in this section consider key areas of attention that can serve as a foundation for an institutional approach.

The recommendations are broken into four sub-sections:

- Policy & Protocol Recommendations
- Recommendations for Preparing & Supporting Staff and Faculty
- Recommendations for Working with EL Providers
- Recommendations for Preparing & Supporting Students

“[We need] greater consistency in approaches despite decentralized oversight of [experiential] learning opportunities.” — PSI staff/faculty participant

### Policy & Protocol Recommendations

The following recommendations are written for institution-level policies and protocols, with the recognition that they are also applicable at program-, department- and faculty-levels. When implementing these recommendations, it’s important to be consistent and to align policies and protocols across the institution so that all students are provided the same support, response and information when it comes to sexual harassment.

“I think you can have a really nice piece of paper, [but] if people don't read it or don't care about it, then nothing's gonna happen.” — student participant

#### 1. Ensure experiential learning contexts are clearly included in the scope of institutional sexual violence and other relevant policies.

Students in EL should receive the same protections and supports as other members of the post-secondary community. This should be clearly laid out in the scope of institutional sexual violence or other relevant policies.

At the same time, it’s important to be clear about the limits of an institution’s sexual violence policy in the context of EL. For example, when sexual harassment and/or violence

occurs in an EL context that is external to the institution, the institution is unlikely to have jurisdiction to lead an investigation or to impose sanctions. However, this does not absolve the institution of their responsibility to support students and to provide safe working and learning environments. Policies should be clear on this point, while also setting out an institution's responsibilities and commitments in those circumstances. For example, the institution is responsible for providing supports for students affected by sexual harassment and/or violence, including: mental health supports, EL programming supports, academic and workplace considerations or accommodations and more.

When including EL in the scope of sexual violence policies, institutions should ensure that they also reference any applicable legislative or regulatory frameworks, as well as institutional protocols or procedural documents that are specific to responding to sexual harassment and/or violence in the context of EL, if available.

### **Promising Practices**

- Concordia University's [Policy Regarding Sexual Violence](#) specifically names "research environments, co-op and EL contexts, internships, organized class activities and University workshops" as settings to which the policy applies.
- Laurentian University's [Policy on Response and Prevention of Sexual Violence](#) defines the learning and working environment to include "any setting where University learning, working or other activities take place, whether in the classroom, lab, in other teaching, research, study or office settings, including the online environment, in co-op or practicum placements."
- Dawson College's [Policy on Sexual Violence](#) states that the "policy applies to all pedagogical, social or sports activities that are organized by members of the college community and take place on or off campus, such as integration and welcoming activities, student trips, social events, internships, etc."

## 2. Ensure institutional experiential learning policies clearly articulate how sexual harassment and/or violence will be addressed.

“There is a lack of consistency across EL programming at my PSI, which means that students encounter widely varying experiential learning opportunities (i.e., a lot of EL is faculty led without institutional knowledge or support). This makes it hard to even know how policy impacts students in EL, and we often have to push for any clarity around EL policy. So our PSI needs to resource EL at the institution to create clear policies and evaluate those policies for different situations.”— PSI staff/faculty participant”

EL policies offer an opportunity for PSIs to articulate their commitment to addressing and responding to sexual harassment. To that end, institutional EL policies should include, at minimum:

- the institution’s values and commitments to provide a safe working and learning environment, particularly with respect to sexual harassment and/or violence;
- reference to procedures and protocols specific to responding to sexual harassment and/or violence, if available, rather than treating the occurrence the same as any other threat to a safe working and learning environment;
- reference to the institutional sexual violence policy, or other relevant policies, to the extent that they apply;
- reference to the relevant provincial/territorial or federal protections available to EL students, such as Human Rights Codes or the ability to bring a complaint before a relevant board or tribunal;
- the institution’s commitment to providing students with clear, accessible information on available supports, reporting options and applicable policies as they apply in the context of EL. For example, consider institutional sexual violence policies, harassment and discrimination policies, respectful work and learning policies, EL policies, and other applicable policies and procedures;
- the institution’s commitment to providing academic and workplace considerations to students affected by sexual harassment and/or violence. These considerations

should never be contingent on a student needing to “prove” their experience of sexual harassment and/or violence.

## Promising Practices

- Assiniboine Community College’s [Policies and Procedures: Work Practicums](#) is an excellent model on including the relevant provincial/territorial or federal protections available to EL students.
- Loyalist College of Applied Arts & Technology’s [Co-operative Education Programs Policy](#) takes a trauma-informed, survivor-driven approach by stating that the employer, faculty representative and Career Services & Work Integrated Learning unit “should then take whatever steps the student deems necessary to ensure their personal safety which may include immediately exiting from the workplace” if that student has informed them that their rights have been threatened or violated.
- The Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology’s [Work Practicum and Work Co-op Policy](#) explicitly states that “the student has the right to refuse dangerous work including any concerns related to their personal safety.” It further provides that “a student will not be disciplined for exercising their right to refuse to work when acted upon in good faith,” which is important given the power differentials involved in EL environments.
- The [Policy on Internships](#) (in French) at CÉGEP of Sorel-Tracy’s clearly states the institution’s commitment to safeguarding the wellbeing of interns in regard to instances of sexual violence. It outlines the specific responsibilities of staff members overseeing internships in evaluating potential EL providers and ensuring their compliance with the [Act to ensure the protection of trainees in the workplace](#). Staff members are, among other things, responsible for verifying that internship environments are free from harassment. They also have to implement appropriate protective measures in response to reports of harassment from students during the course of their internships.

Promising practices can also be found in other institutional policies that apply, but are not specific to, EL. For example:

- Toronto Metropolitan University’s [Academic Considerations Policy](#) and [online portal for Academic Consideration Requests](#) provides an accessible avenue for students,

including those in EL positions, to request academic considerations in extenuating circumstances, defined as “occurrences that: (a) Are outside of a student’s immediate control; (b) Could not have been reasonably foreseen or avoided, and (c) Significantly impact a student’s ability to fulfill their academic requirements.”

- Clause 5.6(b) in the University of Ottawa’s [Prevention of Sexual Violence Policy](#) states that in instances of sexual violence, the Sexual Violence Response Team will ensure “appropriate accommodations and interim measures are available and implemented to stabilize the situation and/or separate the parties and to address any safety or security concerns.”

### 3. Develop a specific protocol for how the institution will respond to sexual harassment and/or violence in experiential learning.

The Courage to Act Report identified the need for institutional protocols to address sexual harassment in EL in response to concerns raised in their Listening and Learning sessions (Khan, Rowe, and Bidgood, 2019, p. 62). This was echoed by participants in our research and consultations, almost all of whom named having an institutional protocol as one of the biggest needs.

**“[It would be] very beneficial to have a standard that can be taught and referred to so we have a template to follow that is consistent and not just applied by some people who care about this and [ignored by] others who do not think [it’s] their responsibility.” — PSI staff/faculty participant**

An institutional protocol that lays out the specific procedures to be followed would support staff and faculty, and ensure that they’re attentive to the institutional, legal and regulatory contexts, along with the duties and responsibilities, at play. This can help to address concerns around responsibility and liability that staff and faculty might hold, allowing them to respond appropriately. It also demonstrates the institution’s commitment to addressing sexual harassment and/or violence in EL and protects against institutional liability and risk.

Such a protocol would contribute to a safer and more inclusive culture of trust and safety where students are empowered to come forward and report incidents of sexual harassment and/or violence without fear of reprisal or judgement. It would also send a strong message that the institution is committed to safeguarding the wellbeing and rights of all students in every aspect of their academic experience.

“We're not going to have a flowchart to solve a problem like sexual violence, but there is helpful information about processes that can be mapped out.” —PSI staff/faculty participant

## Resource

- See *Possibility Seeds'* [Building a Protocol for Post-secondary Institutions to Respond to Sexual Harassment and/or Violence in Experiential Learning](#) workbook for important considerations and step-by-step guidance to develop a protocol for your institution.

## Recommendations for Preparing & Supporting Staff and Faculty

### 4. Provide staff and faculty with tools to respond to disclosures.

Staff and faculty need to be prepared to respond when a student shares that they've been affected by sexual harassment. This is important to avoid causing feelings of institutional betrayal and inflicting further harm on students.

More than simply knowing how to respond in ways that are consistent and trauma-informed, staff and faculty also need to be able to respond in ways that are grounded in the reality of the limits and responsibilities of their roles. Failing to do so raises issues of liability and risk, and can also be harmful to the students who choose to disclose. Staff and faculty should therefore understand how to respond in a way that balances care and compassion with any:

- obligations and responsibilities around confidentiality, such as when there is a duty to report or other obligations to share a disclosure;
- obligations under institutional policies and protocols on responding to sexual harassment and violence in EL;
- obligations under federal, provincial and territorial legislative and regulatory requirements;
- other professional obligations and duties.

“Equip internship coordinators to receive disclosures, as many feel helpless in dealing with them. Answer their questions, which are numerous: this helps to avoid minimizing the incidents.” (translated from French) — consultation participants

It's also important that students know that staff and faculty are prepared to respond to disclosures. This will encourage more students to come forward, knowing they will be met with care and further harm will not be caused.

### Promising Practice

- [Acknowledge, Respond & Connect \(ARC\)](#) is a three-step model developed by Farrah Khan and *Possibility Seeds* to better equip staff and faculty to respond to disclosures of sexual harassment and violence in EL. The model discusses how staff and faculty can acknowledge their role, capacity in responding, and responsibilities and limitations around confidentiality.

### Resource

- See *Possibility Seeds'* [Responding to Sexual Harassment in Experiential Learning: A Toolkit for Staff and Faculty at Post-secondary Institutions](#) for support in responding to sexual harassment. The document includes a workbook on the ARC model; educational resources on sexual harassment in EL; and templates for mapping out disclosure, reporting and support options specific to your institution.

Additionally, responding to disclosures can be challenging and may impact a person mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually. It's important that PSIs put practices and resources in place to support staff and faculty. "Building in these practices and resources actively supports the well-being and self-care of personnel who are repeatedly exposed to others' stories of violence; helps them understand people's responses to violence, including their own; and helps prevent 'trigger responses'" (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2018 in Eerkes et al., 2021).

These practices and resources might include:

- "a psychologically safe workplace;
- education about the existence of and symptoms associated with Trauma Exposure Response, vicarious and secondary trauma and compassion fatigue;
- education and training in self-compassion, relaxation techniques, self-soothing, experiencing joy, and 'taking in the good' (Hansen, 2005 as cited in Klinik Community Health Centre, n.d., p. 126);
- regular opportunities to debrief with colleagues and/or supervisors;



- adequate supervision;
- adequate access to counselling; and
- options for flexible workdays and locations where possible” (Eerkes et al., 2021).

“Problem is that we’re experiencing these things in our own workplaces as we’re trying to support students.” — PSI staff/faculty participant

“What resources are available to staff who are supporting a student through these experiences? It was a triggering experience for me and the only supports that were discussed were for the student.” — PSI staff/faculty participant

## 5. Ensure staff and faculty are adequately supported.

Rather than duplicating efforts, many EL programs collaborate with other departments, such as career centres and equity offices, to make the best use of support resources—not only for students but for staff and faculty as well (R. A. Malatest & Associates Ltd., 2018, p. 3).

This approach should be applied in the context of sexual harassment. Staff and faculty working in EL spaces are not, and do not need to be, experts in sexual harassment and violence. However, they need to be connected to those who are. This means building networks between EL staff and faculty and sexual violence experts on campus, such as a sexual violence and prevention office or advisor. Building this network can ensure staff and faculty are knowledgeable about the resources and supports available for students (as well as for themselves) and can ensure that the sexual violence experts on campus are thinking about EL contexts.

“[We need] more connection between the sexual violence advisor and the EL office.” — PSI staff/faculty participant

“I would also connect with our incredible coordinator for [sexual violence] work at [our institution] on how we could introduce this to EL/WIL [work-integrated learning] programs together. She’s very well respected on campus and would be an important champion.” — PSI staff/faculty participant

## Promising Practice

- Sheridan College and McMaster University are two examples, among others, where the sexual violence and EL staff have worked collaboratively on this issue.

Staff and faculty engaged in EL across the institution should also connect on this issue to promote consistency in approaches and responses. This offers an opportunity to debrief, discuss challenges, provide support to one another, share promising practices and explore improvements to institutional practices. Importantly, these spaces must be attentive to confidentiality and privacy concerns. Matters pertaining to specific students or incidents of sexual harassment should not be discussed.

## Promising Practice

- Some PSIs hold “sharing sessions” where staff and faculty can explore challenges and opportunities to address student issues.

“We do have a sharing session where we bring up student issues outside the norm that are troubling (e.g., injury, firing, etc.) These are good forums to give the background and have almost a think tank of how to solve it or, if [it’s] over, a debrief and best practice discussion for next time.” — PSI staff/faculty participant

## Recommendations for Working with Experiential Learning Providers

Offering EL opportunities that are external to the PSI requires strong partnerships and significant trust. When a student is participating in EL under the supervision of an external partner, there is no way to predict if or when a student will be subjected to harm, including sexual harassment. However, this does not absolve the PSI of their responsibility to provide a safe working and learning experience for students, as there are proactive steps the institution can and should take to mitigate and significantly reduce the risk of harm. The following recommendations outline the minimum steps necessary for a PSI to take when starting or continuing a relationship with an EL provider.

## Challenge



Student safety and wellbeing should never be secondary to a relationship with an EL provider. Unfortunately, we recognize that some institutions may prioritize relationships with EL providers to meet quotas, or where they might add prestige to the institution.

Dispelling the idea that a relationship with an EL provider is more important than student safety is an ongoing challenge.

## 6. Assess experiential learning providers' policies, protocols and practices to address sexual harassment before starting or continuing a relationship.

In the Courage to Act Report, it is recommended that PSIs request that EL providers have an up-to-date policy that addresses sexual harassment (Khan, Rowe, and Bidgood, 2019, p. 62).

Ideally, this information should be gathered prior to entering a relationship with an EL provider. However, in situations where a relationship has already been established, we recommend that the PSI do a review of the EL provider's policies, protocols, communications and/or training before continuing that relationship.

**“I would like to see each employer partner have a robust policy for dealing with sexual harassment before our institution partners with them. At present, this is not the case. I wonder if the policy department within a university could aid employers in crafting these policies, as some do not have the internal resources to do so.” — staff/faculty participant**

### Promising Practice

- Saint Mary's University includes a question on their intake form for all new EL providers: *Does your organization have a Harassment, Sexual Harassment, and/or Discrimination policy?*

It can also be beneficial to know what other practices the EL provider has in place. Consider inquiring about any communications or training they provide related to sexual harassment, as well as their policies and procedures, particularly as they onboard new students and throughout the course of their EL opportunity.

**“Due diligence needs to be done in vetting employers. Not only policies and protocols are needed, but also communication on what policies and resources exist.” — PSI staff/faculty participant**

**“I think employers need to be vetted to ensure that students are sent to working environments that have proper training for their regular employees, and policies and procedures in place to support students who come into their environments.” — staff/faculty participant**

## 7. Be clear about expectations for the experiential learning provider to ensure a safe working and learning environment.

Before entering or continuing a relationship with an EL provider, PSIs often state their expectations for academic and learning outcomes. The same practice should apply to laying out expectations around providing harassment-free environments, which are essential for student safety and for meeting academic and learning outcomes.

These expectations should clearly describe the EL provider's responsibilities to:

- treat students participating in EL with respect, dignity and fairness;
- provide a working and learning environment free from sexual violence, harassment and discrimination, in compliance with:
  - all relevant federal, provincial or territorial human rights legislation, employment and health and safety laws;<sup>2</sup> and
  - all of the PSIs' policies and procedures pertaining to sexual harassment and violence.<sup>3</sup>
- implement, enforce and adhere to workplace sexual violence, harassment, and discrimination policies and procedures;
- provide students with relevant information about:
  - organizational policies and procedures related to sexual harassment and violence;
  - reporting options; and
  - available supports.
- take an appropriate course of action when made aware of sexual harassment and/or violence.

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<sup>2</sup> If the relevant legislation is unclear on how students are protected, the PSI should discuss with EL providers the importance of providing the same protections to students that are provided to workers.

<sup>3</sup> These should be provided to the EL provider by the PSI so the EL provider understands any responsibilities and rights of students under the policies and procedures.

“It would be good for the school to email me their policy to make sure it aligns with our training and who should be contacted if an incident does occur.” — employer/EL provider participant

Consider how this information is communicated. It may be beneficial to have an initial meeting with EL providers to discuss these expectations and ensure that they understand their responsibilities and roles when hosting students from your institution. In addition to this meeting (or in lieu of it, recognizing that it may not be feasible) you can communicate expectations in a variety of ways, including incorporating them into relevant institutional policies, contracts, memoranda of understanding, employer handbooks, or any other agreement or resource provided to the EL provider.

It may be helpful to have a standard resource that can be adapted by individual offices, departments and faculties, or for individual staff and faculty. This will help to make expectations consistent across the institution while alleviating unnecessary labour.

Wherever you include information about expectations, make sure students are provided with the same information so they know what they can expect from their EL provider.

## 8. Monitor experiential learning providers and hold them accountable when expectations aren't met.

Working with EL providers requires trust and relationship building to ensure safe opportunities for students. However, even with clear expectations and strong relationships, we cannot control what happens in an EL setting. For this reason, it's important for PSIs to monitor EL providers and to have accountability measures in place for when expectations for providing a safe, harassment-free working and learning environment are not met.

Accountability measures may look different depending on the institution, type of EL, or relationship with the EL provider, but the end result should be that the PSI is not putting students in EL opportunities where sexual harassment occurs, where the EL provider has not met expectations, and/or is not responding appropriately to sexual harassment.

### Promising Practice

- At the University of Alberta, where EL providers can post opportunities for students on a job board, one accountability measure in place is that EL providers who have had complaints made against them can no longer post opportunities.

## Further Attention Needed



There is no standard metric to assess risk of sexual harassment in EL. Existing risk assessment tools for EL do not consider sexual harassment, and generalized risk assessments tools cannot be applied accurately to sexual harassment or to other forms of gender-based violence. *Possibility Seeds'* [Gender-Based and Sexualized Violence Community Risk Assessment Tool for Post-Secondary Settings](#)— the first evidence-based tool to assess the risk that an incident or report of gender-based or sexualized violence poses to a school community—includes a factor on the living and learning climate, which includes EL settings. This is an important tool for assessing the risk posed by individuals who have caused harm, but further work is needed to develop a standard metric for assessing the risk of sexual harassment in an EL setting.

### 9. Develop a procedure for recordkeeping and information-sharing within your institution about potentially unsafe experiential learning providers.

Previous or multiple reports of students experiencing sexual harassment and/or violence in an EL environment should be considered when assessing the environment's safety. Although this factor depends on disclosures or reports being made, when an institution does have knowledge of histories of sexual harassment, it can allow them to make informed decisions to support the safety of students.

“The supervisor of interns in my program talks to me a lot, and he warned me about this assistant that was known to like young 20-years-old girls. When he said that, I thought that if he was telling me, there was probably a history to that.” (translated from French) — student participant

“I heard word of [the same type of sexual harassment] happening to the next student that entered my role with the company as well.” — student participant

“[It's important] that students do not get placed somewhere where clients exhibit highly sexualized behaviours.” — student participant

“I need better internal reporting mechanisms to communicate unsafe workspaces to mitigate student risk without putting the educational institution at legal risk while an investigation is ongoing or when a student chooses not to file a police report.” — PSI staff/faculty participant

“Collecting information for the purpose of preventing GBV in the institution should be clearly understood as permissible. The PSI needs information to meet its legal obligations, particularly those that require PSIs to provide a safe working and educational environment, free from GBV...a PSI’s purpose in collecting information is to use and disclose it to administer its own policies and programs” — Eerkes & De Costa, 2023

A common question that came up in our research, consultations and conversations was how to keep track of EL providers where a student has been subjected to sexual harassment, where the EL provider is deemed “unsafe,” and/or where the relationship has been discontinued because of sexual harassment and how it was responded to.

A procedure for recordkeeping and information-sharing within the institution should answer the following questions:

- What information will be collected and recorded? What is the minimum information necessary for the purpose of providing a safe working and learning environment?
- How will the information be collected and recorded? Who will collect and record the information?
- Who will hold the records and for how long?
- Who should have access to this information? How will it be shared with those who have a legitimate need to know (e.g., staff, faculty or administrators making decisions about working with EL providers)?

**Any procedure you develop for collecting and storing information should align with existing institutional practices and comply with applicable information and privacy laws. It’s important to consult with your institution’s information and privacy office and/or legal office on this.**

Additionally, ensure this procedure is aligned with (and included in) your protocol for how the institution will respond to sexual harassment and/or violence in EL. (See [Recommendation 3: Develop a specific protocol for how the institution will respond to sexual harassment and/or violence in EL.](#))

## Further Attention Needed



Developing recordkeeping and information-sharing procedures within a PSI is a challenge in and of itself, but more attention is also needed when it comes to finding ways to share information about potentially unsafe EL providers between PSIs.

“If we were to blacklist somebody, they’d just reinvest in another institution that didn’t know any better, so there also needs to be a way for institutions to share that information.” — PSI staff/faculty participant

“Might there be a way for communities of practice to encourage each other to share that information? Because if it’s happening with one student, I mean, it’s likely to reoccur.” — PSI staff/faculty participant

## Resource

- See *Possibility Seeds’* [Preventative Information Sharing Between Post-secondary Institutions: Privacy, Human Rights & Safety in the Context of Campus Gender-based Violence](#) for some insight into the limitations and opportunities for information sharing between institutions.

## Recommendations for Preparing & Supporting Students

Part of the PSI’s responsibility to provide safe working and learning opportunities for students is to ensure that they are adequately prepared and supported prior to, during and after their EL opportunity. In general, “having clear, consistent messaging presented to students early and often helps reduce misconceptions about what a specific WIL [work-integrated learning] experience entails and helps students develop an understanding of their own role in and responsibilities for their WIL experiences” (R. A. Malatest & Associates Ltd., 2018, p. 3). The same is true for communicating information about sexual harassment in EL.

### 10. Ensure students are adequately prepared to participate in experiential learning.

PSIs must ensure students are prepared with knowledge and resources about sexual harassment. They should know where to go for support, what their options are for disclosing and reporting, and what their rights are before they begin their EL opportunities. Having this knowledge empowers students to be able to acknowledge sexual harassment when it occurs, access the supports and resources they need, and make an informed



decision about their options moving forward. It also helps to reduce barriers to reporting and accessing supports.

“[We need] basic introduction of the topic so that students can have the language to voice these concerns and training on where to access the resources available for staff and students.” — student/PSI staff/faculty participant

“[It would be helpful to] add information about sexual harassment in experiential learning to orientations/prep work, with a focus on where to get support if anything should happen.” — student participant

### **What is sexual harassment?**

Before entering an EL opportunity, students need to be able to recognize sexual harassment and the different ways it can manifest. This must include the different forms of oppression that intersect and feed into sexual harassment, including racism, ableism and transphobia. It also means providing students with an understanding of sexual harassment that addresses the ways it is often minimized or ignored.

“[We could use] better student awareness of what sexual harassment actually is. The obvious is covered, but some of the more covert forms may not be clear.” — PSI staff/faculty participant

“[We should have] training on sexual harassment, but focusing on what is all-too-often described as ‘normal violence’ : sexist or racist jokes, homophobia, transphobia, etc.” (translated from French) — PSI staff/faculty participant

“For students, harassment is often not considered serious, so they need to be equipped to understand and know their rights and where to turn. When it comes to academic success and failure, students often have a high threshold for harassment, making them particularly vulnerable.” (translated from French) — PSI staff/faculty participant

### **What supports are available, and how can they be accessed?**

Students should be given information about campus sexual violence resources (where available) as well as resources in the community. These should include safe spaces for students of all genders, including trans, non-binary and male-identified students, as well as spaces that centre the experiences of BIPOC and 2SLBTQIA+ students. If students are

participating in EL opportunities that are far from the PSI, such as in another province or territory, include supports and resources that are accessible for those students. It's important that students are explicitly told that they can access supports without having to make a report, and that they can access these supports during their EL, even if they are in a different region, province or territory than their PSI.

“[We need] clarity on how we should approach the situation and seek help. Or, if it's a fact of the job we'll be doing, how to seek support outside of that environment.” — student participant

“We find that there are so many resources, and folks do find themselves overwhelmed with how to find the appropriate [ones.]” — PSI staff/faculty participant

### **What disclosure and reporting options are available?**

Students should be informed about the different options available should they choose to disclose or report sexual harassment. They should know the difference between a disclosure and a report and what each one triggers. Knowing their options and how to access them allows students to make informed decisions about the path that's best for them.

“[Include] resources and reporting procedures in the seminars we attend before leaving for our internship. I have no idea what to do if sexual harassment occurs or who to reach out to.” — student participant

Some options students should consider include:

- telling someone at the institution or in the EL setting,
- making a report or complaint to the institution or to the EL provider,
- making a human rights complaint,
- making a workplace health and safety complaint,
- reporting the incident to a professional or regulatory body (where applicable),
- reporting the incident to the police.

It's important to be clear that a student does not need to make a report to access supports and that it is their decision which pathway to pursue.

## Resource

- See *Possibility Seeds'* [Responding to Sexual Harassment in Experiential Learning: A Toolkit for Staff and Faculty at Post-Secondary Institutions](#) for templates to map out disclosure, reporting and support options for students.

### What are their rights and responsibilities and those of the PSI and EL provider?

Students should be educated on any relevant institutional policies and protocols; the PSI's expectations for the EL provider to ensure a safe, harassment-free working and learning environment for students; and any applicable employment or labour laws. Ensure that the information on rights and responsibilities includes relevant considerations for international students on study permit or work visa. Students should also be taught how to ask their EL provider about rights and responsibilities under policy and law, as needed.

“I would go as far as recommending that programs proactively provide information about the institution's policies to students as part of their training or onboarding to the EL program, rather than making it the student's responsibility to inquire.” — staff/faculty participant

“I guess, if there is a policy or procedures to follow, let us know where that information can be found.” — student participant

Equally important to what information is provided to students is *how* it's provided.

### Sexual harassment education and training should be provided by experts.

EL staff and faculty should provide students with information about available supports, disclosure and reporting pathways, and rights and responsibilities. However, when it comes to education and training on sexual harassment, it's important that the person providing that education is trained to do so. Connect with the sexual violence expert on campus, or with a local, community-based sexual violence centre.

“Training for students [should be] conducted by the sexual violence advisor rather than the project lead for EL.” — PSI staff/faculty participant

## Education and training can be built into preparatory courses but needs to be highlighted.

Education and training related to sexual harassment is important, but can be overlooked or ignored if it is added as an afterthought or treated as less important than other preparatory education and training provided to students prior to EL.

“Make it a more serious part of training. Don’t avoid talking about why it’s important to discuss. Most of the men in my class treated it as a joke.”  
— student participant

## Provide information about sexual harassment in multiple easily accessible formats.

Information about sexual harassment, available supports, and disclosure and reporting options should be easy to find and accessible to students.

“Students shouldn’t have to search for policies to find next steps.” — PSI staff/faculty participant

This can be approached in several ways. For example, the Courage to Act Report recommends that there be “a requirement to include information for students on how to report GBV in the workplace in the course syllabus, PSI career, co-op and other forms of experiential learning websites” (Khan, Rowe, and Bidgood, 2019, p. 62). It can also be included in agreements or contracts, student handbooks and guides.

“[Information about sexual harassment] is something you might want to put in your syllabus, or share on a slide on the first day of class to help students understand, to feel that it’s a safe space, and to point them to resources” — PSI staff/faculty participant

“In the co-op guide, have a section that states what can be done if you experience harassment.” — student participant

## Promising Practices

- The University of Waterloo includes information about harassment and discrimination, including student rights and information about available resources and supports on its [Cooperative Education](#) website.
- Dr. Megan Scribe, Department of Sociology, Toronto Metropolitan University, includes the following in their syllabus: “I do not have the knowledge or skillset

required to provide psychological support for individuals. If you require mental health and/or wellness support, I can direct you to institutional resources and supports. You are not required to disclose any personal information to me to receive assistance in locating university services. If you are unsure on how to initiate this process, you can simply send an email that states, “can you assist me in locating university services and supports for mental health / wellness / counselling / AAS / writing, etc...”

Additionally, consider providing this information during meetings with students.

“Making sure there is a direct connection (for example, sitting down with students) can make a more concrete difference.” (translated from French)  
— consultation participants

## 11. Ensure students are adequately supported during their experiential learning opportunities.

Giving students information about support, disclosure and reporting options, and rights and responsibilities, is important prior to participation in their EL opportunity, but it’s equally important that they be reminded of this information throughout their time in EL. It’s also vital, of course, to ensure that supports are available and accessible.

“It should not be a thing that gets sent once. It should be at least at the beginning of the year, in the middle and then also at the end.”  
— staff/faculty participant

“Access to supports needs to be improved. At this time, there are not enough counsellors available for the student body.” — student participant

For some students, participating in an EL opportunity may require moving or temporarily relocating to a place that’s far away from the PSI and their networks of support. They may be in isolated and remote locations that further disconnect them from supports and resources. PSIs should remain vigilant about connecting with these students throughout their EL opportunity to ensure that they are able to access the supports they need.

### Promising Practices

- In addition to co-op student advisors, the University of Waterloo’s Co-operative Education program has designated [Advisors, Workplace Harassment](#) for each region

where an employer is located. Students are informed that they can contact their co-op student advisor or the relevant Advisor, Workplace Harassment should they be affected by harassment or discrimination.

- Students at the University of Guelph have both a work supervisor and a personal development mentor who work together to support the student. The personal development mentor provides an avenue for support that is not tied to their academic performance or their status at the organization where they are participating in EL.

## 12. Check in with students throughout their experiential learning opportunity.

Students consistently told us that they wanted the PSI to check in with them about sexual harassment throughout their EL opportunity.

“I think they need to talk about it at their check ins and have solutions for students. I think most women feel like there isn’t a lot that can be done or helped but maybe if they actually had support that wouldn’t be the case.”  
— student participant

“During interim co-op meetings, ask specifically about harassment.”  
— student participant

Check ins are important because they offer the student an opportunity to share any concerns or to make a disclosure. They are also an opportunity to remind students of resources and supports available.

Students also shared the importance of checking in multiple times throughout the EL opportunity.

“I think it would have been better if [our supervisor] checked on me and my coworker more often.” — student participant

Importantly, check ins with a student about their safety, feelings of safety, experiences or observations of (and concerns about) sexual harassment, cannot be done in the presence of the EL provider, supervisor or manager.

“Maybe in the co-op interviews, which are done with the employer present, have a section of the interview with just the student and ask if they feel safe and respected at work.” — student participant

“For example, in the site visits, the supervisor, me and the student are talking about workplace performance. But that’s not really the space where any of this can come up. Like, the student’s not going to say, ‘Well, you said this comment to me and that’s really offside.’ They’re never going to do that because of power dynamics.” — staff/faculty participant

### 13. Provide academic and workplace considerations to students affected by sexual harassment and/or violence.

Academic and workplace considerations are an important tool to support students affected by sexual harassment and/or violence. They might apply to students who, for example, couldn’t complete, or risk failing to complete, their EL requirement(s) or who didn’t meet grade expectations because of sexual harassment and/or violence.

“Academic considerations are temporary and informal, usually based on immediate circumstances...Academic considerations do not require formal documentation. They are usually provided by the office dedicated to GBV support, or can be obtained through self-advocacy. They can also be attained without entering a formal PSI process or investigation” — Jafry et al., 2022

PSIs should have a clear plan for providing academic and workplace considerations in the context of EL. This plan should consider how the institution will avoid disruptions to a student’s academic trajectory should they have to leave an EL setting. Students should understand what options they have, including that they can leave their EL opportunity to prioritize their safety and wellbeing.

Importantly, students should not be required to share their experience of sexual harassment in order to make adjustments to their EL.

Academic and workplace considerations should never be contingent on a student needing to “prove” their experience of sexual harassment and/or violence.

“[I think it should be] easier to leave a co-op term when you feel unsafe. For me, I was afraid of the consequences that quitting my co-op term would have on my standing in [my faculty]. They really drill into you that you CAN’T quit, will have to have a meeting with the dean, will be suspended or kicked out of your program, etc.” — student participant

“I've heard of cases where stuff has gone wrong with internships [...] a student's degree is in jeopardy. It's because if you've agreed to do an internship or it's required for your program, and then something goes wrong, and you want to get out of it and there's no process or policies, that creates a bias for a student. They might feel like, 'Oh, I can't stay in this particular degree.' Or if they do leave, maybe they won't be able to finish their degree or they'll be required to withdraw or something like that. So, I think having a policy around this would be really useful.” — student participant

## Resource

- See *Possibility Seeds'* [Developing Academic Considerations for Students Affected by Sexual and Gender-Based Violence at Canadian Post Secondary Institutions](#) for a draft guide, robust framework and promising practices to mitigate the impacts of gender-based violence on a student's academic experience.

## Key Recommendations for Experiential Learning Providers, Industries, and Professional and Regulatory Bodies

EL providers, industries and professions have an important role to play in addressing sexual harassment against students in EL.

The recommendations in this section focus on key areas of policy and protocol development, training and education, and support for broader efforts to address sexual harassment in EL. Some recommendations are intended to be met at an organizational level. Others are intended to be taken up at the industry or professional level, with support from industry, professional and regulatory bodies, unions, and associations. How the recommendations are applied will depend on the size and type of organization, the industry or profession, and other relevant factors.

## Further Attention Needed



As part of our Sexual Harassment in Experiential Learning Research-to-Action Project, we conducted preliminary research to better understand the needs and perspectives of EL providers on the issue. We have identified recommendations that can serve as a foundation for ongoing efforts to address the specific needs of each industry and profession; however, a comprehensive review of the policy landscape across all types of organizations, employers, industries and professions is still needed.



## 1. Ensure students completing experiential learning opportunities are explicitly included in organizational policies around sexual harassment and/or violence.

Students in EL should receive the same protections and supports as other workers in an organization. This should be clearly laid out in the scope of organizational policies that relate to workplace sexual harassment. It's important that the fact that the policy applies to students is explicit in the policy itself, and that everyone in the organization understands how the policy applies.

“Many [employers] need clarity on what policies apply (and some need a policy in the first place!) This is especially the case for smaller employers, and those with gender imbalances in their workforce.” — employer/EL provider participant

“I would like to see supervisors and employers make explicit statements about the policy, so that everyone who works in the [organization] not only knows the policy (from training) but also knows that the supervisors support and actively implement it.” — student participant

When including students in the scope of workplace sexual harassment policies, organizations should ensure that they also reference any applicable legislative or regulatory frameworks, as well as protocols or procedural documents that are specific to responding to sexual harassment, if available.

## 2. Develop a specific protocol for how the organization will respond to sexual harassment and/or violence against students completing experiential learning opportunities.

An organizational protocol that lays out the procedures to be followed when a student has been affected by sexual harassment and/or violence is important to account for the unique institutional, legal and regulatory context, along with the duties and responsibilities at play. It can help to address concerns around responsibility and liability that the organization might hold, allowing them to respond appropriately.

It also supports organizational accountability by demonstrating a commitment to addressing sexual harassment and/or violence in EL and protects against institutional liability and risk by setting out how the organization will take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of students.

By establishing a comprehensive protocol that addresses the challenges faced by students, EL providers can foster a safer and more inclusive environment. Such a protocol would contribute to a culture of trust and safety where students are empowered to come forward and report incidents of sexual harassment and/or violence without fear of reprisal or judgement. It would also send a strong message that the organization is committed to safeguarding the wellbeing and rights of all students in every aspect of their EL.

We recommend that EL providers work with PSIs when developing their protocols so that they align with any applicable PSI policies, protocols or practices. This will help to ensure a consistent, comprehensive response to sexual harassment and/or violence against students in EL.

### **3. Ensure experiential learning providers, employers, employees, supervisors and members are appropriately trained.**

EL providers, industries and professional or regulatory bodies should be educating their employees and members on sexual harassment. Training and education are essential components of any effort to address and prevent sexual harassment in the workplace. This is well-recognized. For example, in federally regulated workplaces, “everyone in the workplace, including the employer, must participate in training about harassment and violence” (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2023). EL providers and their employees should also be knowledgeable about their rights and responsibilities. They should understand the power dynamics at play for students and how these can shape experiences of sexual harassment.

Employees need to be able to recognize sexual harassment and the different ways it can manifest. This must include the different forms of oppression that intersect and feed into sexual harassment, including racism, ableism and transphobia. They should also understand the ways sexual harassment is often minimized or ignored.

Like their employees, EL providers, employers and supervisors should have a strong understanding of sexual harassment, with additional training on their roles and responsibilities under applicable legislation. Employers, EL providers and supervisors should also be trained in responding to disclosures in ways that are consistent, trauma-informed and grounded in the reality of the limits and responsibilities of their roles. This means understanding how to respond in a way that balances care and compassion with any:

- obligations and responsibilities around confidentiality, such as when there is a duty to report or other obligations to share a disclosure;
- obligations under institutional policies and protocols on responding to sexual harassment and violence in EL;
- obligations under federal, provincial and territorial legislative and regulatory requirements; and/or
- other professional obligations and duties.

“Staff and employers should also receive training regarding how to support students when they experience sexual harassment in experiential learning.” — staff/faculty participant

#### 4. Provide students with information about sexual harassment.

EL providers should provide all students with information on where to go for support, their disclosure and reporting options, and their rights.. This knowledge empowers students to acknowledge sexual harassment when it occurs, access the supports and resources they need, and make informed decisions about their options moving forward. It also helps to reduce barriers to reporting and accessing supports.

“[It would help to have] a training session at the beginning of the job outlining the available resources and reporting procedures if [sexual harassment] happens.” —student participant

Provide the following information to students during onboarding, as well as throughout their time at the organization:

#### The Supports Available and How They Can be Accessed

Students should be given information about supports and resources available through the organization (where available) as well as information about resources in the community. These should include resources that are safe spaces for people of all genders, including trans, non-binary and male-identified persons, as well as those that centre the experiences of BIPOC and 2SLBTQIA+ people.

## The Disclosure and Reporting Options Available

Students should be informed about the different options available should they choose to disclose or report sexual harassment. They should know the difference between a disclosure and a report and what each one triggers. Knowing their options and how to access them allows students to make informed decisions about the path that's best for them.

Some options the student should consider include:

- telling someone at the organization,
- making a report or complaint to the institution or to the EL provider,
- making a human rights complaint,
- making a workplace health and safety complaint,
- reporting the incident to a professional or regulatory body (where applicable),
- reporting the incident to the police.

It's important to be clear that a student does not need to make a report to access supports and that it is their decision which pathway to pursue.

## Their Rights and Responsibilities

Students also need to understand their rights and responsibilities, as well as those of the EL provider. This means that they should be educated on any relevant organizational policies and protocols; the EL provider's obligations to ensure a safe, harassment-free working and learning environment; and any applicable employment or labour laws.

### **5. Provide workplace or professional considerations to students affected by sexual harassment and/or violence.**

When students are participating in EL as a requirement to enter an industry or profession, sexual harassment not only impacts their wellbeing, but can also have significant impacts on their career trajectory. Professional and regulatory bodies can help to mitigate these impacts by building workplace or professional considerations (similar to the academic considerations provided by PSIs) into EL requirements.

In the context of post-secondary institutions, “[a]cademic considerations are temporary and informal, usually based on immediate circumstances” (Jafry et al., 2022). Similarly, workplace or professional considerations can be temporary informal measures put in place to respond to an immediate circumstance to ensure that the student’s career pathway is not hindered.

Professional and regulatory bodies should have a clear plan for providing workplace or professional considerations to students. This plan should consider how to avoid disruptions to a student’s career trajectory should they have to leave an EL setting. Students should understand what options they have, including that they can leave their EL opportunity to prioritize their safety and wellbeing without worrying about jeopardizing their ability to meet professional or regulatory requirements.

Importantly, students should not be required to share their experience of sexual harassment in order to make adjustments to their EL.

**Workplace or professional considerations should never be contingent on a student needing to “prove” their experience of sexual harassment and/or violence.**

## **6. Champion amendments to workplace harassment and violence legislation that will strengthen protections for students in experiential learning positions.**

Industries and professional bodies can have significant influence when advocating for legislation. As students continue to push for safer working and learning conditions, it’s important that they have their EL providers’ support. Students are future members of the same industries, professions or organizations, and working with them to ensure there are robust legislative and policy frameworks in place can help to establish trust and buy-in by demonstrating a commitment to their safety. Recognizing the long-term impacts of sexual harassment on a person’s wellbeing, it also helps to set students up for successful futures.

### **Key Recommendations for Governments**

Like PSIs and EL providers, governments have a role to play in addressing sexual harassment in EL. They can do this by developing and supporting robust policy and legislative frameworks to address discrepancies across the country.

This need was identified by student leaders in the [Our Campus, Our Safety](#) Action Plan. The document includes a call for provincial and territorial governments to “address sexual

violence in EL opportunities by implementing the legislative and regulatory recommendations collaboratively developed by students; EL professionals, faculty, and staff; and sexual violence experts” (Kemeni et al., 2022).

This section lays out those recommendations, with guidance for governments so that they can take up this call.

## **1. Invest in paid experiential learning opportunities.**

Governments at all levels should be making investments in paid EL opportunities, particularly in female-dominated industries. Female-dominated industries, such as nursing, social work and education, often require that students participate in mandatory unpaid internships, placements or other positions. According to the most recently available data from Statistics Canada across all levels of study and disciplines, work-integrated learning was a mandatory program requirement for 68% of male students and 87% of female students. Yet, for 49% of male students their work-integrated learning was paid, compared to only 19% of female students (Statistics Canada, 2020).

When EL positions are unpaid, it raises equity concerns and introduces a dimension of precariousness (see LOPRESPUB, 2020; Cranford & Vosko, n.d.), which is tied to increased “likelihood of experiencing workplace violence such as sexual harassment” (Bigras-Dutrisac et al., 2020). This is because there are fewer legal protections for unpaid positions when compared to paid positions, as unpaid work is not always covered by employment, labour and/or occupational health and safety legislation. Additionally, students may need to balance working part-time with both their academic responsibilities and their EL opportunity to make ends meet. This can add barriers to seeking support or pursuing available reporting options because there may simply not be enough time, leaving students silenced (Enos, 2018).

## **2. Introduce or strengthen existing provincial and territorial legislation to specifically protect students in experiential learning from sexual harassment and/or violence.**

Legislation to specifically protect students in EL (including paid and unpaid positions, as well as part-time and full-time work) from sexual harassment and/or violence can help to address the challenges and vulnerabilities of students while clarifying the responsibilities of EL providers and PSIs, along with the rights of students. Furthermore, introducing legislation is a way for provincial and territorial governments to demonstrate their

commitment to the safety of students as they explore their career pathways, and to support institutional, governmental and organizational accountability.

Following the introduction of this legislation, provincial and territorial governments should conduct regular reviews to address gaps, concerns or challenges that emerge. These reviews must include meaningful engagement with students most impacted by sexual harassment and/or violence in EL.

### Promising Practice

- In 2022, Quebec adopted Bill 14, [An Act to ensure the protection of trainees in the workplace](#), the first legislation in Canada that specifically focuses on the protection of students in EL positions. It grants, “the right to a training environment exempt from psychological harassment, including such behaviour in the form of verbal comments, actions or gestures of a sexual nature,” and includes responsibilities for workplaces, PSIs and professional or regulatory bodies to respect this right.” Notably, Quebec also has the highest proportion of institutional sexual violence policies that include EL within their scope as compared to the rest of the country.

According to our review, 66.7% of universities and 82.6% of colleges in Quebec include EL in their scope compared to 21.3% of universities and 20.0% of colleges in the other provinces and territories.

### 3. Strengthen provincial and territorial legislative and regulatory frameworks on workplace harassment and violence to protect students in experiential learning positions.

See [Appendix B: Legislative and Policy-based Frameworks for Workplace Protections Against Sexual Harassment and/or Violence](#) to see how the relevant provincial and territorial legislation aligns with this recommendation.

All provinces and territories should review existing legislative and regulatory frameworks on workplace harassment and violence to ensure that they adequately protect students in EL and address sexual harassment. This will help to clarify the role of employers and other EL providers in fostering a safe, harassment-free environment for students.

In conducting their reviews and making any necessary amendments, provincial and territorial governments should:

- consider the different forms of EL (including paid and unpaid positions, part-time and full-time work, etc.) and the implications they may have on the protections to be provided;
- be aware of the power differentials at play when students are relying on these positions to complete their educational requirements;
- consider the intersections of employment legislation and PSIs' sexual violence policies; and
- strategize about how to best educate employers, PSIs, professional or regulatory bodies and students on their rights and responsibilities under these legislative and policy frameworks.

#### a. Amend provincial and territorial workplace harassment and violence legislation to ensure students in experiential learning are covered.

Provincial and territorial legislation should be amended to include clearer language around which types of employees (i.e., salary-based, hourly-wage-based, or volunteer-based employees; unpaid or paid EL students at PSIs) are protected by the legislation and, consequently, workplace harassment and violence prevention plans, policies and procedures.

We recognize that some legislation is only legally applicable to a specific type of employee (such as EL students doing paid work) and therefore it may not be possible to include students in other forms of EL. In those cases, specifically enumerating these students in relevant definitions and provisions helps with clarity and creates a sense of inclusivity and security for the EL students to whom the legislation can apply. We encourage provinces and territories to explore alternative avenues to ensure that all students have legislated protections to support equitable and safe working and learning opportunities.

#### **Promising Practices**

- Ontario's [Occupational Health & Safety Act](#) explicitly includes students in EL under the definition of "worker," which is "a person who performs work or supplies services for monetary compensation...[and] a person who performs work or supplies services for no monetary compensation under a program approved by a



college of applied arts and technology, university, private career college or other post-secondary institution.”

- Yukon’s [Workers’ Safety & Compensation Act](#) provides a helpful level of specificity in its definition of “worker,” which includes “a person who performs services for an employer under an express or implied contract of employment or apprenticeship, whether paid or unpaid, a learner, a volunteer, or a self-employed person.”
- The Federal government has clear communications on the inclusion of student interns in the [Canada Labour Standards Code](#), including information explaining the [federal labour standards for interns and student interns](#) and the [federally regulated employer obligations towards interns and student interns](#).

## b. Amend provincial and territorial legislation on workplace harassment and violence to specifically address sexual harassment and/or violence.

It’s important to recognize sexual harassment and sexual violence as distinct forms of harassment and violence with their own unique and problematic impacts on society, rather than grouping them under workplace harassment, violence and/or bullying.

This requires that (where necessary) provincial and territorial legislation be amended to specifically address sexual harassment and/or violence as distinct from workplace harassment, violence and/or bullying. The specific inclusion of terms like sexual harassment and sexual violence is essential for fostering genuinely safe, inclusive workplaces. Specific language provides clarity, allows for targeted protections and reassures workers and EL students that these risks are being considered by employers.

### **Promising Practices**

- Ontario’s [Occupational Health & Safety Act](#) includes a definition of “workplace sexual harassment” that is distinct from “workplace harassment” and “workplace violence.”
- Prince Edward Island’s [Employment Standards Act](#) includes a stand-alone definition of “sexual harassment.” The Act also includes an entire section specific to sexual harassment.

## Note



When amending definitions for relevant terms like employee, worker, harassment, violence and bullying, the same level of specificity should be applied to each definition. When specific and comprehensive definitions are used for some relevant terms, and ambiguous or broad definitions are used for other relevant terms within the same piece of legislation, it creates confusion around how the legislation should be interpreted and applied. Ideally, relevant definitions will err on the side of specificity and comprehensiveness, but if there are relevant definitions that are written broadly and ambiguously, then other relevant definitions should be written to match that broadness.

### c. Amend provincial and territorial workplace harassment and violence legislation to promote institutional accountability and data collection on sexual harassment and/or violence in the workplace.

Requiring that each government publicly report the incidence of sexual harassment and/or violence in the workplaces to which each piece of workplace health and safety or employment standards legislation applies enhances protections by introducing a mechanism for accountability.

Provincial and territorial governments might consider requiring each workplace bound by the relevant legislation to submit a template-based annual report including:

- the number of instances of sexual harassment and/or violence that occurred that calendar year;
- basic details with respect to each incident, to the extent that it does not violate local freedom of information legislation;
- information as to how each reported incident was dealt with internally; and
- the policies, training and other relevant practices that the institution has in place to deal with the issues of workplace harassment, violence, bullying, sexual harassment and sexual violence.

### Promising Practice

- The Federal government's [Work Place Harassment and Violence Prevention Regulations: SOR/2020-130](#), which came into effect in January 2021, require

“employers to report annually all occurrences of harassment and violence to the Minister [of Labour] and secondly, that the Minister prepare and publish an annual report related to harassment and violence within federally regulated work places.”

#### **4. Provide legislative and regulatory guidance to post-secondary institutions on addressing and preventing sexual harassment and/or violence in experiential learning.**

Provincial and territorial governments have a role to play in addressing discrepancies in how PSIs address sexual harassment in EL. They can support a comprehensive, consistent approach by providing legislative and/or regulatory guidance around the scope of institutional sexual violence policies. This is an existing gap in all seven provinces with sexual violence legislation or regulatory frameworks.

This would align with the calls to action in the [Our Campus, Our Safety](#) Action Plan. In the document, student leaders call on provincial and territorial governments to strengthen sexual violence prevention legislation by including “provisions and guidance for institutions to develop mandatory sexual violence policies with students and community input across all processes of drafting and reviewing the policy that meets a set of minimum standards.” We recommend that one minimum standard for sexual violence policies be that governments provide provisions around the explicit inclusion of EL contexts within the scope of institutional policies.



# Part 4



## Areas for Further Exploration

As this report makes clear, we've only just begun the work needed to address the complex problem of sexual harassment in EL. Our research and interviews with stakeholders have illuminated critical areas that warrant further attention. Although these areas fall outside the scope of the current project, they are outlined in this section for future exploration.

Likewise, our conversations with students, staff and faculty brought forward ideas for tools and resources that would be beneficial, but which fell beyond the scope of the current project. We share them here in hopes that this work will be taken up by PSIs, governments, and EL providers and organizations as we continue to work towards safe, harassment-free EL for students.

### More Attention Needed

#### Specific EL Contexts

While our project took a broad look at sexual harassment in EL, more work is needed to better understand the nuances of addressing it in different forms of EL, in specific industries and professions, and regionally. Delving into the policy landscape and the challenges and concerns that emerge within these diverse contexts will illuminate tailored approaches for promoting student safety and wellbeing.

#### EL Opportunities Organized by Students

Our project focused on EL activities organized by PSIs. However, in some cases (particularly in humanities and related fields) students may seek out and facilitate their own opportunities. While the institution typically reviews and approves the chosen provider, the level of institutional engagement with the EL provider can vary greatly. This raises questions about the extent to which the institution can provide support, guidance and protection. Factors like the establishment of institutional frameworks, communication channels, accountability mechanisms and avenues for addressing potential sexual harassment within this context should be investigated.

#### Trades and Apprenticeships

A deeper exploration is needed to equip stakeholders with targeted strategies and recommendations for understanding the concerns and challenges of protecting against sexual harassment in apprenticeships for the trades.

## International EL Opportunities

More work is needed to respond to the concerns and challenges of protecting against and responding to sexual harassment when students are participating in EL outside of Canada, particularly given the complexity of applicable laws and policies.

## EL in High School

While our research centered on EL in the post-secondary sector, high school students, as well as students in professional or vocational schools, might also engage in EL. Addressing sexual harassment within high school EL settings calls for a nuanced approach and tailored strategies and interventions given the age of the students and the institutional responsibilities at play. This seems especially important given the general lack of measures in place to protect high school students from sexual and gender-based violence within their educational environments.

## EL Pathways Beyond Post-secondary

We recognize that EL may continue after a relationship with a PSI has ended, as is the case in some professional programs. More attention is needed to ensure that those entering their careers through such pathways are protected and supported.

## Online Spaces

Since the pandemic, the educational world has fundamentally changed. It's now common for students to take online classes. It's even possible to complete an entire degree without ever setting foot on campus. This transformation extends to EL, where students might perform tasks remotely for an EL provider. The unique dynamics of conducting EL online may require considerations or recommendations that fell beyond the scope of this project.

## Information Sharing Between PSIs

Developing recordkeeping and information-sharing procedures within a PSI is a challenge in and of itself, but more attention is also needed when it comes to finding ways to share information about potentially unsafe EL providers between PSIs.

## Risk Assessment Tool

There is no standard metric to assess risk of sexual harassment in EL. Existing risk assessment tools for EL do not consider sexual harassment, and generalized risk assessments tools cannot be applied accurately to sexual harassment or to other forms of

gender-based violence. *Possibility Seeds'* [Gender-Based and Sexualized Violence Community Risk Assessment Tool for Post-Secondary Settings](#)—the first evidence-based tool to assess the risk that an incident or report of gender-based or sexualized violence poses to a school community—includes a factor on the living and learning climate, which includes EL settings. This is an important tool for assessing the risk posed by individuals who have caused harm, but further work is needed to develop a standard metric for assessing the risk of sexual harassment in an EL setting.

## Resource Ideas from Stakeholders

### Case Scenarios

Develop realistic case scenarios that depict situations related to sexual harassment in EL. These could help staff and faculty in PSIs to better understand and respond to such situations.

### Sample Questions for Check-ins

Provide a set of sample questions to ask at regular check-ins with students in EL. This will help to gauge workplace culture and make sure the student isn't being subjected to sexual harassment.

### Email Template for Students Undertaking EL

Create a draft email to be sent to students before their EL begins. This email should outline what they need to know about their EL opportunity and include information about sexual harassment, support and resources.

### Flowcharts Outlining the Steps to Take Following a Disclosure or Report

Design visual flowcharts that outline what should happen after a disclosure or report of sexual harassment in EL, making it easier for students to understand the process and guide them to available resources.

### Information for EL Providers

Develop a concise information sheet with essential information about sexual harassment in EL, including the responsibilities of EL providers and how institutional policies and procedures apply within the context of EL. This could serve to both educate EL providers and help them to initiate conversation with PSIs.

## **Educational Material for International Students**

Create educational content tailored for international students, covering topics such as human rights, applicable labour standards in EL and information about sexual harassment and the effects that making a report could have on their study permit, work visa or immigration status.

## **Information for Senior Administration**

Produce a comprehensive guide aimed at senior decision-makers within PSIs to emphasize the importance of addressing sexual harassment in EL. This guide would inform them about legal rights and responsibilities of PSIs in fostering safe and harassment-free EL for students.

## **Customizable EL Database**

Create a database of resources to address sexual harassment in EL that is accessible across institutions to allow for resource and best practice sharing.

## **EL Community of Practice**

Facilitate a community of practice where stakeholders can connect, share insights, discuss challenges and work collectively towards creating harassment-free EL environments.



## Conclusion

Throughout the Sexual Harassment in Experiential Learning Research-to-Action project, we have gleaned valuable insights into what can be done to enhance the safety of EL environments. We've heard specific concerns that require immediate attention, and have learned about further challenges that must be addressed. Additionally, we've been inspired by an array of innovative ideas and promising practices for driving positive change. We've used this knowledge to develop practical tools, resources and recommendations designed to foster EL contexts that are safer from sexual harassment.

But this is only the beginning of what we hope will become a transformative journey. Moving forward, collective action is imperative. We call upon PSIs, governmental bodies, EL providers and other stakeholders to implement the proposed strategies and recommendations. Post-secondary institutions must prioritize the safety and well-being of students, ensuring that comprehensive policies and practices are in place. Governments should actively support initiatives to address sexual harassment in EL, promoting legislative and policy measures. EL providers are urged to integrate awareness, prevention and response mechanisms into their operations. And, last but not least, ongoing research, dialogue and collective commitment are essential to create lasting change.

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## Appendix A: Findings from *Possibility Seeds'* Literature Reviews and Environmental Scans

In 2020, *Possibility Seeds* conducted a preliminary environmental scan on the incidence and impact of sexual and gender-based violence in experiential learning (EL). The scan confirmed that there is a significant gap in the research on this issue, particularly in the Canadian context. Existing research focuses on sexual and gender-based violence in the workplace generally, without naming the unique experiences of students in EL. While there are some resources that speak to sexual and gender-based violence in these contexts, the research is limited and not generalizable to the issue across institutions and fields of study.

Our Research-to-Action Project focused on sexual harassment (one form of sexual and gender-based violence) in Canadian EL settings broadly. As part of the project, we conducted a literature review on the issue, and environmental scans to understand the legislative and policy landscape. Our findings are detailed below, beginning with an overview of sexual harassment, including how it is defined, as well as prevalence rates in post-secondary, workplace and industry- or profession-specific contexts. This is followed by brief notes on the impacts of sexual harassment and barriers to reporting. Next, we provide an overview of the legislative and policy landscape. Finally, we include available literature on addressing sexual harassment in EL.

### Sexual Harassment

#### Sexual Harassment Defined

There is no standard definition for sexual harassment in Canada. Definitions vary depending on the legal, policy, institutional and social context, although most definitions are found in the context of workplace sexual harassment. At the federal level, sexual harassment is considered under the definition for harassment and violence, which is defined as: “any action, conduct or comment, including of a sexual nature, that can reasonably be expected to cause offence, humiliation or other physical or psychological injury or illness to an employee, including any prescribed action, conduct or comment” (Canada Labour Code, 1985, §122(1)).

Likewise, there is no standard definition of sexual harassment in most provinces and territories. At the provincial and territorial level, only Ontario and Prince Edward Island

include a standalone definition in workplace safety legislation. In Ontario, workplace sexual harassment is defined as “engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace because of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, where the course of comment or conduct is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome, or making a sexual solicitation or advance where the person making the solicitation or advance is in a position to confer, grant or deny a benefit or advancement to the worker and the person knows or ought reasonably to know that the solicitation or advance is unwelcome” (Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1990, §1(1)). In Prince Edward Island, sexual harassment is defined as “any conduct, comment, gesture or contact of a sexual nature (a) that is likely to cause offence or humiliation to any employee; or (b) that might, on reasonable grounds, be perceived by that employee as placing a condition of a sexual nature on employment or on any opportunity for training or promotion” (Employment Standards Act, 1988, §24).

As Bigras-Dutrisac et al. (2020) note, “defining sexual harassment in broad and dynamic terms allows us to better understand why so many victim-survivors are reluctant to label their experiences of gendered or sexualized harassment as sexual harassment...The “sexual harassment” label is often fraught with cultural and historical associations that can feel limiting for those whose experiences do not match up with the conventional or normative definitions.”

## **Sexual Harassment & Intersectionality**

Understanding sexual harassment requires applying an intersectional lens. Intersectionality (a term coined by Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 and built on a history of Black feminist thought) is “a lens, a prism, for seeing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other” (Crenshaw, quoted in Steinmetz, 2020). It helps us to understand how a person’s identities and their social locations are interconnected and shape the ways they experience gender-based violence.

A key recommendation in *Courage to Act: Developing a National Draft Framework to Address and Prevent Gender-Based Violence at Post-Secondary Institutions in Canada* is for post-secondary institutions to “[i]mplement an intersectional equity approach to addressing and preventing gender-based violence” (Khan, Rowe, & Bidgood, 2019). According to Khan, Rowe, and Bidgood (2019): “Intersectionality should be an underpinning of any framework that addresses GBV. It recognizes that all experiences of gender-based



violence (GBV) are not the same. Rather, our conversations, interventions, prevention strategies, and support services should be facilitated to respond to the needs of the broader campus community while also providing relevant supports and services based on an individual's needs and lived experience. Some individuals or groups experience GBV at higher rates. Intersectionality recognizes that a person's experience will be impacted by many social factors, including their positions within the structures of their campus" (p. 30).

In the context of workplace sexual harassment, Bigras-Dutrisac et al. (2020) name the importance of taking an intersectional approach because "[w]hile sexual harassment occurs across all occupations and industries, social location and employment status place some workers at higher risk than others." The authors point to a study by MacQuarrie et al. (2004) that looked at the personal experiences of women who had been subjected to sexual harassment. These "women reported that their race, ethnic identity, citizenship status, disability, sexual orientation, language, and other perceived difference was as much at the root of their harassment as their gender" (Bigras-Dutrisac et al., 2020).

The Gender-based Analysis Plus Assessment conducted by the federal government as part of the development of Bill C-65 and the Regulations discusses the differential impacts that harassment and violence have on various groups, specifically "women, men, sexual minorities (LGBTQ2+), Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and workers in Canadian territories" (Government of Canada, 2020).

Statistics Canada's study on workers' experiences of inappropriate sexualized behaviours, sexual assault and gender-based discrimination found that, "[a]s with other forms of victimization and misconduct in other settings, inappropriate sexualized behaviours and gender-based discrimination at work were more common among young people, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ2 people" (Burczycka, 2021).

### **Sexual Harassment in the Post-secondary Context & the Workplace**

Sexual and gender-based violence is a prevalent issue in post-secondary settings. In 2019, 71% of students surveyed reported witnessing or experiencing unwanted sexual behaviours in Canadian post-secondary institutions (Burczycka, 2020). However, little is known about students' experiences of sexual harassment in EL contexts, specifically.

Sexual harassment is also a prevalent concern in Canadian workplaces. Notably, research indicates that students face the same risks as employees in the workplace, including sexual

harassment and physical and emotional intimidation (Newhook, 2016). In 2018, the Angus Reid Institute surveyed 2004 Canadian adults who were members of the Angus Reid Forum. Fifty-two percent of female respondents said that they had been sexually harassed at work in their lifetimes (Kurl & Holliday, 2018). In 2020, the federal government, through the Department for Women and Gender Equality (WAGE), funded Statistic Canada's first Survey on Sexual Misconduct at Work, finding that "47% of workers in the provinces either witnessed or experienced some sort of inappropriate sexualized or discriminatory behaviour in a work-related setting in the previous year" (Burczycka, 2021).<sup>4</sup> In 2022, the Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children and the Canadian Labour Congress published their Respect at Work Report in which they reported that 43.9% of survey respondents experienced sexual harassment in the workplace (Berlingieri et al., 2022).<sup>5</sup>

## Industry or Profession-specific Experiences of Students and Employees

Canadian research on industry-specific experiences of sexual harassment is limited, therefore the following provides an overview of research done in Canadian, American and international contexts. Research from American and international contexts is included where we can infer similar findings in Canada. Additionally, information on students' experiences of sexual harassment is limited, and therefore an overview of employees within specific industries and professions is included with the understanding that students' experiences in these workplaces may be similar to those of the employees, as noted by Newhook (2016).

Male-dominated industries and professions—those where men occupy positions "that can directly influence career options of women who are subordinate to them—have high rates of sexual harassment" (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, et al., 2018). This was confirmed in Statistics Canada's 2020 Survey on Sexual Misconduct at Work, which found that "47% of women working in trades, transportation, equipment operation and related occupations experienced [inappropriate sexualized behaviour] at work in the past year" (Burczycka, 2021). Newhook (2016) found that female co-op students were more

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<sup>4</sup> The Survey on Sexual misconduct at Work included individuals aged 15 and older living in the Canadian provinces who were working in a paid or unpaid job or internship not organized through a school, or who had done so in the past.

<sup>5</sup> This is the largest research study on workplace harassment and violence to date, but it does not include students.

vulnerable to sexual harassment when working in engineering, a predominately male-dominated industry. Meanwhile, American research found that “women in engineering and medicine faced more sexual harassment in the course of their studies than women in non-SEM [science, engineering, and medicine] majors or women in science majors” (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, et al., 2018).

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, et al. (2018) state that women experience sexual harassment in male-dominated fields because of organizational tolerance for harassment within those spaces. Male colleagues in these fields have a higher degree of authority and power, receive preferential treatment and are excused when exhibiting sexually harassing behaviours. Additionally, within the sciences field, if sexual harassment occurred during field education, students were often unaware of the reporting process and the perpetrators were usually senior to the trainees (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, et al., 2018).

However, sexual harassment is also a concern in professions that are predominately female, particularly when these professions involve work with the public. For example, an American study on the prevalence of sexual harassment among 515 social work students found that 55% of participants had at least one incident of sexual harassment in their field placement. The most common form of sexual harassment was inappropriate jokes or stories, although 63% of the individuals who experienced sexual harassment said that they experienced more than one form (Moylan & Wood, 2016). More than half (53%) of women working in sales and service occupations who responded to Statistics Canada’s 2020 Survey on Sexual Misconduct at Work reported being targeted for inappropriate sexualized behaviours (Burczycka, 2021).

Health-related occupations are also known to have high rates of sexual harassment. In Canada, 30% of women working in health-related occupations, which include nurses and doctors, had been subjected to inappropriate sexualized behaviours. Women in these occupations reported higher rates of being subjected to inappropriate sexualized behaviour than men, 19% of whom were subjected to these behaviours (Burczycka, 2021). According to the National Federation of Nurses Union report in 2017, 61% of nurses reported some form of violence within a 12-month period (Reichert, 2017). An international, systematic review of sexual harassment rates against nurses found 43% of

nurses reported some form of sexual harassment including verbal, non-verbal, physical and psychological (Kahsay et al., 2020).

Research on the creative industries in the U.S. found 54% of self-employed female freelance respondents had been sexually harassed at least once (Honeybook, 2018). Creative industries include photographers, graphic designers and event planners. In these work environments, generally characterized by flexibility and informal work structures, 77% of sexual harassment experienced was in the form of unprofessional comments, 76% in the form of demeaning nicknames and 60% involved physical intimidations (Honeybook, 2018). Due to the flexible nature of their work, employees in the creative industries may be more prone to sexual harassment over other more regulated industries with strong support networks.

In the American entertainment industry, 94% of women surveyed reported experiencing sexual harassment or assault. Of the types of sexual harassment and assault reported, 87% were unwelcome sexual comments, jokes or gestures made to them or about them (Puente & Kelly, 2018).

Research has shown that sexual harassment and violence is also prevalent in journalism, specifically among women. For example, in a 2014 survey conducted by the international Women's Media Foundation almost 50% of female journalists said that they had been sexually harassed at work (Barton & Storm, 2014).

While students' EL may take place in contexts and industries not discussed above, from these studies we can extrapolate that sexual harassment is a cross-industry problem. Taking the time to research and understand students' experiences in these workplaces as part of EL programs can contribute knowledge about the prevalence, types of incidents and support services required to address this issue.

## **Impacts of Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment can have negative impacts on the mental, emotional and physical wellbeing of those affected.

Research shows that people who are subjected to sexual harassment can experience emotional distress, increased stress, anxiety and/or depression, decreased self-esteem, social isolation, disrupted sleep, loss of appetite, eating disorders, headaches and an inability to concentrate (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, et al.,

2018; Lynch, 2019; Government of Canada, 2020; Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2011). In some instances, people subjected to sexual harassment may experience post-traumatic stress disorder or have suicidal ideation or behaviours (Tucker & Mondino, 2020; Lynch, 2019; Berlingieri, et al., 2022). There is a disproportionate impact on the mental health of Indigenous people subjected to sexual harassment in the workplace. Tucker and Mondino (2020) found that two in five Indigenous people, compared to one in five non-Indigenous people, reported negative impacts on their mental health.

Sexual harassment also has negative impacts on a person's work and career, including: lost time from missing or shortened workdays; decreased productivity and difficulty doing their work; avoiding work-related social function; losing trust in their workplace; changing jobs, transferring or quitting (or wanting to transfer or quit); being transferred (unwillingly), suspended or fired; receiving poor performance ratings; and being denied a promotion or pay increase (Berlingieri, et al., 2022; Burczycka, 2021). Research also points to the negative impact on a person's reputation and lost earnings as consequences of sexual harassment (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, et al., 2018; Tucker & Mondino, 2020).

For institutions and organizations, failure to address sexual harassment and violence can have a high financial cost. In their study, *Me Too: Does Workplace Sexual Harassment Hurt Firm Value?* Au et al. (2022) found that North American firms with high rates of sexual harassment had a decline in operating profitability and increase in labour costs, compared to firms with low rates of sexual harassment. Within educational institutions, sexual harassment that causes students to leave the institutions leads to a loss of knowledge and is costly to the individual institutions (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, et al., 2018). This is because the institution is investing time and resources on the student and when they leave, lose their investment and subsequent tax paying dollars (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, et al., 2018).

## Barriers to Reporting

Sexual harassment, like other forms of gender-based violence, is underreported (Bigras-Dutrisac et al., 2020; Lynch, 2019; Government of Canada, 2020). According to the Government of Canada's Regulatory Impact Analysis Statement for the Work Place Harassment and Violence Prevention Regulations, some studies estimate that "up to 80% of occurrences g[o] unreported to anyone." While there is limited research exploring barriers

to reporting for student in EL as compared to workplace employees, the relationships and power dynamics that shape EL opportunities suggest that students' experiences of sexual harassment may go unreported at similar or higher rates. This is supported by Wood and Moylan's (2017) study of American social work students which found that only 5.6% of the students who reported their experiences of sexual harassment during their placement did so through "formal agency or campus reporting mechanisms," and of the students "who did make formal reports, 43.6% said that the response to their report was unhelpful" (p. 719).

There are several reasons why individuals may not report sexual harassment. Common factors include: feelings of shame or fearing what others might think or say or that they may not be believed; not thinking the incident was "serious enough" or not wanting to label it as sexual harassment; not knowing what behaviour constitutes sexual harassment; a lack of support or not knowing what supports are available; and not knowing who to report to or a lack of reporting options (Wood & Moylan, 2017; Bigras-Dutrisac et al., 2020; Lynch, 2019; Government of Canada, 2020). While most of the literature is from a workplace sexual harassment context, it is notable that Wood and Moylan (2017) name the same factors in the context of students in an EL setting.

Barriers to reporting for students and workers also include concerns about retaliation (Wood & Moylan, 2017; Lynch, 2019; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, et al., 2018; Bigras-Dutrisac et al., 2020). A study from the TIME'S UP Legal Defense Fund found that "[m]ore than 7 in 10 survivors who experienced workplace sexual harassment faced some form of retaliation, including but not limited to, termination, being sued for defamation, and denial of promotions" (Tucker & Mondino, 2020, p. 4). The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, et al. (2018) names retaliation as a common practice in academic settings and identifies that "retaliation becomes more likely and severe when there is a power differential between the target and the harasser, as is often the case."

Similarly, individuals may choose not to report for fear of the negative impact it could have on their career. The National Sexual Violence Resource Center found that three out of four women in the film industry who were subjected to sexual harassment or assault chose not to report the behaviour "because of fear of personal or professional backlash or retaliation" (Puentes & Kelly, 2018). Students may be particularly concerned as they are just entering their careers, seeking necessary experience, and building networks for the first time. The

Canadian Bar Association's Women Lawyers Forum explain how young lawyers and law students are vulnerable to sexual harassment because "reporting that behaviour can be a career-limiting move" (Careless, 2019).

## Legislative & Policy Landscape

At the time of writing, only seven provinces had sexual violence legislation or regulatory frameworks for post-secondary institutions, including British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. However, no legislation or regulatory framework provides provisions around the explicit inclusion of EL contexts within the scope of institutional policies. In 2019, Crabb et al. surveyed 155 Canadian post-secondary institutions and found that 70% had specific, accessible sexual violence and harassment policies. The same study noted that there is limited research on sexual violence and harassment policies related to EL.

Of the post-secondary sexual violence policies we reviewed, only 25 of 79 university policies and 71 of 139 college policies<sup>6</sup> explicitly included EL within their scope. While no institutional policies explicitly excluded EL contexts, there was a concerning lack of clarity as to whether EL contexts were included within the scope of the majority of policies.

Few post-secondary institutions have institution-wide policies on EL that are publicly available for review. Of the 47 policies we reviewed, only six directly mentioned sexual harassment and/or violence. More commonly, policies spoke to safety generally. Of the policies that mentioned sexual harassment and/or violence, two placed the responsibility on the student to protect themselves. The only document that named the responsibility of the EL provider was Red Deer Polytechnic's Work Integrated Learning Procedures; however, the Procedures name harassment, discrimination and bullying broadly, and do not speak to sexual harassment and/or violence specifically.

In Canada, Part II of the Canada Labour Code and the Work Place Harassment and Violence Prevention Regulations provides occupational health and safety protections for employees of federally-regulated industries or workplaces, including protections against harassment and violence. While not considered "employees," student interns performing activities for

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<sup>6</sup> This includes CEGEPs, subsidized private schools and government-funded establishments. It doesn't include non-subsidized private schools as their policies related to sexual violence are usually not available online.

federally regulated employers are afforded the full occupational health and safety protections provided to employees under the Code (Government of Canada, 2022). The definition of harassment and violence used in the Code includes sexual harassment and violence (An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code, 2018). However, there is no standalone definition of sexual harassment provided in the Code or Regulations, and sexual harassment is only directly named in the Regulations in reference to data collection.

All provinces and territories have legislative protections against workplace harassment and/or violence, but not all these protections are broad or robust enough to protect students in EL positions from harm.



See [Appendix B: Legislative and Policy-based Frameworks for Workplace Protections Against Sexual Harassment and/or Violence](#) for an overview of the legislative and regulatory frameworks in each province and territory.

For example, only British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, Saskatchewan and Yukon specifically include students in their legislative and regulatory frameworks on workplace harassment and violence. More commonly, legislative and regulatory frameworks are unclear, partially inclusive (i.e., they only apply to students completing paid opportunities) or they explicitly exclude students completing unpaid work.

In 2022, Quebec adopted Bill 14, An Act to ensure the protection of trainees in the workplace, the first legislation in Canada that specifically focuses on the protection of students in EL positions. It grants, “the right to a training environment exempt from psychological harassment, including such behaviour in the form of verbal comments, actions or gestures of a sexual nature” and details responsibilities for workplaces, post-secondary institutions and professional or regulatory bodies to respect this right. Notably, Quebec also has the highest proportion of institutional sexual violence policies that include EL within their scope as compared to the rest of the country. (Sixty-six point seven percent of universities and 82.6% of colleges in Quebec include EL in their scope compared to 21.3% of universities and 20.0% of colleges in the other provinces and territories).

Students are also protected against sexual harassment through human rights legislation, which is governed at the federal, provincial and territorial level. While it is commonly considered to be “harassment on a prohibited ground of discrimination” (Canadian Human



Rights Act, 1985, §14(2)), sexual harassment is only explicitly named in the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, *New Brunswick's Human Rights Code*, *Nova Scotia's Human Rights Act* and *Ontario's Human Rights Code*. *Manitoba's* and *Yukon's Human Rights Codes* consider sexual harassment under their definitions of harassment. *Newfoundland's*, the *Northwest Territories'*, and *Nunavut's Human Rights Acts*, as well as *Quebec's Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*, consider harassment broadly. *Alberta's Human Rights Act*, *British Columbia's Human Rights Code*, *Prince Edward Island's Human Rights Act* and *Saskatchewan's Human Rights Code* do not include reference to harassment in any form. However, where it is unnamed, sexual harassment (or harassment more broadly) are sometimes defined in supplementary materials. For example, the *British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal's* (n.d.) glossary includes sexual harassment under its definition for harassment.

There are also discrepancies in how students are named, or more commonly not named, in human rights legislation. We looked at the definition of "employee" or "employment" and found that there were no examples where students were explicitly included. However, according to the *Alberta Human Rights Commission* (2017): "Under human rights law, courts and human rights tribunals have found employment relationships in situations which are broader than conventional ideas of what is "employment." Independent contractors, subcontractors, taxi drivers, army cadets and volunteers have all been found to be in employment relationships under human rights legislation and therefore protected against discrimination."

## Addressing Sexual Harassment in EL

Students in EL are experiencing sexual harassment in ways that have not been extensively evidenced in the research. In the limited research that does exist, some recommendations to address this issue have been identified.

For example, in their Master's thesis considering students' experiences of sexual violence and harassment in co-op in the Master of Public Administration and Master of Business Administration at the University of Victoria, Lynch (2019) suggests students be provided with education about harassment before starting their co-op, during their co-op and after it has ended. Before starting a placement, students should be provided with access to information about harassment and where to go for support. During placement, the onus falls on the educational institution to remain available in the form of email to reiterate what harassment can look like and to offer an anonymous platform for students to ask

questions. Following the completion of the placement, the educational institution should send out an anonymous survey to all co-op students with questions about their experience, including harassment.

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, et al. (2018) names the importance of changing culture and climate to address sexual harassment more effectively in higher education SEM fields. The authors found several factors that support environments free from sexual harassment. These included: having “[s]trong and effective leaders at all levels of the organization”; fostering “[e]nvironments with organizational systems and structures that value and support diversity, inclusion, and respect”; “[r]educing hierarchical power structures”; building systems and policies that support persons subjected to sexual harassment; “provid[ing] options for informal and formal reporting”; developing transparent and accountable sexual harassment policies; “measuring the climate in relation to sexual harassment, diversity, and respect, and assessing progress in reducing sexual harassment”; and implementing incentives for system-wide change. The authors also note the importance of professional societies in addressing the issue on a broad scale.

## Conclusion

There is strong research exploring sexual and gender-based violence in post-secondary settings as well as sexual harassment in the workplace; however, there is a significant gap in the literature exploring sexual harassment in EL settings. While we can infer some understanding from the existing research, more attention is needed to understand the specific experiences of students in EL. There are also identifiable gaps in the current response and support, and legislative and policy landscapes that leave students in EL vulnerable to sexual harassment and without clear pathways to accessing reporting and support options. In conclusion, there is a clear need for research exploring this issue.

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# Appendix B: Legislative and Policy-Based Frameworks for Workplace Protections Against Sexual Harassment and/or Violence

## Federal

### Workplace Sexual Harassment and Violence Legislation

- [Canada Labour Code](#)
- [Work Place Harassment and Violence Prevention Regulations](#)

**Recommendation: Amend provincial and territorial workplace harassment and violence legislation to ensure students in experiential learning are covered.**

- Student interns are covered by the Canada Labour Code and Work Place Harassment and Violence Prevention Regulations.

**Recommendation: Amend provincial and territorial legislation on workplace harassment and violence to specifically address sexual harassment and/or violence.**

- Language used: “harassment and violence.”
- There is no stand-alone definition of sexual harassment or sexual violence.
- The definition of harassment and violence includes “any action, conduct or comment, including of a sexual nature, that can reasonably be expected to cause offence, humiliation or other physical or psychological injury or illness to an employee, including any prescribed action, conduct or comment.”

## Alberta

### Workplace Sexual Harassment and Violence Legislation

- [Occupational Health & Safety Act](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Code](#)

**Recommendation: Amend provincial and territorial workplace harassment and violence legislation to ensure students in experiential learning are covered.**

- It is unclear whether students in paid experiential learning positions are covered under the definition of “worker,” which means “a person engaged in an occupation, including a person who performs or supplies services for no monetary compensation for an organization or employer.”
- Students in *unpaid* experiential learning positions are **not** covered under the definition of “worker,” which states it “does not include a student in learning activities conducted by or within an educational institution for which no compensation is paid to the student.”

**Recommendation: Amend provincial and territorial legislation on workplace harassment and violence to specifically address sexual harassment and/or violence.**

- Language used: “harassment,” “violence.”
- There is no stand-alone definition of sexual harassment or sexual violence.
- The definition of harassment includes “conduct, comment, bullying or action because of ...gender, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation” and/or “a sexual solicitation or advance.”
- The definition of “violence” includes “domestic or sexual violence.”

## British Columbia

### Workplace Sexual Harassment and Violence Legislation

- [Workers Compensation Act](#)
- [Policies for the Workers Compensation Act](#)

**Recommendation: Amend provincial and territorial workplace harassment and violence legislation to ensure students in experiential learning are covered.**

- Students are covered under the definition of “worker,” which includes “a person who has entered into or works under a contract of service or apprenticeship” and “a person who is a learner who is not under a contract of service or apprenticeship.”



**Recommendation: Amend provincial and territorial legislation on workplace harassment and violence to specifically address sexual harassment and/or violence.**

- Language used: “bullying and harassment.”
- There is no stand-alone definition of sexual harassment or sexual violence.
- The definition of bullying and harassment does not reference bullying or harassment of a sexual nature.

## Manitoba

### Workplace Sexual Harassment and Violence Legislation

- [Workplace Safety and Health Act and Regulation](#)

**Recommendation: Amend provincial and territorial workplace harassment and violence legislation to ensure students in experiential learning are covered.**

- Students are covered under the definition of “worker,” which includes “any person undergoing training or serving an apprenticeship at an educational institution or at any other place.”

**Recommendation: Amend provincial and territorial legislation on workplace harassment and violence to specifically address sexual harassment and/or violence.**

- Language used: “harassment,” “violence.”
- There is no stand-alone definition of sexual harassment or sexual violence.
- The definition of harassment includes conduct that is “objectionable if based on sex, gender, sexual orientation etc.”
- The definition of violence does not mention sexual violence.

## New Brunswick

### Workplace Sexual Harassment and Violence Legislation

- [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#)
- [New Brunswick Regulation 91-191](#)

**Recommendation: Amend provincial and territorial workplace harassment and violence legislation to ensure students in experiential learning are covered.**

- It is unclear whether students in experiential learning positions are covered under the definition of “employee,” which means “a person employed at or in a place of employment, or a person at or in a place of employment for any purpose in connection therewith.”

**Recommendation: Amend provincial and territorial legislation on workplace harassment and violence to specifically address sexual harassment and/or violence.**

- Language used: “harassment,” “violence.”
- There is no stand-alone definition of sexual harassment or sexual violence.
- The definition of harassment includes “sexual harassment.”
- The definition of violence includes “sexual violence, intimate partner violence and domestic violence.”

## **Newfoundland & Labrador**

### **Workplace Sexual Harassment and Violence Legislation**

- [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Regulations](#)

**Recommendation: Amend provincial and territorial workplace harassment and violence legislation to ensure students in experiential learning are covered.**

- It is unclear whether students in experiential learning positions are covered under the definition of “worker,” which means “a person engaged in an occupation.”

**Recommendation: Amend provincial and territorial legislation on workplace harassment and violence to specifically address sexual harassment and/or violence.**

- Language used: “harassment,” “violence.”
- There is no stand-alone definition of sexual harassment or sexual violence.
- The definition of harassment does not reference sexual harassment.
- The definition of violence does not reference sexual violence.

## Northwest Territories

### Workplace Sexual Harassment and Violence Legislation

- [Safety Act](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Regulations](#)



*Notably, the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations provide that employers are required to credit the time spent in counselling due to the violence experienced at the workplace, which we view as an equitable mechanism for workers who have experienced harm while on the job.*

### **Recommendation: Amend provincial and territorial workplace harassment and violence legislation to ensure students in experiential learning are covered.**

- It is likely that students in experiential learning positions are covered under the definition of “worker,” which means “a person engaged in work for an employer, whether working with or without remuneration,” but greater specificity would be helpful.

### **Recommendation: Amend provincial and territorial legislation on workplace harassment and violence to specifically address sexual harassment and/or violence.**

- Language used: “harassment,” “violence.”
- There is no stand-alone definition of sexual harassment or sexual violence.
- The definition of harassment does not reference sexual harassment.
- The definition of violence does not reference sexual violence.

## Nova Scotia

### Workplace Sexual Harassment and Violence Legislation

- [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#)
- [Workplace Health and Safety Regulations](#), specifically the [Violence in the Workplace Regulations](#)

**Recommendation: Amend provincial and territorial workplace harassment and violence legislation to ensure students in experiential learning are covered.**

- It is unclear whether students in experiential learning positions are covered under the definition of “employee,” which means “a person who is employed to do work and includes a dependent contractor.”

**Recommendation: Amend provincial and territorial legislation on workplace harassment and violence to specifically address sexual harassment and/or violence.**

- Language used: “violence.”
- There is no stand-alone definition of sexual harassment or sexual violence.
- The definition of violence does not reference sexual violence.
- There is no mention of harassment or sexual harassment.

## Nunavut

### Workplace Sexual Harassment and Violence Legislation

- [Safety Act](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Regulations](#)

**Recommendation: Amend provincial and territorial workplace harassment and violence legislation to ensure students in experiential learning are covered.**

- It is likely that students in experiential learning positions are covered under the definition of “worker,” which means “a person engaged in work for an employer, whether working with or without remuneration,” but greater specificity would be helpful.

**Recommendation: Amend provincial and territorial legislation on workplace harassment and violence to specifically address sexual harassment and/or violence.**

- Language used: “harassment,” “violence.”
- There is no stand-alone definition of sexual harassment or sexual violence.
- The definition of harassment does not reference sexual harassment.
- The definition of violence does not reference sexual violence.

## Ontario

### Workplace Sexual Harassment and Violence Legislation

- [Occupational Health & Safety Act](#)



*This is one of the clearest and most comprehensive pieces of legislation on this subject across the provinces and territories.*

#### **Recommendation: Amend provincial and territorial workplace harassment and violence legislation to ensure students in experiential learning are covered.**

- Students are covered under the definition of “worker,” which includes “a person who performs work or supplies services for monetary compensation...[and] a person who performs work or supplies services for no monetary compensation under a program approved by a college of applied arts and technology, university, private career college or other post-secondary institution.”

#### **Recommendation: Amend provincial and territorial legislation on workplace harassment and violence to specifically address sexual harassment and/or violence.**

- Language used: “workplace harassment,” “workplace sexual harassment,” “workplace violence.”
- There is a stand-alone definition of workplace sexual harassment.
- There is no mention of sexual violence.

## Prince Edward Island

### Workplace Sexual Harassment and Violence Legislation

- [Employment Standards Act](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#)

#### **Recommendation: Amend provincial and territorial workplace harassment and violence legislation to ensure students in experiential learning are covered.**

##### *Employment Standards Act*

- It is unclear whether students in *paid* experiential learning positions are covered under the definition of “employee,” which means “a person who performs any work

for or supplies any services to an employer for pay, and includes...a person who is being trained by an employer to perform work for or supply services to the employer.”

- The inclusion of “for pay” excludes students in *unpaid* experiential learning positions.

#### *Occupational Health & Safety Act*

- It is unclear whether students in experiential learning positions are covered under the definition of “worker,” which means “a person employed in a workplace, or a person in a workplace for any purpose in connection therewith.”

**Recommendation: Amend provincial and territorial legislation on workplace harassment and violence to specifically address sexual harassment and/or violence.**

#### *Employment Standards Act*

- Language used: “sexual harassment.”
- There is a stand-alone definition of sexual harassment.
- There is no mention of violence or sexual violence.

#### *Occupational Health & Safety Act*

- Language used: “workplace harassment.”
- There is no stand-alone definition of sexual harassment or sexual violence.
- There is no definition provided for workplace harassment.
- There is no mention of violence or sexual violence.

## Quebec

### Workplace Sexual Harassment and Violence Legislation

- [Act Respecting Labour Standards](#)
- [Act Respecting Occupational Health and Safety](#)
- [Act to ensure the protection of trainees in the workplace](#)

**Recommendation: Amend provincial and territorial workplace harassment and violence legislation to ensure students in experiential learning are covered.**

*Act Respecting Labour Standards*

- It is unclear whether students in *paid* experiential learning positions are covered under the definition of “employee” which means “a person who works for an employer and who is entitled to a wage”. Students in *unpaid* experiential learning positions are not covered under this Act.

*Act Respecting Occupational Health and Safety*

- Students are covered under the definition of “worker” which includes “a student undergoing a job shadowing or work training period under the responsibility of an educational institution”.

*Act to ensure the protection of trainees in the workplace*

- Students are covered under the definition of “trainee.”

**Recommendation: Amend provincial and territorial legislation on workplace harassment and violence to specifically address sexual harassment and/or violence.**

*Act Respecting Labour Standards*

- Language used: “psychological harassment”, “sexual violence.”
- There is no standalone definition of sexual harassment.
- The definition of psychological harassment includes “verbal comments, actions or gestures of a sexual nature.”
- There is no definition provided for sexual violence.

*Act Respecting Occupational Health and Safety*

- Language used: “sexual violence.”
- There is no standalone definition of sexual harassment.
- There is no definition provided for sexual violence.

*Act to ensure the protection of trainees in the workplace*

- Language used: “psychological harassment.”

- There is no standalone definition of sexual harassment or sexual violence.
- The definition of psychological harassment includes “verbal comments, actions or gestures of a sexual nature.”

## Saskatchewan

### Workplace Sexual Harassment and Violence Legislation

- [Employment Act](#)

**Recommendation: Amend provincial and territorial workplace harassment and violence legislation to ensure students in experiential learning are covered.**

- Students are covered under the definition of “worker,” which includes “...a person who is enrolled in a secondary or post-secondary educational institution and who: is permitted by an employer, directly or indirectly, to perform work or services; or is being trained by an employer.”

**Recommendation: Amend provincial and territorial legislation on workplace harassment and violence to specifically address sexual harassment and/or violence.**

- Language used: “harassment.”
- There is no stand-alone definition of sexual harassment or sexual violence.
- The definition of harassment includes “any inappropriate conduct, comment, display, action or gesture [that is based on] sex, sexual orientation.” Gender, gender identity and gender expression are not named.

## Yukon

### Workplace Sexual Harassment and Violence Legislation

- [Workers’ Safety & Compensation Act](#)
- [Workplace Health and Safety Regulations](#)

**Recommendation: Amend provincial and territorial workplace harassment and violence legislation to ensure students in experiential learning are covered.**

- Students are covered under the definition of “worker,” which includes “a person who performs services for an employer under an express or implied contract of



employment or apprenticeship, whether paid or unpaid, a learner, a volunteer, or a self-employed person.”

**Recommendation: Amend provincial and territorial legislation on workplace harassment and violence to specifically address sexual harassment and/or violence.**

- Language used: “harassment,” “violence.”
- There is no stand-alone definition of sexual harassment or sexual violence.
- The definition of harassment includes conduct “that relates to, or is motivated by, the worker's sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.”
- The definition of violence does not mention sexual violence.



*Notably, Yukon’s [Employment Standards Act](#), which does not provide protections against sexual harassment or violence in the workplace, does include a comprehensive definition of sexual violence.*

# Appendix C: Findings from *Possibility Seeds*' National Survey of Students, Staff, and Faculty at Post-secondary Institutions

## Methodology

On October 1, 2022, *Possibility Seeds* launched a bilingual, national survey for students, staff, and faculty at post-secondary institutions across Canada. The survey was conducted to learn about students' experiences or observations of sexual harassment, their experiences reporting or seeking support regarding instances of sexual harassment, and institutional responses to instances of sexual harassment in experiential learning (EL).

Research ethics board approval was sought and received by the Sheridan College Research Ethics Board (SREB No 2022-10-001-018), the North Island College Research Ethics Board (Certificate No. 22-06), the University of Manitoba Research Ethics Board (Protocol HE2022-0319), MacEwan University Research Ethics Board (File No: 102071), CÉR du Cégep Garneau (Numéro de référence: 20220913-6), CÉR du Cégep de Saint-Laurent (SL-2022-08), and CÉR du Cégep de Sainte-Foy (14/10/2022).

## Participants and Recruitment

Students, staff, and faculty from post-secondary institutions were invited to participate in the survey between October 1 and December 2, 2022. To be eligible, student participants had to be the age of majority in their province or territory, be enrolled in a university, college, CEGEP or technical institute in Canada at the time of the survey or within the previous 48 months, and have participated in an EL opportunity in Canada while enrolled at their institution. Staff and faculty participants had to be the age of majority in their province or territory, be employed by a university, college, CEGEP or technical institute at the time of the survey, and do work related to EL.

Participants were recruited using a non-random, voluntary response sampling method. Calls for participants were shared via social media, newsletters and email.

The survey was promoted by *Possibility Seeds*, Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning Canada, the Canadian Association of College & University Student Services, CERIC, the Canadian Association of Career Educators and Employers, the Association for

Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning BC/Yukon, the BC Work Integrated Learning Council, Experiential and Work-Integrated Learning Ontario, the National Educational Association of Disabled Students, the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, the Alliance of BC Students, the BC Federation of Students, the Alma Mater Society of the University of British Columbia Vancouver, the Anti-Violence Project at the University of Victoria, the Manitoba Alliance of Post-Secondary Students, the University of Manitoba Students' Union, Students Nova Scotia, the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, the College Student Alliance in Ontario, Union étudiante du Québec, Fédération étudiante collégiale du Québec, the McGill Student Union, Regroupement étudiant de maîtrise, diplôme et doctorat de l'Université de Sherbrooke, Association Étudiante de l'ÉTS, Association étudiante Cégep de Trois-Rivières, as well as by participating post-secondary institutions across the country.

Student participants were incentivized to participate in the survey by the opportunity to enter a prize draw for an iPad (valued at \$429). Student participants interested in the prize draw were invited to share their email address on a separate online form not linked to their survey responses.

Students, staff and faculty who decided to participate in the survey were informed that participation was entirely voluntary, their responses would be anonymous, and their responses would only be recorded after they consented to participate and clicked “submit” at the end of the survey. They were also informed that they could skip any question and that they could withdraw their participation at any time up until they clicked “submit.” Each page of the survey included a link to a list of available supports, and reminders of participant rights were included throughout the survey.

## Survey Instrument

The survey instrument was informed by existing surveys on gender-based violence in post-secondary settings and workplace sexual harassment which were adapted for the EL context. These included: Western University's Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children, researchers from the University of Toronto, and the Canadian Labour Congress' [National Survey on Harassment and Violence at Work in Canada](#); Statistics Canada's [Survey on Sexual Misconduct at Work](#); and Statistics Canada's [Survey on Individual Safety in the Postsecondary Student Population](#).

The survey questions followed three pathways, one for students, one for staff and faculty, and one for participants who were both students and employed in a position related to EL by their institution. Participants in this third pathway were given the same questions as those in the student pathway in addition to the questions from the staff and faculty pathway. Participants were streamed into the appropriate pathway through a set of branching questions at the start of the survey. Once participants were directed to the appropriate pathway, they were given screening questions to confirm their eligibility to participate.

Participants were asked demographic questions, as well as contextual questions about their post-secondary institution, area of study and experiential learning opportunity (in the case of students), and their post-secondary institution and role (in the case of staff and faculty). These questions were important to contextualize participant responses and to allow for more targeted data analysis.

The remainder of the questions asked about experiences, observations, and knowledge of sexual harassment in EL, as well as questions about institutional readiness and response. The survey instrument is available at the [end of this Appendix](#).

## Limitations

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this survey and the data collected to provide a complete and comprehensive understanding of the issue.

First, the non-random, voluntary response sampling method used, coupled with the response rate, means that the survey sample was not representative of the population and the findings shared are not generalizable to the experiences of all students in EL at Canadian post-secondary institutions. The sampling method introduced the potential for selection bias, as individuals who chose to participate or not to participate may have different experiences or motivations. This is further compounded by the sensitive and potentially triggering nature of research into sexual harassment. However, as the first national study exploring sexual harassment in EL, the data gathered provide insights that are necessary to better understanding the issue and providing direction for continued research.

There is a second limitation in the fact that all survey research relies on self-reported data, which introduces challenges around question interpretation, response measurement, and

response bias. Participants' varied perspectives, experiences, and contexts necessarily means that they will interpret some questions differently. This, coupled with open text options and the fact that participants were able to skip questions, introduced challenges around response measurement. However, despite these challenges, the self-reported data gathered was particularly valuable as sexual harassment is an underreported issue, especially in the context of EL. Using a trauma-informed lens in survey development and administration, along with the anonymity of survey participation, created a space for participants to share their experiences more candidly and openly.

## Results

### Survey Participation

The survey reached a total of 1,200 people. Of those, 525 people did not meet the eligibility requirements to participate in the survey and were disqualified by a set of screening questions at the start of the survey. 325 surveys were not included in the sample because participants did not click "submit" at the close of the survey and the survey was therefore considered incomplete.<sup>7</sup>

The final survey sample included 350 total participants (271 participants who completed the English survey, and 79 participants who completed the French survey). 284 participants were students, 75 were staff and faculty, and 9 were students at the same time as being a staff or faculty member.

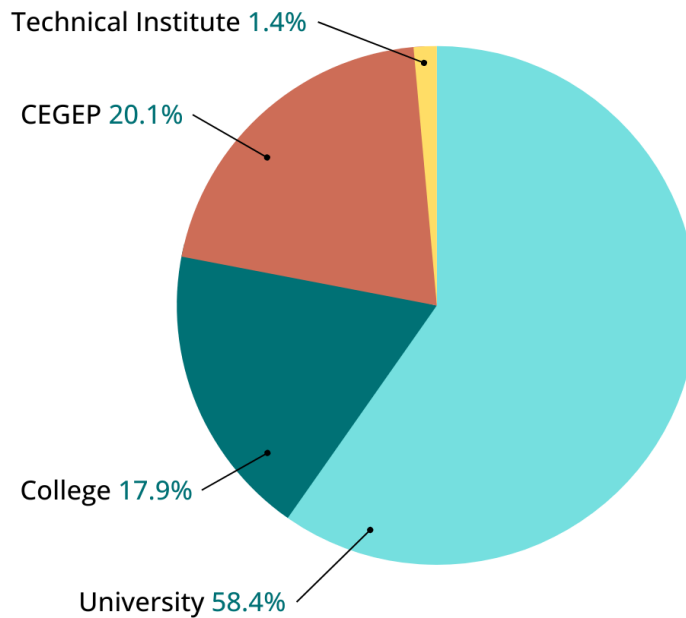
A large majority (91.1%) of participants were enrolled in or worked at post-secondary institutions in provinces or territories where sexual violence policies were governmentally mandated. This includes: Alberta (18.0%); British Columbia (19.1%); Manitoba (0.9%); Ontario (30.6%); and Quebec (22.6%). The remaining 8.9% of participants were enrolled in or worked at post-secondary institutions in provinces or territories where sexual violence policies were not governmentally mandated, including: New Brunswick (0.6%); Nova Scotia (8.0%); and Saskatchewan (0.3%).

A majority of participants (58.4%) were enrolled in or worked at universities; 20.1% were enrolled in or worked at CEGEPs; 17.9% were enrolled in or worked at colleges; and 1.4% were enrolled in or worked at technical institutes.

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<sup>7</sup> Surveys were considered "complete" when a participant clicked "submit" at the close of the survey, regardless of the number of questions they chose to answer.

**Figure 1: Type of Institution**



## About Student Participants

### Demographics

Student participants were asked questions about their demographics at the time of their EL opportunity.

A large majority of student participants (83.5%) were between the ages of 18 and 25, with the largest number of participants (62.1%) between 18 and 21 years. Only 15.1% of participants were older than 25 years, with less than 1% over 45 years of age.

Participants were provided with a list of disability types using definitions from the [National Educational Association of Disabled Students](#) and asked to select any that described themselves. More than one-third (39.3%) of student participants selected at least one disability type, and 60.7% selected none of the above/prefer not to say. Of those who selected one or more disability type: 17.9% selected intellectual or learning disability (disability affecting ability to learn tasks or process information; another 17.9% selected psychiatric disability (disability resulting from mental illness); 6.8% selected physical disability (disability affecting mobility or dexterity); 4.7% selected visual impairment; 3.0%

selected hearing impairment; 3.4% selected developmental disability; and 1.3% selected neurological disability (disability associated with damage to the nervous system).

When asked their gender, 66.2% of student participants selected woman, 24.4% selected man, and 8.4% selected another gender or multiple genders, including: non-binary (6.2%); queer (3.3%); agender (0.4%). 0.4% preferred to self-describe and 1.1% preferred not to share their gender identity. A large majority (96.0%) said that they presented as their gender identity in their EL position, 1.5% said that they presented as a gender identity that was different from their gender, and 2.6% preferred not to share whether they presented as their gender identity. Participants were also asked about their sexual identity. Just over half (58.8%) of student participants selected only heterosexual/straight, while 34.6% selected another sexual identity or multiple sexual identities, including: bisexual (16.5%); queer (8.1%); asexual (7.7%); pansexual (7.0%); lesbian (2.9%); women loving women (2.2%); gay (1.1%); aromantic (0.7%); and men loving men (0.7%). 6.6% of student participants preferred not to share their sexual identity and 2.9% preferred to self-describe.

A small percentage of student participants (4.7%) identified as Indigenous (including Status or non-Status First Nations, Métis, or Inuit), and 93.5% did not identify as Indigenous. 1.8% preferred not to say.

One-quarter (25.3%) of student participants identified as racialized. This includes 7.0% of student participants who identified with more than one racial or ethnic identity, and 18.3% who identified as one of the following racial or ethnic identities: South Asian (5.1%) Chinese (4.4%); Black (3.7%); Indigenous (3.7%); Latin, Central, or South America (3.3%); South East Asian (1.5%); Filipino (1.1%); West Asian (1.1%); Arab (0.7%); and Japanese (0.4%). 3.3% of student respondents identified as a racial or ethnic identity not included in the list provided. Just under three-quarters (72.2%) identified as White and no other racial or ethnic identity. 2.6% of student participants preferred not to share their racial or ethnic identity.

When asked about their religious identity, 73.1% of student participants said they were not religious, atheist, or that they preferred not to say. 16.2% said they were Christian, and 11.0% had another religious identity (1.0% were Christian and another religious identity). These included student participants who were: Muslim (3.7%); Hindu (1.5%); Jewish (1.1%); Buddhist (0.7%); Sikh (0.7%); and Taoist (0.4%). 5.2% of student participants had a religious identity not included in the list provided.

A majority of student participants spoke English (77.5%) or French (18.8%) as their primary language (the language they prefer to communicate or receive information in). Only 3.6% of student participants spoke a primary language other than English or French.

Student participants were asked if they had dependents or were the primary caregiver for a dependent while completing their EL opportunity. 9.1% said they did have dependents or were a primary caregiver, 89.1% said they did not have dependents, and 1.8% preferred not to say whether they had dependents or not.

Student participants were classified as low-income or not low-income based on [Statistics Canada's Low-Income Measure](#) for total income.<sup>8</sup> Student participants who identified themselves as financially independent were assessed based on a 1-person household, with \$25,000 or less falling under the low-income category. Students participants who were not financially independent were assessed based on a 4-person household, with \$50,000 or less falling under the low-income category. Just under half (47.2%) of student participants were not low-income, 38.2% were low-income, and 14.6% of student participants preferred not to share their income.

A majority of student participants (81.3%) were not first generation post-secondary students, meaning that their parent(s) and/or guardian(s) had attended post-secondary. 16.9% of student participants were first generation post-secondary students, and 1.8% preferred not to share the educational credentials of their parent(s) and/or guardian(s).

To identify international students, participants were asked whether they were enrolled with a study permit. 13.0% of student participants were enrolled with a study permit, and a majority of student participants were not enrolled with a study permit (83.3%).

## **Academics & Experiential Learning**

A large majority (93.7%) of student participants were enrolled in post-secondary institutions in provinces or territories where sexual violence policies were governmentally mandated. This includes: Alberta (20.4%); British Columbia (20.8%); Manitoba (1.1%); Ontario (32.4%); and Quebec (19.0%). The remaining 6.3% of student participants were enrolled in

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<sup>8</sup> The most recently available low-income measure at the time of data analysis was from 2021. As participants were asked to select from an income range, rather than provide a specific dollar amount, the low-income classification has been rounded to the closest available range.



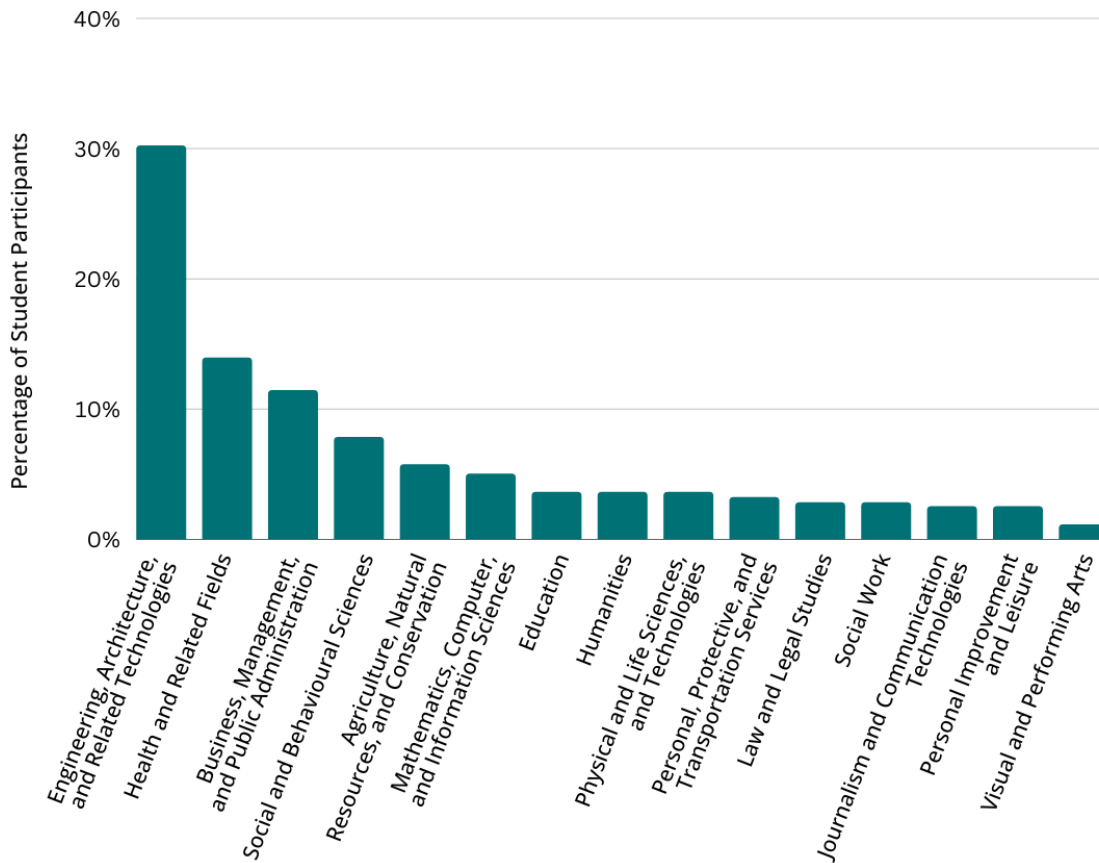
post-secondary institutions in provinces or territories where sexual violence policies were not governmentally mandated, including: New Brunswick (0.4%); and Nova Scotia (6.0%).

A majority of student participants (60.8%) were enrolled in universities; 21.2% were enrolled in colleges; 17.3% were enrolled in CEGEPs; and 0.7% were enrolled in technical institutes.

Student participants were primarily studying for a university undergraduate degree (52.7%), followed by a college certificate or diploma (17.6%), and a CEGEP diploma (DSC/DEC) (14.3%). Student participants were also studying for: a master's degree (6.1%); a university undergraduate certificate or diploma (2.9%); an apprenticeship (1.8%); a doctorate degree (1.4%); a professional degree (1.1%); and a joint university and college credential (0.4%). 1.8% of student participants were enrolled in a level of study not listed.

A majority of student participants were enrolled in programs under the following areas of study: Engineering, Architecture, and Related Technologies (30.2%); Health and Related Fields (13.9%); and Business, Management, and Public Administration (11.4%). The remaining 44.5% of student participants were enrolled in: Social and Behavioural Sciences (7.8%); Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Conservation (5.7%); Mathematics, Computer, and Information Sciences (5.0%); Education (3.6%); Humanities (3.6%); Physical and Life Sciences, and Technologies (3.6%); Personal, Protective, and Transportation Services (3.2%); Law and Legal Studies (2.8%); Social Work (2.8%); Journalism and Communications Technologies (2.5%); Personal Improvement and Leisure (2.5%); and Visual and Performing Arts (1.1%).

**Figure 2: Area of Study**



Just under half (49.5%) of student participants participated in a co-op work term, 7.5% participated in an unpaid internship, and 6.8% participated in a paid internship. The remaining 36.3% of students participated in: clinical placements (6.8%) field placements (6.0%); labs (6.0%); service learning (3.9%); job shadowing (3.9%); practica (3.6%); applied research (2.5%); mentorship programs (0.7%); and industry/community research projects (0.4%). 2.5% of students participated in a type of EL not included in the list provided.

EL was a requirement for just over three-quarters (76.2%) of student participants. For some (67.3%), EL was a requirement for their academic program. For half of participants (50.4%), EL was a requirement for a course. And for 37.0% of participants, EL was a requirement to be recognized by a professional or regulatory body associated with the student’s area of study.

A majority (61.2%) of students participated in a paid EL opportunity. Of those, 2.9% were paid \$1,000 or less; 8.7% were paid between \$1,001 and \$5,000; 48.3% were paid between \$5,001 and \$20,000; 23.8% were paid between \$20,001 and \$50,000; 11.0% were paid more than \$50,000; and 5.2% were unsure or preferred not to share the amount they were paid.

A majority (67.4%) of students participated in a full-time EL opportunity, with 59.1% working between 31 and 40 hours, and 8.2% working more than 40 hours. One-third (32.6%) of students participated in a part-time EL opportunity, working: 5 hours or less (10.4%); between 6 and 10 hours (11.1%); between 11 and 20 hours (6.1%); and between 21 and 30 hours (5.0%).

EL opportunities were fairly evenly split between one semester (or less) in length (49.8%) and more than one semester (46.3%), with 24.9% participating in a two semester EL opportunity; 9.3% participating in a three semester EL course; and 11.4% participating in an EL opportunity that lasted more than a calendar year.

Students participated in EL in the following types of organizations: for profit businesses (34.3%); governments (19.6%); post-secondary institutions (16.8%); and not-for-profit or charity organizations (10.7%). The remaining 18.6% of students participated in EL with: community organizations (5.7%); co-operatives (4.3%); social economy companies (1.4%); or a type of organization not included in the list provided (7.1%).

Students participated in EL at small, medium, and large organizations: 39.1% described the organization as small (1-99 employees); 18.3% described the organization as medium-sized (100-499 employees); and 36.3% described the organization as large (more than 500 employees). 6.5% were unsure of the size of the organization.

When asked to describe the location of their EL opportunity, student participants said their EL opportunity was: online, virtual, or remote (28.2%); at a post-secondary institution (34.6%), either their own (21.1%) or one that was different from their own (13.9%); in a rural or Northern community or First Nations Reserve (10.0%); in a small city or town (32.0%) or a major city (64.4%).

When asked about the makeup of the organization where they participated in EL, 35.0% described the organization as a mixture of men and women; 26.8% described the organization as mostly men; 15.7% described the organization as mostly women; 12.1% described the organization as a mixture of men, women, and non-binary people; and 1.1%

described the organization as mostly women and non-binary people. 8.2% of student participants were not sure of the makeup of the organization, and 1.4% selected “other.”

When asked about the gender of their immediate supervisor, 45.7% of student participants said their supervisor was a man, 40.1% said their supervisor was a woman, 0.4% said their supervisor was non-binary, and 12.1% had multiple immediate supervisors.

Student participants were asked how often they worked in isolation or remote areas during their EL opportunity. One-fifth (19.1%) worked in isolation or remote areas most or all of the time; 17.3% sometimes did; 25.0% rarely did; and 40.4% never worked in isolation or remote areas.

Just over half (53.0%) of students interacted with the public as part of their EL position, while 47.0% did not interact with the public in their EL position.

7.2% of students participated in an EL opportunity where alcohol was served, 89.2% participated in an EL opportunity where alcohol was not served, and 3.6% were unsure whether alcohol was served.

Just over one-quarter (26.4%) of students participated in an EL opportunity in a [federally-regulated industry or workplace](#). Half (48.9%) of students participated in EL in an industry or workplace that was not federally regulated, and 24.6% were unsure whether their industry or workplace was federally regulated.

Almost one-quarter (23.2%) of student participants had to move to a new city or region for their EL position, while 76.8% did not have to move for their EL position.

## About Staff & Faculty Participants

### Demographics

Participants were provided with a list of disability types using definitions from the [National Educational Association of Disabled Students](#) and asked to select any that described themselves. One-quarter (25.0%) of staff and faculty participants selected at least one disability type, and 75.0% selected none of the above/prefer not to say. Of those who selected one or more disability type: 16.2% selected intellectual or learning disability (disability affecting ability to learn tasks or process information); 7.4% selected psychiatric disability (disability resulting from mental illness); 5.9% selected hearing impairment; 2.9% selected physical disability (disability affecting mobility or dexterity); 1.5% selected

neurological disability (disability associated with damage to the nervous system); another 1.5% selected developmental disability; and another 1.5% selected visual impairment.

When asked their gender, 76.0% of staff and faculty participants selected woman, 17.3% selected man, and 4.0% selected another gender or multiple genders, including: non-binary (2.7%); and queer (1.3%). 2.7% preferred not to share their gender identity. A large majority (97.3%) said that they presented as their gender identity at work, no staff and faculty participants said that they presented as a gender identity that was different from their gender, and 2.7% preferred not to share whether they presented as their gender identity. Participants were also asked about their sexual identity. Just over half (76.0%) of staff and faculty participants selected only heterosexual/straight, while 20.0% selected another sexual identity or multiple sexual identities, including: bisexual (6.7%); queer (5.3%); lesbian (4.0%); women loving women (2.7%); pansexual (5.3%); and gay (1.3%). 4.0% of staff and faculty participants preferred not to share their sexual identity and 2.7% preferred to self-describe.

A small percentage of staff and faculty participants (4.1%) identified as Indigenous (including Status or non-Status First Nations, Métis, or Inuit), and 94.6% did not identify as Indigenous. 1.4% preferred not to say.

One-fifth (20.5%) of staff and faculty participants identified as racialized. This includes 4.1% of staff and faculty participants who identified with more than one racial or ethnic identity, and 16.4% who identified as one of the following racial or ethnic identities: Black (4.1%); Indigenous (4.1%); South Asian (4.1%); Chinese (2.7%); Filipino (1.4%); and Latin, Central, or South America (1.4%). 2.7% of staff respondents identified as a racial or ethnic identity not included in the list provided. 78.1% identified as White and no other racial or ethnic identity. 4.1% of staff and faculty participants preferred not to share their racial or ethnic identity.

When asked about their religious identity, 62.2% of staff and faculty participants said they were not religious, atheist, or that they preferred not to say. 32.4% said they were Christian, and 5.5% had another religious identity (1.4% were Christian and another religious identity). These included staff and faculty participants who were: Buddhist (1.4%); Hindu (1.4%); Muslim (1.4%); and Jain (1.4%). Another 1.4% of staff and faculty participants had a religious identity not included in the list provided.

A majority of staff and faculty participants spoke English (61.3%) or French (37.3%) as their primary language (the language they prefer to communicate or receive information in). Only 1.3% of staff and faculty participants spoke a primary language other than English or French.

## **Role & Workplace**

A majority (82.7%) of staff and faculty participants worked at post-secondary institutions in provinces or territories where sexual violence policies were governmentally mandated. This includes: Alberta (8.0%); British Columbia (12.0%); Manitoba (1.3%); Ontario (26.7%); and Quebec (34.7%). The remaining 17.3% of participants worked at post-secondary institutions in provinces or territories where sexual violence policies were not governmentally mandated, including: New Brunswick (1.3%); Nova Scotia (14.7%); and Saskatchewan (1.3%).

A majority of staff and faculty participants (58.7%) worked at universities; 30.7% worked at CEGEPs; 6.7% worked at colleges; and 4.0% worked at technical institutes.

Staff and faculty participants primarily worked in centralized career services and EL or faculty-specific career services (38.4%). Staff and faculty participants also worked in academic or student support offices (15.1%), and the remaining 46.6% worked in specific faculties or departments, including: Education (9.6%); Health and Related Fields (6.8%); Social and Behavioural Sciences (6.8%); Physical and Life Sciences, and Technologies (5.5%); Social Work (4.1%); Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Conservation (2.7%); Humanities (2.7%); Engineering, Architecture, and Related Technologies (1.4%); and Visual and Performing Arts (1.4%). 5.5% of staff and faculty participants worked in a department or office not listed.

Staff and faculty participants were in a variety of roles, including: administrators (20.5%); program leads or coordinators (34.2%); faculty members (19.2%); teaching staff members (27.4%); and non-teaching staff members (16.4%). Three-quarters (74.0%) of staff and faculty participants were in student facing positions, while 26.0% of staff and faculty participants were not in student facing positions.

## Sexual Harassment in Experiential Learning

### A note on the findings

- While we were unable to validate relationships based on statistical significance, in part due to sample size and unrepresentativeness, we have chosen to highlight trends in the data that were important to better understanding the issue and the experiences of survey participants. Including these trends allows for a more nuanced understanding, creates a roadmap for future research, and can help to inform targeted interventions to address the issue.

### Prevalence of Sexual Harassment

Half (50.0%) of student participants responded that they had experienced at least one behaviour of sexual harassment, at least one time during their EL opportunity.

The percentage of student participants who had been subjected to at least one behaviour of sexual harassment was highest for non-binary, queer, or agender students (60.9% had experienced at least one behaviour of sexual harassment), as well as for women (55.0% had experienced at least one behaviour of sexual harassment). By comparison, fewer students participants who identified as men (37.3%) were subjected to at least one behaviour of sexual harassment.

Indigenous student participants reported being subjected to sexual harassment at higher rates (61.5% had experienced at least one behaviour of sexual harassment) when compared to student participants who were not Indigenous (50.8% had experienced at least one behaviour of sexual harassment).

More student participants between the ages of 18 and 25 years were subjected to sexual harassment (52.0% had experienced at least one behaviour of sexual harassment) when compared to student participants who were over 25 years of age (46.3% had experienced at least one behaviour of sexual harassment).

Overwhelmingly, more student participants in EL in male-dominated organizations (73.7%) had been subjected to at least one behaviour of sexual harassment when compared to student participants not in male-dominated spaces (44.0%).

The percentage of student participants who had been subjected to at least one behaviour of sexual harassment was highest for students in engineering, architecture, and related

technologies, and in health and related fields (58.6% and 59.0% had experienced at least one behaviour of sexual harassment, respectively). By comparison, fewer students in other fields (44.8%) were subjected to at least one behaviour of sexual harassment.

Students who participated in EL with for-profit business and with the government more commonly shared that they were subjected to sexual harassment (58.3% and 58.2% had experienced at least one behaviour of sexual harassment, respectively). By comparisons, 36.7% of student participants in EL with not-for-profits and charities, and 23.4% of student participants in EL with a post-secondary institution had been subjected to at least one behaviour of sexual harassment.

A higher percentage of student participants whose immediate supervisor was a man (53.9%) had been subjected to at least one behaviour of sexual harassment when compared to those whose immediate supervisor was not a man (47.8%).

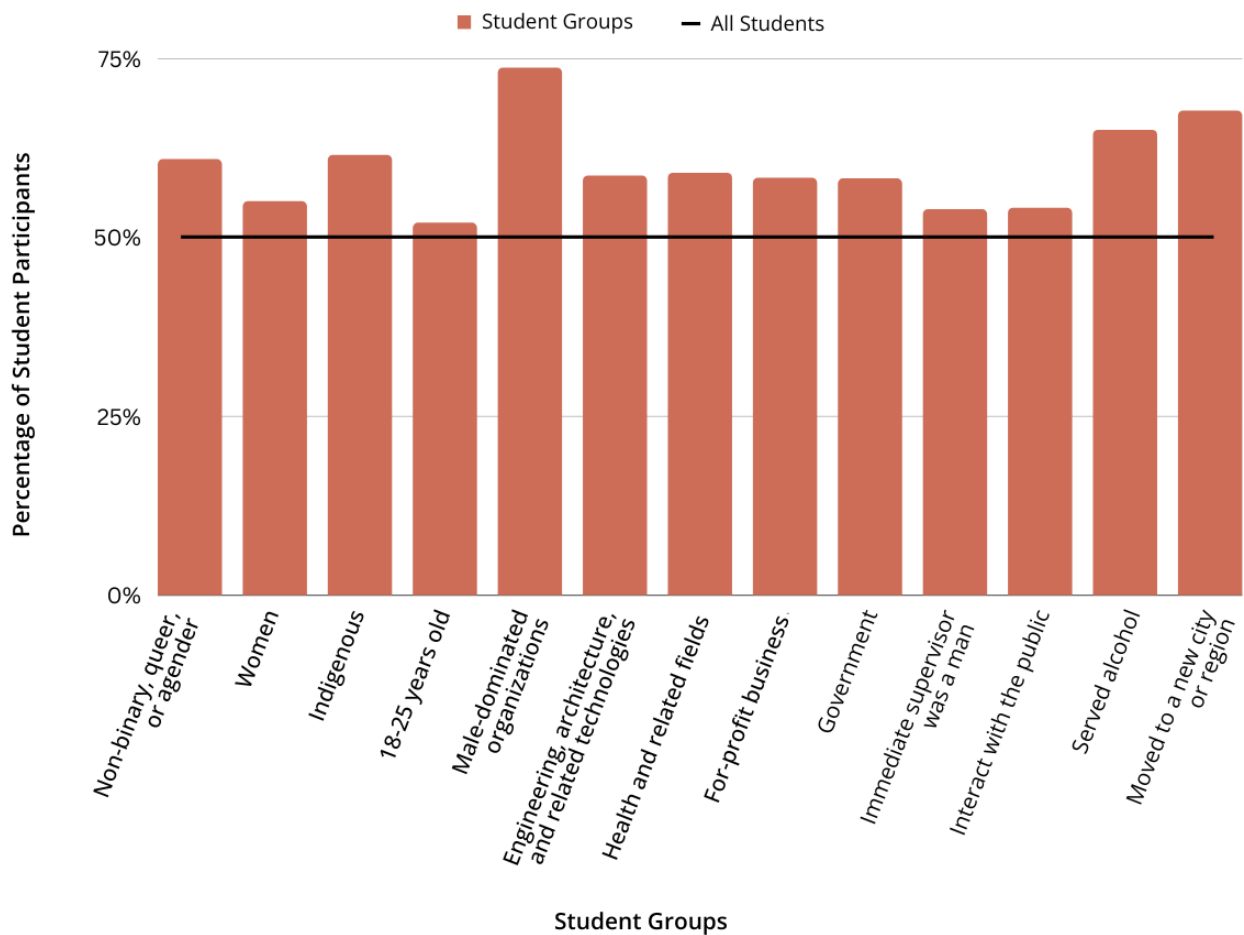
Students who participated in EL where they were required to interact with the public more commonly responded that they had been subjected to at least one behaviour of sexual harassment (54.1%) when compared to students who did not interact with the public (45.8%).

Similarly, students who participated in EL that served alcohol more commonly responded that they had been subjected to at least one behaviour or sexual harassment (65.0%) when compared to those in organizations that did not serve alcohol (48.6%).

Finally, student participants who had to move to a new city or region for their EL more commonly responded that they had been subjected to at least one behaviour of sexual harassment (67.7%) when compared to students who did not move (44.7%).



**Figure 3: Trends in Prevalence of Sexual Harassment**



More than half (69.0%) of staff and faculty participants responded that they were aware of students being subjected to at least one behaviour of sexual harassment during an EL opportunity.

### Behaviours of Sexual Harassment

The most commonly experienced behaviours of sexual harassment identified by student participants included: being subjected to unwelcome sexual teasing, jokes, comments or questions (29.5% had been subjected to this behaviour at least one time during their EL opportunity); being subjected to unwelcome invasion of personal space (26.6%); people having sexually oriented conversations in front of others (26.6%); and being insulted, mistreated, ignored, or excluded because they were a woman (26.2%). Notably, when

looking exclusively at student participants who identified as women, 38.3% had been insulted, mistreated, ignored, or excluded because they were a woman.

Student participants also shared that they had been subjected to the following behaviours at least one time during their EL opportunity: being told they did not “act” like a man or woman is “supposed to act” (18.1%); being subjected to unwelcome sexually suggestive looks or gestures (17.8%); receiving unwelcome communications of a sexual nature (11.4%); being insulted, mistreated, ignored, or excluded because of their sexual orientation or assumed sexual orientation (9.9%); being pressured for dates (9.2%); being insulted, mistreated, ignored, or excluded because of their gender expression (6.8%); being subjected to sexually oriented material in any format (5.6%); being pressured for sexual favours (2.8%); being told they did not “look” or “act” like a trans person is “supposed to look/act” (2.2%); being insulted, mistreated, ignored, or excluded because they were a man (2.1%; or 6.0% of student participants who identified as men); and being insulted, mistreated, ignored, or excluded because they were (or were assumed to be) transgender (1.1%).

Student participants were also subjected to other forms of sexual violence, including: being stalked (7.1% had been subjected to this behaviour at least one time during their EL opportunity); being subjected to attempted rape or attempted sexual assault (2.8%); and being raped or sexually assaulted (2.2%). 5.1% shared other experiences of sexual harassment or violence not included in the listed behaviours.

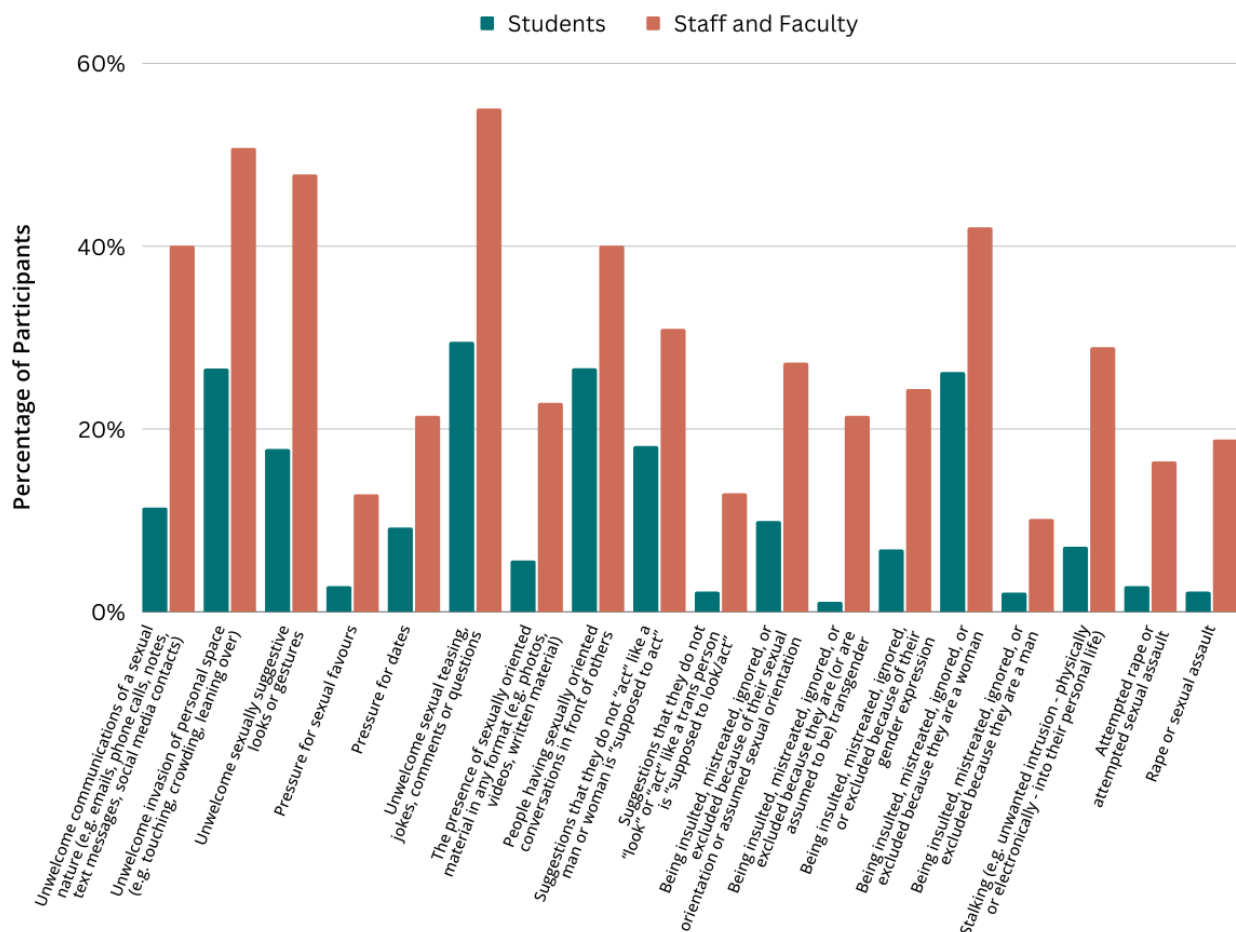
The most common behaviours of sexual harassment identified by staff and faculty participants included: being subjected to unwelcome sexual teasing, jokes, comments or questions (55.0% were aware of students being subjected to this behaviour at least one time during their EL opportunity); being subjected to unwelcome invasion of personal space (50.7%); being subjected to unwelcome sexually suggestive looks or gestures (47.8%); being insulted, mistreated, ignored, or excluded because they were a woman (42.0%); receiving unwelcome communications of a sexual nature (40.0%); people having sexually oriented conversations in front of students (40.0%); and being told they did not “act” like a man or woman is “supposed to act” (30.9%).

Staff and faculty participants also shared that they were aware of students being subjected to the following behaviours at least one time during their EL opportunity: being insulted, mistreated, ignored, or excluded because of their sexual orientation or assumed sexual

orientation (27.2%); being insulted, mistreated, ignored, or excluded because of their gender expression (24.3%); being subjected to sexually oriented material in any format (22.8%); being pressured for dates (21.4%); being insulted, mistreated, ignored, or excluded because they were (or were assumed to be) transgender (21.4%); being told they did not “look” or “act” like a trans person is “supposed to look/act” (12.9%); being pressured for sexual favours (12.8%); and being insulted, mistreated, ignored, or excluded because they were a man (10.1%).

Staff and faculty were also aware of students being subjected to other forms of sexual violence, including: being stalked (28.9% were aware of a student being subjected to this behaviour at least one time during their EL opportunity); being subjected to attempted rape or attempted sexual assault (16.4%); and being raped or sexually assaulted (18.8%).

**Figure 4: Behaviours of Sexual Harassment**



## Persons Who Cause Harm

Most commonly, student participants were subjected to or observed sexual harassment committed by employees of the organization where they participated in their EL (33.6%), followed by: customers, patients, or members of the public who the organization provided services to (22.1%); other students they worked with (15.9%); persons in supervisory positions within the organization who were not their immediate supervisor (15.9%), contractors (14.2%); their immediate supervisor (10.6%); and someone with no connection to the organization (8.0%). Less commonly, sexual harassment was committed by: someone from outside the organization in a personal relationship with the student (2.7%); someone from outside the organization in a personal relationship with an employee of the organization (0.9%); someone from outside the organization in a personal relationship with another student (0.9%); and delivery or salespeople who came into the workplace regularly (0.9%).

Staff and faculty participants were most aware of students being subjected to sexual harassment committed by other students in the EL setting (51.1%), followed by: employees of the organization where they participated in their EL (48.9%); a student's immediate supervisor (33.3%); persons in supervisory positions within the organization who were not a student's immediate supervisor (22.2%); customers, patients, or members of the public who the organization provided services to (15.6%); someone with no connection to the organization (15.6%); someone from outside the organization in a personal relationship with the student (13.3%); contractors (11.1%); someone from outside the organization in a personal relationship with another student (6.7%); and someone from outside the organization in a personal relationship with an employee of the organization (4.4%).

## Compounding Factors

Participants were asked to select which forms of discrimination contributed to or were a factor in the sexual harassment they were subjected to or observed.

Student responses included: ageism (17.3%); heteronormativity or cisheteronormativity (14.3%); misogynoir (11.2%); homophobia, queerphobia, biphobia, aphobia or lesbophobia (10.2%); racism (9.2%); ableism (7.1%); fatphobia (7.1%); classism (5.1%); colonialism (4.1%); anti-Indigenous racism (3.1%); transphobia (3.1%); white supremacy (3.1%); Islamophobia (2.0%); xenophobia (2.0%); anti-Black racism (1.0%); colourism (1.0%); and ethnocentrism (1.0%).

Staff and faculty responses included: homophobia, queerphobia, biphobia, aophobia or lesbophobia (35.0%); heteronormativity or cisheteronormativity (22.5%); racism (20.0%); ageism (15.0%); anti-Black racism (15.0%); misogynoir (15.0%); classism (12.5%); transphobia (12.5%); ableism (10.0%); colonialism (10.0%); ethnocentrism (10.0%); Islamophobia (10.0%); anti-Indigenous racism (7.5%); colourism (7.5%); white supremacy (7.5%); fatphobia (5.0%); xenophobia (5.0%); and sanism (2.5%).

## Response to Sexual Harassment

Students shared a number of actions they took in response to the sexual harassment they were subjected to or observed, and whether it made things better, made no difference, or made things worse.

Most commonly, student participants said they ignored the behaviour or did nothing (67.2%). Of those who did, doing so made no difference for the majority (63.2%), made things worse for 23.7%, and made things better for 13.2%.

Just over half (53.0%) of student participants avoided the person. Of those, doing so made things better for 45.0%, made no difference for 38.3%, and made things worse for 16.7%.

Of the 39.3% of student participants who reported the behaviour to their supervisor or other officials in the organization, doing so made things better for just over half (54.5%), made no difference for 38.6%, and made things worse for 6.8%.

Of the 38.4% of student participants who asked the person to stop, doing so made things better for 37.2%, made no difference for 37.2%, and made things worse for 25.6%.

Of the 37.3% of student participants who went along with the behaviour, doing so made no difference for 43.9%, made things worse for 36.6%, and made things better for 19.5%.

Just over one-third (34.6%) of student participants made a joke of the behaviour. Of those that did, doing so made no difference for half (50.0%), made things better for 28.9%, and made things worse for 21.2%.

Just over one-quarter (28.4%) responded that they threatened to tell, or that they told, others about the sexual harassment. Of those, doing so made no difference for 45.2%, made things better for 35.5%, and made things worse for 19.4%.

Just under one-quarter (23.0%) reported the behaviour to their institution. Of those, doing so made things better for 44.0%, made no difference for 40.0%, and made things worse for 16.0%.

Only 13.6% of student participants filed a formal complaint with their supervisor or other official in the organization. Of those, doing so made things better for the majority (73.3%), and made no difference (13%) or made things worse (13.3%) for the remainder.

Even fewer student participants changed the days or hours they participated in their EL opportunity. Of those who did, doing so made things better for just over half (57.1%), made no difference for 35.7%, and made things worse for 7.1%.

Only 12.7% of student participants spoke with a counsellor, psychologist, social worker, or other support in the community. Doing so made things better for 57.1%, made no difference for 35.7%, and made things worse for 7.1%.

Similarly, only 11.8% of student participants spoke with a counsellor, psychologist, social worker, or other support offered through their institution (11.8%). Doing so made things better for the majority (61.5%), made no difference for 23.1%, and made things worse for 15.4%.

Only 11.7% of student participants filed a formal complaint with their institution. Of those who did, doing so made things better for 38.5%, made no difference for 38.5%, and made things worse for 23.1%.

A small percentage (9.9%) of student participants stopped showing up to their EL opportunity in response to the sexual harassment. Of those, doing so made things better for 45.5%, made no difference for 27.3%, and made things worse for 27.3%.

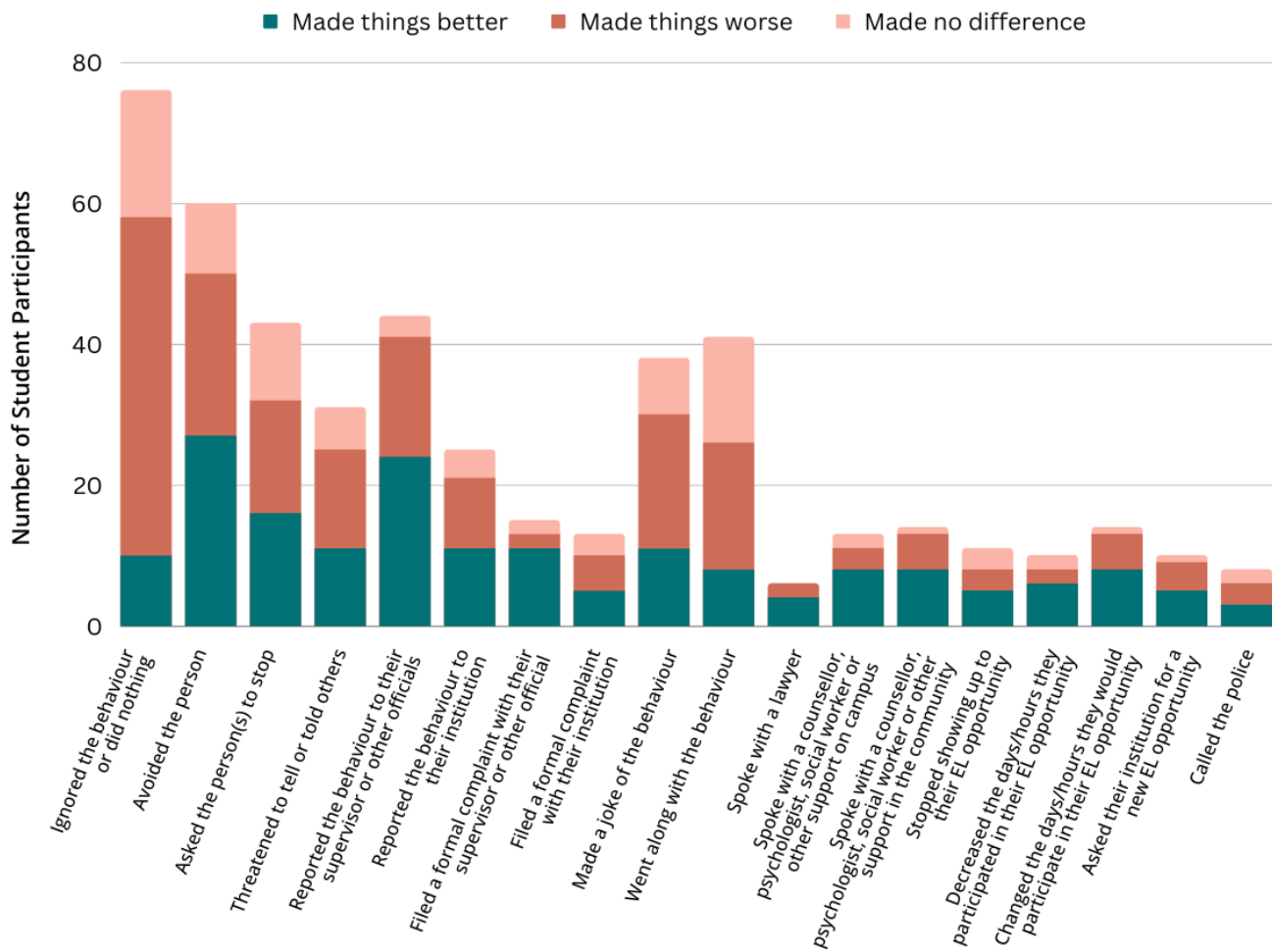
Similarly, 9.1% of student participants decreased the days/hours they participated in their EL opportunity. Doing so made things better for 60.0%, made no difference for 20.0%, and made things worse for 20.0%.

Only 9.0% of student participants asked their institution for a new EL opportunity. Of those that did, doing so made things better for half (50.0%), made no difference for 40.0%, and made things worse for 10.0%.

A small percentage (7.4%) of student participants called the police in response to the sexual harassment. Doing so made things better for 37.5%, made no difference for 37.5%, and made things worse for one-quarter (25.0%).

The fewest student participants spoke to a lawyer about the the sexual harassment (5.4%). However, doing so made things better for 66.7% or made no difference for 33.3%, and no student participants who spoke to a lawyer indicated that it made things worse.

**Figure 5: Actions Taken by Student in Response to Sexual Harassment**



Students who did not report the sexual harassment to their institutions were asked to indicate their reasons for not doing so. The most common reasons for not reporting the sexual harassment to the institution included: not thinking the issue was serious enough (62.8%); they did not believe it would make a difference (46.5%); they were afraid of

negative consequences (38.4%); they resolved the issue on their own (25.6%); they had concerns about the formal complaint process (23.3%); the behaviour stopped (20.9%); they didn't know what to do, where to go, or who to ask for help (19.8%); or that they left their position (12.8%). Other reasons included: someone advising the student not to report it (8.1%); someone responsible for student and/or worker safety and wellbeing finding out about the behaviour in another way (5.8%); someone threatening the student not to report it (5.8%); the person who committed the sexual harassment changed jobs or locations (2.3%).

### Impact of Sexual Harassment and Response

Student participants indicated a number of different results or impacts of the sexual harassment or the response to the sexual harassment.

Most commonly, students responded that: they experienced negative emotional impacts (49.1%); they stayed or wanted to stay away from specific locations (38.8%); they experienced negative impacts on their personal or social life (29.3%); they lost trust in their superiors (28.2%); their productivity was reduced (27.6%); their learning opportunities were hindered (23.3%); they lost trust in their team, unit, department, or division (23.1%); they lost trust in their institution (22.4%); they experienced sleep difficulties (19.1%); they experienced negative academic impacts (12.9%); and they missed work or worked fewer hours (12.1%).

Other responses included: their work assignments got worse (8.6%); they left their EL position (6.0%); they were denied a good performance rating or good reference (4.3%); their EL opportunity was ended against their wishes (2.6%); and they were reassigned within the organization against their wishes (1.7%).

Students also indicated that: they were asked what an appropriate remedy to their concern or complaint would be (13.0%); they were informed of the next steps that would be taken following their concern or complaint (11.2%); they received a follow-up about their concern or complain (10.3%); corrective action was taken against the person who caused harm (7.8%); and their work assignments or conditions got better (6.9%).

One-third (33.0%) of student participants said that no changes occurred as a result of the sexual harassment or response to the sexual harassment.



## Institutional Readiness & Response

### Feelings About Institutional Readiness & Response

Student participants were asked about the actions taken by their institution, as well as their employer or EL provider in response to the sexual harassment they were subjected to or observed. Just over half (52.8%) indicated that no actions were taken by their institution, and 42.9% indicated that no actions were taken by their employer or EL provider.

Where actions were taken by their institution, 32.4% of students were very satisfied with their institution's response, 20.6% were very dissatisfied, 17.6% were somewhat satisfied, another 17.6% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 11.8% were somewhat dissatisfied.

Where actions were taken by their employer or EL provider, 36.2% were very satisfied with their employer or EL provider's response, 21.3% were somewhat satisfied, 14.9% were somewhat dissatisfied, another 14.9% were very dissatisfied, and 12.8% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Student participants were also asked to rate how safe they felt from sexual harassment in their EL position. Overall, the majority of students felt very safe (54.8%) or fairly safe (25.7%) in their EL position. The remainder felt somewhat unsafe (9.6%), neither safe nor unsafe (5.9%), or not at all safe (2.9%).

Student participants had mixed responses when asked how much they agreed with the following statement: "My institution takes sufficient steps to prevent sexual harassment from occurring in experiential learning opportunities." Half (50.5%) agreed or strongly agreed that their institution takes sufficient steps to prevent sexual harassment from occurring in EL opportunities; 22.2% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement; and 20.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed. 6.7% of student participants preferred not to respond.

Staff and faculty participants responded similarly when asked how much they agreed with the following statement: "My institution takes sufficient steps to prevent sexual harassment from occurring in experiential learning opportunities." Just over half (54.0%) agreed or strongly agreed that their institution takes sufficient steps to prevent sexual harassment from occurring in EL opportunities; 16.2% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement;

and 27.1% disagreed or strongly disagreed. 2.7% of staff and faculty participants preferred not to respond.

## Knowledge of Institutional Practice & Measures

Participants were asked to rate their agreement with the following statements:

- I know where to find my institution's policies on sexual harassment that apply to experiential learning opportunities.
- I know where to go to access supports and resources.
- I know where to find information on filing a complaint about sexual harassment and the complaints process at my post-secondary institution.
- I understand my options for when I experience sexual harassment in my experiential learning opportunity.

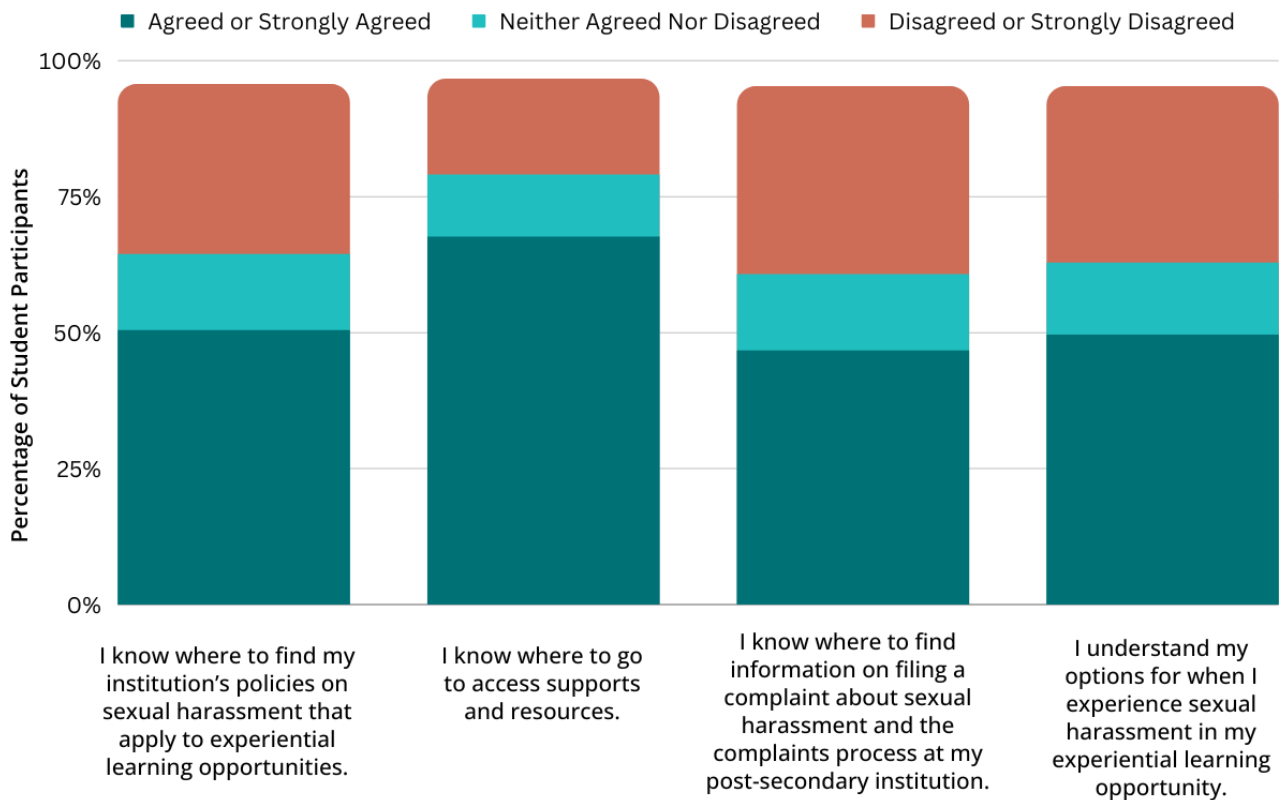
Student participants were most knowledgeable about where to access supports and resources through their institution: 67.6% agreed or strongly agreed with that statement; 11.4% neither agreed nor disagreed; 17.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed; and 3.3% preferred not to respond.

Half (50.4%) of student participants agreed or strongly agreed that they knew where to find institutional policies on sexual harassment that apply to EL opportunities; 14.0% neither agreed nor disagreed; 31.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed; and 4.4% preferred not to respond.

Similarly, 49.6% of student participants agreed or strongly agreed that they understood their options for when they experience sexual harassment in an EL opportunity; 13.2% neither agreed nor disagreed; 32.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed; and 4.8% preferred not to respond.

Just under half (46.7%) of student participants agreed or strongly agreed that they knew where to find information on filing a complaint about sexual harassment and the complaints process at their post-secondary institution; 14.0% neither agreed nor disagreed; 34.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed; and 4.8% preferred not to respond.

**Figure 6: Students' Knowledge of Institutional Measures**



Overall, staff and faculty participants were more knowledgeable than student participants about institutional measures in place.

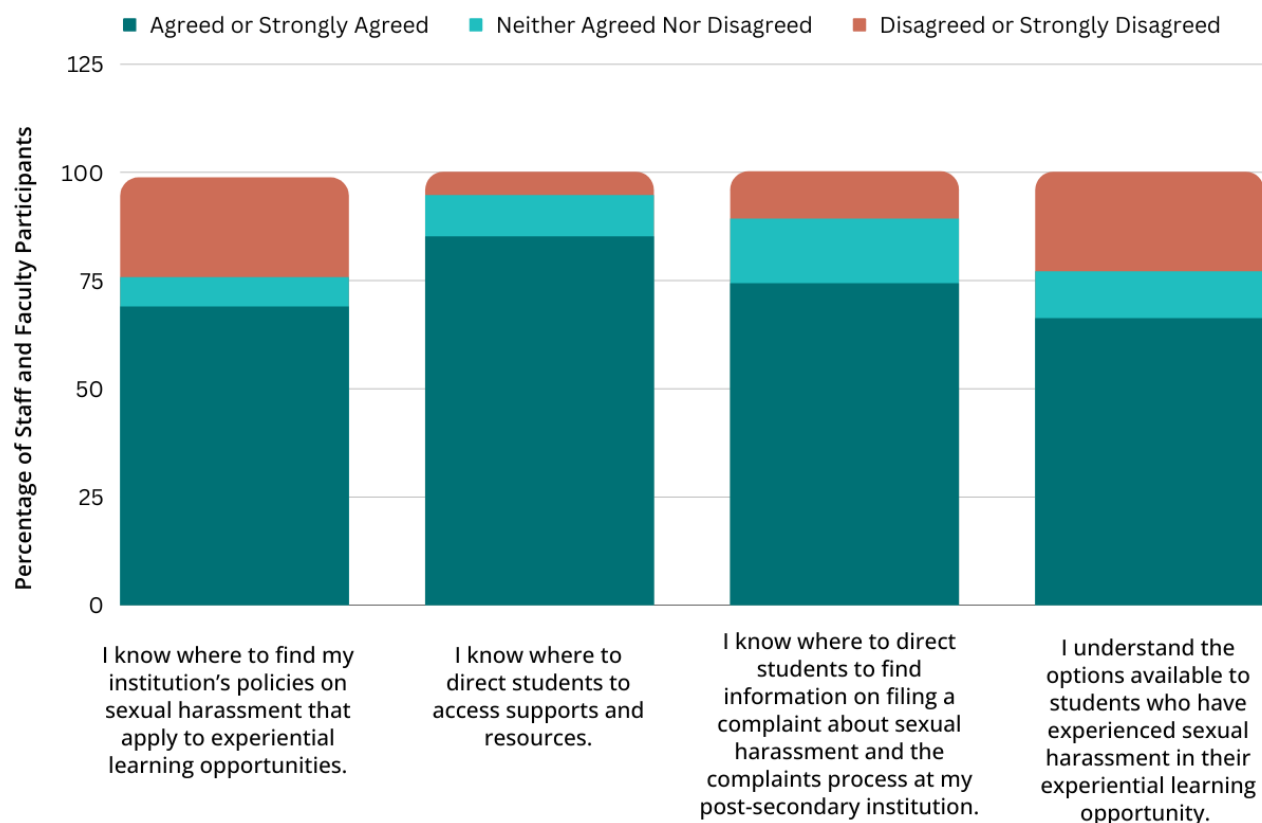
Like students, staff and faculty were most knowledgeable about where to direct students to access supports and resources through their institution: 85.1% agreed or strongly agreed with that statement; 9.5% neither agreed nor disagreed; and only 5.4% disagreed.

Three-quarters (74.3%) of staff and faculty participants agreed or strongly agreed that they knew where to direct students to find information on filing a complaint about sexual harassment and the complaints process at their post-secondary institution; 14.9% neither agreed nor disagreed; and 10.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

68.9% of staff and faculty participants agreed or strongly agreed that they knew where to find institutional policies on sexual harassment that apply to EL opportunities; 6.8% neither agreed nor disagreed; 23.0% disagreed or strongly disagreed; and 1.4% preferred not to respond.

66.2% of staff and faculty participants agreed or strongly agreed that they understood the options available to students for when they experience sexual harassment in an EL opportunity; and 10.8% neither agreed nor disagreed; 23.0% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

**Figure 7: Staff and Faculty’s Knowledge of Institutional Measures**



### Institutional Practices & Measures

Participants were asked which of the following measures were in place at their post-secondary institution: policy; training for students; training for employers; clear reporting procedures; and access to support persons, counsellors, etc.

Just over one-third (35.1%) of student participants responded that their institution did not have (or that they were unsure whether their institution had) any of the measures listed. Students participants from CEGEPs most commonly stated that their institution did not (or they were unsure whether their institution had) any of the measures in place (42.6%), followed by students from universities (36.8%), and colleges (25.9%). In provinces or

territories where having a sexual violence policy is mandated by the government, 34.4% of students responded that their institution did not have (or that they were unsure whether their institution had) any of the measures listed, compared to 44.4% of students in provinces or territories where there is no requirement for post-secondary institutions to have a sexual violence policy.

More than half (64.9%) of student participants selected at least one of the measures listed. The most common measures in place were policy (50.9%) and access to support persons, counsellors, etc. (50.2%). Student participants also selected: clear reporting procedures (27.3%); training for students (26.9%); and training for employers (22.9%).

When given an opportunity to share other measures not listed, student participants shared the following: that students are encouraged to reach out to the EL centre; that there is a sexual violence prevention initiative or team; that their institution follows behavioural management plans and protocols; that there are educational and awareness initiatives and campaigns; and that there are resources through student associations. One participant shared that their institution “recently instituted ‘hot spot’ surveys to detect mistreatment by supervisors/staff. However, there are no options to deal with abusive patients, especially as a medical student because the interactions are quite limited.”

In contrast to student participants, only 8.1% of staff and faculty participants responded that their institution did not have (or that they were unsure whether their institution had) any of the measures listed. Staff and faculty participants from technical institutes most commonly stated that their institution did not (or they were unsure whether their institution had) any of the measures in place (100%), followed by staff and faculty from universities (9.3%), and CEGEPs (4.3%).

In provinces or territories where having a sexual violence policy is mandated by the government, 8.2% of staff and faculty participants responded that their institution did not have (or that they were unsure whether their institution had) any of the measures listed, which was similar to staff and faculty participants in provinces or territories where there is no requirement for post-secondary institutions to have a sexual violence policy (7.7%).

91.9% of staff and faculty participants selected at least one of the measures listed. Like students, staff and faculty identified policy (75.7%) and access to support persons, counsellors, etc. (78.4%) as the most common measures in place. Staff and faculty

participants also selected: training for students (48.6%); clear reporting procedures (39.2%); and training for employers (32.4%).

When given an opportunity to share other measures not listed, staff and faculty participants shared the following: training for staff and faculty; a protocol for responding to disclosures of sexual violence in EL; conflict resolution advisors; that there are educational and awareness initiatives and campaigns; and peer support groups.

### Improving Institutional Readiness & Response

Participants were asked to share any improvements that they thought could be made to the practices their institution had in place, as well as any other practices that they would like to see their institution put in place, to address sexual harassment in EL. Responses fell into five main categories: institutional policy and protocols; reporting options and procedures; education and training; support; and recordkeeping.

Student, staff and faculty participants spoke to the need for clear policies and protocols to be in place. They shared the importance of policies that are specific to EL contexts. Participants also shared that policies and protocols need to be clearly communicated to students. Staff and faculty participants specifically named the importance of consistency in policies and protocols where EL is decentralized across the institution.

Student, staff and faculty participants shared the importance of having clear reporting procedures in place, and having those procedures easily accessible to students. Student participants asked for anonymous reporting options. They also identified a need for institutions to follow-up with students after a report has been made and that they would like greater confidence that appropriate actions will be taken in response to a report of sexual harassment. Student, staff and faculty participants also named the need for reporting options through the employer or EL provider.

Training and education for students, staff and faculty, and employers or EL providers was a common need and area for improvement named by student, staff and faculty participants. Participants shared the need for mandatory, targeted, and expert-led training. For students, participants said training and education should include information about sexual harassment, what it can look like, and its impact, as well as disclosure, reporting and support options. For staff, faculty and employers or EL providers, participants said that training and education should include institutional policies and procedures; how best to

support students; preventive measures; and how to recognize when a student may be affected by sexual harassment.

Student, staff and faculty participants shared that improvements could be made to the accessibility and availability of supports for students who have been affected by sexual harassment. Specifically, they spoke to challenges around limited support options for students and the need for better communication from the institution around what supports are available and how to access them.

Student, staff and faculty participants spoke to the need for procedures for collecting and sharing information about employers and EL providers. Specifically, they shared the need for institutions to have a procedure for vetting potential employers and EL providers, and for a recordkeeping procedure when sexual harassment does occur in order to identify potentially unsafe opportunities for students.

## Survey Questions for *Possibility Seeds*' National Survey of Students, Staff, and Faculty at Post-secondary Institutions

### Branching Questions

1. Please indicate whether you are completing this survey as a student (including anyone who was enrolled as a student in the past 48 months) or a staff/faculty member who is currently employed at a public university, college, CEGEP, or technical institute in Canada:
  - I am a student
  - I am a staff or faculty member
  - I am a student AND I am employed by my institution (e.g., I am a graduate student and I work as a TA)
  - None of the above

*[If response to question 1 is "I am a student" skip to Student Screening Questions; if response is "I am a staff or faculty member" skip to Staff & Faculty Screening Questions; if response is "none of the above" participant is disqualified.]*

2. Does the role you're employed in involve work related to supporting students in experiential learning positions, including through administrative, teaching, and/or supervisory roles?

<Experiential learning is an engaged learning process where you "learn by doing." Some examples include, but are not limited to, co-op, practicums, placements, service learning, field exercises, and job shadowing. This includes course-based research activities and projects, as well experiential learning activities embedded in curriculum.>

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

*[If response to question 2 is "no" or "not sure" skip to Student Screening Questions.]*

3. Please select which of the following surveys you would like to complete at this time:

- Student Survey Only, approximately 20 minutes → skip to student screening questions
- Staff and Faculty Survey Only, approximately 20 minutes → skip to staff and faculty screening questions
- Student, Staff, and Faculty Survey, approximately 30 minutes → skip to student, staff, and faculty screening questions
- None of the above → disqualification page

*[If response to question 3 is "Student Survey Only, approximately 20 minutes" skip to Student Screening Questions; if response is "Staff and Faculty Survey Only, approximately 20 minutes" skip to Staff & Faculty Screening Questions; if response is "Student, Staff, and Faculty Survey, approximately 30 minutes" skip to Student, Staff & Faculty Screening Questions; if response is "none of the above" participant is disqualified.]*



## Student Screening Questions

4. Are you the age of majority in the province or territory in which you reside?  
<The age of majority in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Saskatchewan, and Yukon is 18 years. The age of majority in British Columbia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Northwest Territories, Nova Scotia, and Nunavut is 19.>

Yes

No

*[If response to question 4 is “no” participant is disqualified.]*

5. In the past 48 months, were you enrolled at a university, college, CEGEP, or technical institute in Canada?

Yes

No

*[If response to question 5 is “no” participant is disqualified.]*

6. Did you participate in an experiential learning opportunity while enrolled at your institution?

<Experiential learning is an engaged learning process where you “learn by doing.” Some examples include, but are not limited to, co-op, practicums, placements, service learning, field exercises, and job shadowing. This includes course-based research activities and projects, as well experiential learning activities embedded in curriculum.>

Yes

No

*[If response to question 6 is “no” participant is disqualified.]*

7. Was your experiential learning opportunity in Canada?

Yes

No

*[If response to question 7 is “no” participant is disqualified.]*

## Staff & Faculty Screening Questions

8. Are you the age of majority in the province or territory in which you reside?  
<The age of majority in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Saskatchewan, and Yukon is 18 years. The age of majority in British Columbia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Northwest Territories, Nova Scotia, and Nunavut is 19.>

Yes

No

*[If response to question 8 is “no” participant is disqualified.]*

9. Are you currently employed by a university, college, CEGEP, technical institute in Canada?

Yes

No

*[If response to question 9 is “no” participant is disqualified.]*

10. Does your position involve work related to experiential learning, including through administrative, teaching, and/or supervisory roles?  
<Experiential learning is an engaged learning process where you “learn by doing.” Some examples include, but are not limited to, co-op, practicums, placements, service learning, field exercises, and job shadowing. This includes course-based research activities and projects, as well experiential learning activities embedded in curriculum.>

Yes

No

*[If response to question 10 is “no” participant is disqualified.]*

## Student, Staff & Faculty Screening Questions

11. Are you the age of majority in the province or territory in which you reside?

<The age of majority in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Saskatchewan, and Yukon is 18 years. The age of majority in British Columbia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Northwest Territories, Nova Scotia, and Nunavut is 19.>

Yes

No

*[If response to question 11 is “no” participant is disqualified.]*

12. In the past 48 months, were you enrolled at a university, college, CEGEP, or technical institute in Canada?

Yes

No

*[If response to question 12 is “no” participant skips to question 15.]*

13. Did you participate in an experiential learning opportunity while enrolled at your institution?

<Experiential learning is an engaged learning process where you “learn by doing.” Some examples include, but are not limited to, co-op, practicums, placements, service learning, field exercises, and job shadowing. This includes course-based research activities and projects, as well experiential learning activities embedded in curriculum.>

Yes

No

*[If response to question 13 is “no” participant skips to question 15.]*

14. Was your experiential learning opportunity in Canada?

Yes

No

15. Are you currently employed by a university, college, CEGEP, or technical institute in Canada?

Yes

No

*[If response to question 15 is "no" AND response to question 12, 13, or 14 is also "no" participant is disqualified.]*

*[If response to question 15 is "no" BUT response to questions 12, 13, and 14 are "yes" participant completes student survey pathway.]*

16. Does your position involve work related to experiential learning?

<Experiential learning is an engaged learning process where you "learn by doing." Some examples include, but are not limited to, co-op, practicums, placements, service learning, field exercises, and job shadowing. This includes course-based research activities and projects, as well experiential learning activities embedded in curriculum.>

Yes

No

*[If response to question 16 is "no" AND response to question 12, 13, or 14 is also "no" participant is disqualified.]*

*[If response to question 16 is "no" BUT response to questions 12, 13, and 14 are "yes" participant completes student survey pathway.]*

*[If responses to questions 15 and 16 are "yes" BUT response to question 12, 13, or 14 is "no" participant completes staff and faculty survey pathway.]*

*[If responses to questions 15 and 16 are "yes" AND responses to questions 12, 13, and 14 are "yes" participant completes student, staff and faculty survey pathway.]*

## About Your Education (Students; Students, Staff & Faculty)

<These questions ask about the post-secondary program you are enrolled in, or were enrolled in within the last 48 months.>

17. What type of post-secondary institution are or were you enrolled in?

- CEGEP
- Technical Institute
- College
- University

18. In what province or territory is your post-secondary institution located?

- Alberta
- British Columbia
- Manitoba
- New Brunswick
- Newfoundland and Labrador
- Northwest Territories
- Nova Scotia
- Nunavut
- Ontario
- Prince Edward Island
- Quebec
- Saskatchewan
- Yukon

19. Please select the area of study that best applies to the program you are, or were, enrolled in:

- Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Conservation

- Business, Management, and Public Administration
- Education
- Engineering, Architecture, and Related Technologies
- Health and Related Fields
- Humanities
- Journalism and Communications Technologies
- Mathematics, Computer, and Information Sciences
- Personal Improvement and Leisure
- Personal, Protective, and Transportation Services
- Physical and Life Sciences, and Technologies
- Law and Legal studies
- Social and Behavioural Sciences
- Social Work
- Visual and Performing Arts
- Other, please specify: [OPEN TEXT]

20. What is your level of study?

- Apprenticeship
- Industry Partnership
- CEGEP diploma (DSC/DEC)
- College Certificate or Diploma
- Joint University and College Credential
- University Undergraduate Certificate or Diploma
- University Undergraduate Degree
- Professional Degree
- Master's Degree

- Doctorate Degree
- Other, please specify: [OPEN TEXT]

### About Your Experiential Learning (Students; Students, Staff & Faculty)

<These questions ask about the type of experiential learning you participated in. You did not need to have “completed” your experiential learning to answer these questions.

Experiential learning is an engaged learning process where you “learn by doing.” Some examples include, but are not limited to, co-op, practicums, placements, service learning, field exercises, and job shadowing. This includes course-based research activities and projects, as well experiential learning activities embedded in curriculum.>

If you participated in multiple experiential learning opportunities, please answer questions based on the one that was most significant to you.

If you're unsure, please select the response that most closely reflects your experience.

A gentle reminder that you are completing this survey anonymously, and you are not required to answer any question you are not comfortable with.

You are welcome to take a break or pause at any time. If you choose to leave and return to this survey at a later time, your responses will be saved on your device until you either click SUBMIT OR you clear your 'cookies'. If you close your browser before getting to the end of the survey, and do not confirm your consent to participate at the end of the survey by clicking the SUBMIT button, your information will not be collected or stored as part of this study.>

21. What type of experiential learning did you participate in?

- Co-op work term
- Paid internship
- Unpaid internship
- Externship
- Practicum
- Clinical placement
- Field placement

- Service-learning
- Applied research project
- Industry/community research project
- Lab
- Mentorship program
- Job shadowing
- Other, please specify: [OPEN TEXT]

22. Is participating in experiential learning a requirement for your program?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

23. Is participating in experiential learning a requirement for a course?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

24. Is participating in experiential learning a requirement to be recognized by the professional body associated with your degree?

- Yes
- No
- There is no professional body associated with my degree
- Not sure

25. Is your experiential learning opportunity paid?

- Yes
- No



*[If response to question 25 is "no" skip to question 27.]*

26. What are your total estimated earnings (before taxes and deductions) from your experiential learning position?

- \$0-\$500
- \$501-\$1,000
- \$1,001-\$5,000
- \$5,001-\$10,000
- \$10,001-\$20,000
- \$20,001-\$50,000
- \$50,001-\$75,000
- \$75,001-\$100,000
- More than \$100,000
- Not sure
- Prefer not to say

27. How many hours per week are you required to complete for your experiential learning position?

- 0-5
- 6-10
- 11-20
- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41+

28. What is the duration of your experiential learning opportunity? Please select the response that most closely reflects your experience.

- 1 day

- 1 week
- 1 semester
- 2 semesters
- 3 semesters
- More than 1 calendar year
- Other, please specify: [OPEN TEXT]

29. Is your employer or experiential learning provider external to your institution?

- Yes
- No

30. What best describes the location of your experiential learning? Please select all that apply.

- Online, virtual, or remote
- At my institution
- At an institution that is different from the institution I am enrolled at
- Rural community
- First Nations Reserve
- Northern community
- Major city
- Small city or town

31. How often do you work in isolation and/or remote areas?

- All the time
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

32. Did you have to move to a new city or region for your experiential learning position?

Yes

No

33. Please select the option that best represents the size of the organization you participated in experiential learning with as a whole (not just the department or unit you worked in).

Small (1-99 employees)

Medium (100-499 employees)

Large (500 + employees)

Not sure

34. What best describes the makeup of the organization you participated in experiential learning with?

Mostly men

Mostly women

Mostly non-binary people

Mixture of men, women, and non-binary people

Mostly men and women

Mostly men and non-binary people

Mostly women and non-binary people

Not sure

Other, please specify: [OPEN TEXT]

35. Is your immediate supervisor:

A woman

A man

Non-binary

- Not sure
- I have multiple immediate supervisors
- Other, please specify: [OPEN TEXT]

36. What best describes the type of organization you participated in experiential learning with?

- Not-for-profit organization
- Charity organization
- Community organization
- Co-operative
- Social economy company
- For profit business
- Municipal government
- Provincial or territorial government
- Federal government
- Post-secondary institution
- Other, please specify: [OPEN TEXT]

37. Does your position involve interacting with the public?

- Yes
- No

38. Does the organization where you are participating in experiential learning serve alcohol?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

39. Is the organization where you completed your experiential learning [federally regulated](#)?

<Sectors such as transportation across borders by air, rail, ship/ferry or ground, banking, telecommunications, radio and television are federally regulated. In addition, pipelines, fisheries, First Nations employers, federal Crown Corporations, the federal public sector, and uranium mining companies are also federally regulated. If you work in one of these sectors, you are probably federally regulated.>

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

### About Your Employment (Staff & Faculty; Students, Staff & Faculty)

<These questions ask about the post-secondary you are employed at and your role.>

40. What type of post-secondary institution do you work at?

- CEGEP
- Technical Institute
- College
- University

41. In what province or territory is your post-secondary institution located?

- Alberta
- British Columbia
- Manitoba
- New Brunswick
- Newfoundland and Labrador
- Northwest Territories
- Nova Scotia
- Nunavut

- Ontario
- Prince Edward Island
- Quebec
- Saskatchewan
- Yukon

42. Please select the option that best applies to the department or office you work in:

- Centralized Career Services and Experiential Learning
- Academic Success
- Faculty-specific Career Services
- Alumni relations
- Student support
- Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Conservation
- Business, Management, and Public Administration
- Education
- Engineering, Architecture, and Related Technologies
- Health and Related Fields
- Humanities
- Journalism and Communications Technologies
- Mathematics, Computer, and Information Sciences
- Personal Improvement and Leisure
- Personal, Protective, and Transportation Services
- Physical and Life Sciences, and Technologies
- Law and Legal studies
- Social and Behavioural Sciences
- Social Work

- Visual and Performing Arts
- Other, please specify: [OPEN TEXT]

43. Please select the option(s) that best describe your role:

- Administrator
- Program lead or coordinator
- Faculty member
- Teaching staff member
- Non-teaching staff member
- Other, please specify: [OPEN TEXT]

44. Is your role primarily student-facing?

- Yes
- No

### **Sexual Harassment (Students; Students, Staff & Faculty)**

<These questions ask about experiences or observations of sexual harassment in your experiential learning position.

We know that answering these questions can be difficult. A gentle reminder that you are completing this survey anonymously, your participation is voluntary, and you may skip/are not required to answer any question you are not comfortable with.

You are welcome to take a break or pause at any time. If you choose to leave and return to this survey at a later time, your responses will be saved on your device until you either click SUBMIT OR you clear your 'cookies'. If you close your browser before getting to the end of the survey, and do not confirm your consent to participate at the end of the survey by clicking SUBMIT, your information will not be collected or stored as part of this study.

If you need support at any time, please refer to this list of resources <LINK TO RESOURCE LIST>

Please take some deep breaths before proceeding and take advantage of any other comfort measures to support you at this time.>

45. During your experiential learning opportunity, have you experienced any of the following behaviours?

	Never	Once	More than once	Prefer not to say/Not applicable
Unwelcome communications of a sexual nature (e.g. emails, phone calls, notes, text messages, social media contacts)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unwelcome invasion of personal space (e.g. touching, crowding, leaning over)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unwelcome sexually suggestive looks or gestures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pressure for sexual favours	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pressure for dates	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unwelcome sexual teasing, jokes, comments or questions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The presence of sexually oriented material in any format (e.g. photos, videos, written material)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People having sexually oriented conversations in front of others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Suggestions that you do not “act” like a man or woman is “supposed to act”	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Suggestions that you do not “look” or “act” like a trans person is “supposed to look/act”	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being insulted, mistreated, ignored, or excluded because of your sexual orientation or assumed sexual orientation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being insulted, mistreated, ignored, or excluded because you are (or are assumed to be) transgender	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being insulted, mistreated, ignored, or excluded	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



because of your gender expression				
Being insulted, mistreated, ignored, or excluded because you are a woman	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being insulted, mistreated, ignored, or excluded because you are a man	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stalking (e.g. unwanted intrusion - physically or electronically - into your personal life)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attempted rape or attempted sexual assault	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rape or sexual assault	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other Please specify: [OPEN TEXT]	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

46. During your experiential learning opportunity, did you observe anyone being subjected to the above behaviours? Please name the behaviours you observed.

[OPEN TEXT]

<If you observed or experienced sexual harassment during your experiential learning position, select one experience that had the greatest impact on you and answer the following questions in terms of that experience. A gentle reminder that you are completing this survey anonymously, and resources are available here <LINK TO RESOURCES>.

If you have not observed or experienced sexual harassment during your experiential learning position, please skip ahead to Institutional Responses & Prevention.>

47. Are you responding based on an experience where the sexual harassment was directed at:

- You
- Yourself and another person/other people
- Another person/other people
- No one specifically
- Prefer not to say

48. Who committed the sexual harassment? Please select all that apply.

- Your immediate supervisor
- Other supervisor(s)
- Employees
- Other students you were working with
- Contractors
- Delivery or salespeople who come into the workplace regularly
- Customers or members of the public who the organization provides services to
- Someone from outside the organization in a personal relationship (e.g., (ex)partner, friend, family member, etc.) with you
- Someone from outside the organization in a personal relationship (e.g., (ex)partner, friend, family member, etc.) with an employee
- Someone from outside the organization in a personal relationship (e.g., (ex)partner, friend, family member, etc.) with another student you were working with
- Someone with no connection to the organization
- Not sure/prefer not to say
- Other, please specify: [OPEN TEXT]

49. What gender was/were the person(s) who committed the sexual harassment? Please select all that apply.

- Man
- Woman
- Non-binary
- Two or more men
- Two or more women

- People of different genders
- Not sure/Prefer not to say
- Other, please specify: [OPEN TEXT]

50. Did any of the following factors contribute to the sexual harassment? Please select all that apply.

- Ableism
- Ageism
- Anti-Black Racism
- Anti-Indigenous Racism
- Antisemitism
- Classism
- Colonialism
- Colourism
- Ethnocentrism
- Fatphobia
- Heteronormativity, Cisheteronormativity
- Homophobia, Queerphobia, Biphobia, Aphobia, Lesbophobia
- Islamophobia
- Misogynoir
- Racism
- Sanism
- Transphobia
- White Supremacy
- Xenophobia
- None of the above/not sure/prefer not to say

Other, please specify: [OPEN TEXT]

51. Please select the response that best reflects the effect of specific actions you took in response to the sexual harassment.

<Know that there is no right or wrong way to respond to an experience of sexual harassment, and it is important to do what is right for you in the moment.>

	Made things better	Made no difference	Made things worse	Prefer not to say/Not applicable
I ignored the behaviour or did nothing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I avoided the person(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I asked the person(s) to stop	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I threatened to tell or told others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I reported the behaviour to the supervisor or other officials	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I reported the behaviour to my institution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I filed a formal complaint with my supervisor or other official	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I filed a formal complaint with my institution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I made a joke of the behaviour	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I went along with the behaviour	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I spoke with a lawyer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I spoke with a counsellor, psychologist, social worker, or other support on campus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I spoke with a counsellor, psychologist, social worker, or other support in the community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I stopped showing up to my experiential learning opportunity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I decreased the days/hours I participated in my experiential learning opportunity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I changed the days/hours I would participate in my experiential learning opportunity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I asked my institution for a new experiential learning opportunity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I called the police	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

52. Briefly describe any other action you may have taken and the difference it made, if any. [OPEN TEXT]

53. If you did not report the experience of sexual harassment to your institution, please indicate your reasons for not doing so. Please select all that apply.

<Remember that there are various reasons for not reporting an experience of sexual harassment and reporting is not always a safe or appropriate option for everyone.>

- Someone responsible for student and/or worker safety and wellbeing found out about the behaviour in another way
- The behaviour stopped
- I resolved the issue on my own
- Someone threatened me not to report it
- Someone advised me not to report it
- I didn't think the issue was serious enough
- I left my position
- The person responsible changed jobs/locations
- I didn't know what to do, where to go, or who to ask for help
- I had concerns about the formal complaint process

- I was afraid of negative consequences
- I did not believe it would make a difference
- Not applicable (I reported the experience of sexual harassment to my institution)
- Other, please specify: [OPEN TEXT]

54. Did any of the following happen as a result of the sexual harassment, or your response to it?

	Yes	No	Prefer not to say/Not applicable
My work assignments or conditions got worse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was denied a good performance rating, or good reference	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was reassigned within the organization against my wishes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was reassigned to a different organization against my wishes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My experiential learning opportunity was ended against my wishes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I left my experiential learning position	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My work assignments or conditions got better	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Corrective action was taken against the person who caused harm	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My productivity was reduced	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I experienced negative impacts on my personal or social life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I stayed or wanted to stay away from specific locations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I missed work or worked fewer hours (e.g. leaving early or arriving late)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I experienced negative academic impacts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My learning opportunities were hindered	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I experienced negative emotional impacts (e.g. feelings of depression, anxiety, fear or anger)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I experienced sleep difficulties	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I experienced a loss of trust in my superiors I experienced a loss of trust in my team, unit, department, or division	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I experience a loss of trust in my institution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was informed of the next steps that would be taken following my concern/complaint	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was asked what an appropriate remedy to my concern/complaint would be	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I received a follow-up about my concern/complaint that I raised	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No changes occurred	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other Please specify: [OPEN TEXT]	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

55. Overall, how satisfied were you with the actions taken by your employer or experiential learning provider?

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Prefer not to say
- My employer did not take any action

56. Overall, how satisfied were you with the actions taken by your post-secondary institution?

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Prefer not to say
- My institution did not take any action

### **Sexual Harassment (Staff; Students, Staff & Faculty)**

<These questions ask about what you know about students' experiences of sexual harassment in experiential learning positions from your perspective as a staff or faculty member.

We know that answering these questions can be difficult. A gentle reminder that you are completing this survey anonymously, and you are not required to answer any question you are not comfortable with.

You are welcome to take a break or pause at any time. If you choose to leave and return to this survey at a later time, your responses will be saved on your device until you either click SUBMIT OR you clear your 'cookies'. If you close your browser before getting to the end of the survey, and do not confirm your consent to participate at the end of the survey by clicking the SUBMIT button, your information will not be collected or stored as part of this study.

If you need support at any time, please refer to this list of resources that you are also welcome to share with your students and colleagues <LINK TO RESOURCE LIST>.

Please take some deep breaths before proceeding and take advantage of any other comfort measures to support you at this time.>

57. Are you aware of students being subjected to any of the following behaviours during their experiential learning opportunities?



	Never	Once	More than once	Prefer not to say/Not applicable
Unwelcome communications of a sexual nature (e.g. emails, phone calls, notes, text messages, social media contacts)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unwelcome invasion of personal space (e.g. touching, crowding, leaning over)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unwelcome sexually suggestive looks or gestures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pressure for sexual favours	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pressure for dates	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unwelcome sexual teasing, jokes, comments or questions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The presence of sexually oriented material in any format (e.g. photos, videos, written material)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People having sexually oriented conversations in front of others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Suggestions that they do not “act” like a man or woman is “supposed to act”	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Suggestions that they do not “look” or “act” like a trans person is “supposed to look/act”	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being insulted, mistreated, ignored, or excluded because of their sexual orientation or assumed sexual orientation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being insulted, mistreated, ignored, or excluded because they are (or are assumed to be) transgender	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being insulted, mistreated, ignored, or excluded because of their gender expression	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being insulted, mistreated, ignored, or excluded because they are a woman	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Being insulted, mistreated, ignored, or excluded because they are a man	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stalking (e.g. unwanted intrusion - physically or electronically - into their personal life)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attempted rape or attempted sexual assault	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rape or sexual assault	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other Please specify: [OPEN TEXT]	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<If you are not aware of students being subjected to any of the following behaviours during their experiential learning opportunities, please skip ahead to Institutional Responses & Prevention.>

58. Who committed the sexual harassment? Please select all that apply.

- A student's immediate supervisor
- Other supervisor(s)
- Employees
- Other students
- Contractors
- Delivery or salespeople who come into the workplace regularly
- Customers or members of the public who the organization provides services to
- Someone from outside the organization in a personal relationship (e.g., (ex)partner, friend, family member, etc.) with the student
- Someone from outside the organization in a personal relationship (e.g., (ex)partner, friend, family member, etc.) with an employee
- Someone from outside the organization in a personal relationship (e.g., (ex)partner, friend, family member, etc.) with another student
- Someone with no connection to the organization

- Not sure/prefer not to say
- Other, please specify: [OPEN TEXT]

59. Did any of the following factors contribute to the sexual harassment? Please select all that apply.

- Ableism
- Ageism
- Anti-Black Racism
- Anti-Indigenous Racism
- Antisemitism
- Classism
- Colonialism
- Colourism
- Ethnocentrism
- Fatphobia
- Heteronormativity, Cisheteronormativity
- Homophobia, Queerphobia, Biphobia, Aphobia, Lesbophobia
- Islamophobia
- Misogynoir
- Racism
- Sanism
- Transphobia
- White Supremacy
- Xenophobia
- None of the above/not sure/prefer not to say
- Other, please specify: [OPEN TEXT]

## Institutional Responses & Prevention (Students)

60. Overall, how safe do/did you feel from sexual harassment in your experiential learning position? <LINK TO RESOURCES>

- Very safe
- Fairly safe
- Neither safe nor unsafe
- Somewhat unsafe
- Not at all safe
- Prefer not to say

61. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements as they apply to your post-secondary institution.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Prefer not to say/Not applicable
My institution takes sufficient steps to prevent sexual harassment from occurring in experiential learning opportunities.	●	●	●	●	●	●
I know where to find my institution's policies on sexual harassment that apply to experiential learning opportunities.	●	●	●	●	●	●
I know where to go to access supports and resources.	●	●	●	●	●	●
I know where to find information on filing a complaint about sexual harassment and the complaints process at my post-secondary institution.	●	●	●	●	●	●
I understand my options for when I experience sexual harassment in my experiential learning opportunity.	●	●	●	●	●	●

62. What does your institution have in place to address sexual harassment in experiential learning opportunities? Please select all that apply.

- Policy
- Training for students
- Training for employers
- Clear reporting procedures
- Access to support persons, counsellors, etc.
- None of the above/not sure

63. Please list any other practices your institution has to address sexual harassment in experiential learning opportunities. [OPEN TEXT]

64. Please share what improvements can be made to the practices your institution has to address sexual harassment in experiential learning opportunities.  
 <Some areas you may consider include policy, training, reporting procedures, access to supports, etc.> [OPEN TEXT]

65. What practices would you like to see your institution put in place to address sexual harassment in experiential learning? [OPEN TEXT]

66. Is there anything else that you would like to share about your experiences? [OPEN TEXT]

### Institutional Responses & Prevention (Staff & Faculty)

67. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements as they apply to your post-secondary institution.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Prefer not to say/Not applicable
My institution takes sufficient steps to prevent sexual harassment from occurring in experiential learning opportunities.	●	●	●	●	●	●

I know where to find my institution's policies on sexual harassment that apply to experiential learning opportunities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know where to direct students to access supports and resources.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know where to direct students to find information on filing a complaint about sexual harassment and the complaints process at my post-secondary institution.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I understand the options available to students who have experienced sexual harassment in their experiential learning opportunity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

68. What does your institution have in place to address sexual harassment in experiential learning opportunities? Please select all that apply.

- Policy
- Training for students
- Training for employers
- Clear reporting procedures
- Access to support persons, counsellors, etc.
- None of the above/not sure

69. Please list any other practices your institution has to address sexual harassment in experiential learning opportunities. [OPEN TEXT]

70. Please share what improvements can be made to the practices your institution has to address sexual harassment in experiential learning opportunities.

<Some areas you may consider include policy, training, reporting procedures, access to supports, etc.> [OPEN TEXT]

71. What practices would you like to see your institution put in place to address sexual harassment in experiential learning? [OPEN TEXT]

72. Is there anything else you would like to share? [OPEN TEXT]

### Institutional Responses & Prevention (Students, Staff & Faculty)

73. Overall, how safe do/did you feel from sexual harassment in your experiential learning position? <LINK TO RESOURCES>

- Very safe
- Fairly safe
- Neither safe nor unsafe
- Somewhat unsafe
- Not at all safe
- Prefer not to say

74. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements as they apply to your post-secondary institution.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Prefer not to say/Not applicable
My institution takes sufficient steps to prevent sexual harassment from occurring in experiential learning opportunities.	●	●	●	●	●	●
I know where to find my institution's policies on sexual harassment that apply to experiential learning opportunities.	●	●	●	●	●	●
I know where to go to access supports and resources.	●	●	●	●	●	●
I know where to direct students to access supports and resources.	●	●	●	●	●	●

I know where to find information on filing a complaint about sexual harassment and the complaints process at my post-secondary institution.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know where to direct students to find information on filing a complaint about sexual harassment and the complaints process at my post-secondary institution.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I understand my options for when I experience sexual harassment in my experiential learning opportunity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I understand the options available to students who have experienced sexual harassment in their experiential learning opportunity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

75. What does your institution have in place to address sexual harassment in experiential learning opportunities? Please select all that apply.

- Policy
- Training for students
- Training for employers
- Clear reporting procedures
- Access to support persons, counsellors, etc.
- None of the above/not sure

76. Please list any other practices your institution has to address sexual harassment in experiential learning opportunities. [OPEN TEXT]

77. Please share what improvements can be made to the practices your institution has to address sexual harassment in experiential learning opportunities.



<Some areas you may consider include policy, training, reporting procedures, access to supports, etc.> [OPEN TEXT]

78. What practices would you like to see your institution put in place to address sexual harassment in experiential learning? [OPEN TEXT]

79. Is there anything else that you would like to share about your experiences? [OPEN TEXT]

### Demographic Questions (Students; Students, Staff & Faculty)

80. Were you enrolled with a [study permit](#)?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

81. What is the highest credential held by either of your parent(s) or legal guardian(s):

- Less than High School
- High School
- Trade or Apprenticeship
- CEGEP diploma (DSC/DEC)
- College Diploma or Certificate
- University Undergraduate Certificate or Diploma
- University Undergraduate Degree
- Professional Degree in Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary, Medicine, Law or Optometry
- Master's Degree
- Doctorate Degree
- Not sure
- Prefer not to say

82. What was your age at the time of your experiential learning opportunity:

- 18-21
- 22-25
- 26-29
- 30-45
- 46-50
- 51-55
- 56-60
- 61-65
- 66+
- Prefer not to say

83. At the time of your experiential learning opportunity, were you financially independent from your parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s)?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

*[If response to question 83 is "no" skip to question 85.]*

84. What was your estimated income before taxes in the year you began your experiential learning opportunity?

- \$25,000 or less
- \$25,001 to \$50,000
- \$50,001 to \$75,000
- \$75,001 to \$100,000
- \$100,001 to \$125,000
- Over \$125,000

Not sure/prefer not to say

85. What was the estimated income before taxes of your parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) in the year you began your experiential learning opportunity?

\$25,000 or less

\$25,001 to \$50,000

\$50,001 to \$75,000

\$75,001 to \$100,000

\$100,001 to \$125,000

Over \$125,000

Not sure/prefer not to say

86. Did you have any dependents or were you a primary caregiver while completing your experiential learning opportunity?

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

87. Would you describe yourself as having any of the following? Please select all that apply.

Physical disability (disability affecting mobility or dexterity)

Intellectual or learning disability (disability affecting ability to learn tasks or process information)

Psychiatric disability (disability resulting from mental illness)

Neurological disability (disability associated with damage to the nervous system)

Developmental disability

Visual impairment

Hearing impairment

None of the above/prefer not to say

88. What is your gender?

Woman

Man

Non-binary

Two Spirit

Agender

Queer

Prefer not to say

Prefer to self-describe: [OPEN TEXT]

89. What was your sex assigned at birth?

Female

Male

Intersex

Prefer not to say

90. What gender identity did you present in your experiential learning position:

I presented as my gender

I presented as a gender identity that is different from my gender

Prefer not to say

91. What is your sexual identity?

Asexual

Aromantic

Heterosexual/Straight

Lesbian

- WLW (women loving women)
- Bisexual
- Pansexual
- Gay
- MLM (men loving men)
- Queer
- Two Spirit
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer to self-describe: [OPEN TEXT]

92. Do you identify as an Indigenous person (Status or non-Status First Nations, Métis, or Inuit)?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

93. Which of the following do you identify as? Please select all that apply.

- Arab
- Black
- Chinese (including Mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan)
- Filipino
- Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, Inuit)
- Japanese
- Korean
- Latin, Central, or South American
- South Asian
- Southeast Asian

- West Asian
- White
- Prefer not to say
- Other, please specify: [OPEN TEXT]

94. Which of the following do you identify as? Please select all that apply.

- Christian (Catholic protestant or any other Christian denominations)
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Muslim
- Jewish
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Jain
- Not religious
- Prefer not to say
- Other, please specify: [OPEN TEXT]

95. What is your primary language (what language do you prefer to communicate or receive information):

- English
- French
- An Indigenous language
- Sign language
- Prefer not to say
- Other, please specify: [OPEN TEXT]

## Demographics (Staff & Faculty)

96. Would you describe yourself as having any of the following? Please select all that apply.

- Physical disability (disability affecting mobility or dexterity)
- Intellectual or learning disability (disability affecting ability to learn tasks or process information)
- Psychiatric disability (disability resulting from mental illness)
- Neurological disability (disability associated with damage to the nervous system)
- Developmental disability
- Visual impairment
- Hearing impairment
- None of the above/prefer not to say

97. What is your gender?

- Woman
- Man
- Non-binary
- Two Spirit
- Agender
- Queer
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer to self-describe: [OPEN TEXT]

98. What was your sex assigned at birth?

- Female
- Male
- Intersex

Prefer not to say

99. What gender identity do you present in your job?

I present as my gender

I present as a gender identity that is different from my gender

Prefer not to say

100. What is your sexual identity?

Asexual

Aromantic

Heterosexual/Straight

Lesbian

WLW (women loving women)

Bisexual

Pansexual

Gay

MLM (men loving men)

Queer

Two Spirit

Prefer not to say

Prefer to self-describe: [OPEN TEXT]

101. Do you identify as an Indigenous person (Status or non-Status First Nations, Métis, or Inuit)?

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

102. Which of the following do you identify as? Please select all that apply.



- Arab
- Black
- Chinese (including Mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan)
- Filipino
- Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, Inuit)
- Japanese
- Korean
- Latin, Central, or South American
- South Asian
- Southeast Asian
- West Asian
- White
- Prefer not to say
- Other, please specify: [OPEN TEXT]

103. Which of the following do you identify as? Please select all that apply.

- Christian (Catholic protestant or any other Christian denominations)
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Muslim
- Jewish
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Jain
- Not religious/prefer not to say
- Other, please specify: [OPEN TEXT]

104. What is your primary language (what language do you prefer to communicate or receive information)?

- English
- French
- An Indigenous language
- Sign language
- Prefer not to say
- Other, please specify: [OPEN TEXT]

## Appendix D: Findings from *Possibility Seeds*' National Survey of Employers and Experiential Learning Providers

### Methodology

In 2023, *Possibility Seeds* launched a bilingual, national survey for employers and experiential learning (EL) providers in Canada, including people that supervise or are the primary Field Instructor contact for students participating in EL opportunities at their workplace, and/or work in an environment where students participate in EL. The survey ran from February 13, 2023 to March 27, 2023, and was conducted to learn about employer and EL provider needs and perspectives on sexual harassment experienced by students in EL contexts.

Employers and EL providers were invited to participate in the survey. Participants were recruited using a non-random, voluntary response sampling method. Calls for participants were shared via social media, newsletters, and email.

The survey was promoted by *Possibility Seeds*, Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning Canada, the Canadian Association of College & University Student Services, CERIC, the Association for Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning BC/Yukon, the BC Work Integrated Learning Council, and Experiential and Work-Integrated Learning Ontario. Staff at post-secondary institutions also circulated the call for participants amongst employers and EL providers in their networks.

The survey included a total of 23 questions, included at the conclusion of this Appendix. The first set of questions were contextual questions about the workplace, the types of EL positions offered, the participant's role in their workplace, and their professional relationship to students engaged in EL. The next set of questions asked about sexual harassment policies, procedures and protocols within the workplace, followed by a set of questions on the participant's knowledge of relevant policies at post-secondary institutions (PSIs). The final set of questions asked about available supports for students, as well as employer and EL provider needs to prevent sexual harassment and better support students.

The findings from this survey are not reflective of all employers and EL providers given the small, unrepresentative sample size. However, they do provide some insight into the needs and perspectives of employers and EL providers and can be used as a starting point for continued work towards safer EL opportunities for students.

## Findings

### Survey Participants

A total of 78 employers and EL providers (73 English and 5 French) completed the survey. Surveys were considered complete if a respondent answered at least one question and clicked “submit” at the end of the survey.

The majority of employers and EL providers were in Ontario (68.8%), followed by British Columbia (15.6%), Alberta and Quebec (5.2% each), Nova Scotia (2.6%), and Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador (1.3%). No employers or EL providers from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, or Yukon completed the survey.

Workplaces were predominantly large, with 500 or more employees (46.6%), followed by small workplaces with 99 or fewer employees (36.3%), and medium workplaces with between 100 and 499 employees (16.9%).

Employers and EL providers were from a range of sectors and industries. Educational services (20.5%), professional, scientific, and technical services (16.7%), health care and social assistance (15.4%), and manufacturing (14.1%) were most represented. Other sectors and industries represented included public administration, utilities (3.8% each), accommodation and food services, construction, mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction (2.6% each), agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting, finance and insurance, information and cultural industries, and transportation (1.3% each).

Participants were in supervisory or managerial roles (41.0%), or were employees (19.2%), in Human Resources (15.4%), or Executive Directors and upper management (12.8%). Some participants (10.3%) held multiple roles within their workplace. The majority of participants (53.8%) had supervised or acted as the primary workplace contact for students participating in EL opportunities. Others shared these responsibilities (29.5%), and 16.7% worked in an environment where students participated in EL, but had never supervised or acted as a primary contact for those students.

The majority of employers and EL providers (60.3%) provided paid EL opportunities to students, and 26.9% offered both paid and unpaid opportunities. For EL opportunities that were paid, compensation was primarily in the form of an hourly wage (79.4%), although some employers and EL providers (8.8%) paid salaries to students. Others (11.8%) had multiple forms of compensation, including honoraria, hourly wages, and salaries. Only 12.8% of employers and EL providers offered exclusively unpaid opportunities for students.

The majority of employers and EL providers hosted students for whom EL was a requirement for professional accreditation or for their education program, with 29.9% exclusively hosting students where EL was a requirement, and 41.6% hosting some students where EL was a requirement. For almost one-quarter of employers and EL providers (23.4%), EL was not a requirement for the students they hosted.

Almost all employers and EL providers said they always (7.7%) or sometimes (85.9%) hired students in paid employment positions following the completion of their EL opportunity.

### **Sexual Harassment Policies, Procedures & Protocols**

Almost all employers and EL providers (88.5%) had specific policies, procedures and/or protocols in place to respond to sexual harassment in the workplace. For those that did have workplace sexual harassment policies, procedures, and/or protocols, they were written in a way that was easy to understand (88.4%) and participants knew where to find them (94.0%). The majority of participants (89.9%) said that their workplace sexual harassment policies, procedures, and/or protocols also applied to students in EL positions.

When asked what they knew about their workplace's policies, procedures and protocols in response to incidents of sexual harassment involving students participating in EL, many participants shared that students are considered employees under their workplace policies, procedures, and protocols. This was the case where students were paid as well as where they were unpaid. However, it's important to note that not all employment, labour, and workplace sexual harassment legislation applies to students in unpaid positions, making it critical that students in unpaid positions be *explicitly* included in organizational policies, procedures, and protocols to ensure they receive adequate protections.

For a small majority of employers and EL providers (66.2%), reporting sexual harassment was mandatory. Most commonly, participants shared that reporting sexual harassment was done by contacting someone internal to the organization, such as Human Resources,

or a manager or supervisor. Incident report forms were also a common reporting procedure within workplaces. Few respondents shared that confidential reporting options were available. Only one respondent shared that there was no reporting option available.

When asked if there were different reporting mechanisms/processes for sexual harassment involving students, the majority of participants said that they were either unsure or that reporting mechanisms/processes were the same as other employees. The majority of those that had different reporting mechanisms or processes specified that the sexual harassment would be reported to the PSI, or that it would be dependent on the PSI's policies and procedures.

When asked about what they knew about the sexual harassment policies, procedures and protocols that exist at students' PSIs, almost all participants said that they knew little or nothing. A small number of participants shared that they were aware that policies existed, but that they were unfamiliar with them. Some participants shared that while they didn't know much about PSI policies, they assumed they would be similar to workplace policies on sexual harassment.

## Supporting Students in Experiential Learning

Participants were asked what tools or improvements they needed to better support students who are subjected to sexual harassment. Responses fell under 4 general themes: communication between the PSI and the employer or EL provider; clear policies; education and training for both the student and the employer or EL provider; and support.

Participants shared that communication between the PSI and the employer or EL provider should include the PSI sharing any relevant policies and procedures, particularly around procedures when sexual harassment occurs. They also asked for a checklist for onboarding students, as well as general advice.

*"Would be good for the school to email me their policy to make sure it aligns with our training and who should be contacted if an incident does occur."*

*"Provide employers with advice, suggestions, and information. Notify employers of institutional policies and systems (reporting, supports, etc.) that apply if this is not already being provided."*

*"We probably need to be provided an orientation checklist that reminds us to orient our students to the process here."*

*"Have the post-secondary institutions share their policies and provide information on the support that they could provide to the employer and to the student."*

The importance of having clear policies that apply to students, both in the workplace and at the PSI, was named by some participants as important to better support students.

*"Many [employers] need clarity on what policies apply (and some need a policy in the first place!). This is especially the case for smaller employers, and those with gender imbalances in their workforce."*

Participants shared that education and training was needed for students as well as for employers and EL providers. They shared that both students and employers and EL providers need education on sexual harassment and what it can look like.

*"Many people don't know what is considered harassment and this is because we don't talk about it enough. People are uncomfortable about the topic and with the #MeToo movement, some men feel attacked in these conversations. Being explicit in the definitions and examples that have come up in research, as well as explicit in the expectations of the workplace would be key to see improvement."*

*"Culture wars (both between and within generations) make for huge gaps in people's understandings of what constitutes both sexual harassment and a supportive work environment, and providing resources and training often feels like preaching to the choir, while the most toxic employers (and students) largely avoid accountability because the context we live in doesn't provide real justice to almost any survivor."*

For students, participants shared that education and training should also help them to understand their rights, as well as disclosure, reporting, and support options.

*"Perhaps a specific focus on educating them about the supports, and reinforcement that it is ok, and expected, that they come forward about incidents. Without a record of incidents, no-one may know there are issues that must be addressed."*

For employers and EL providers, participants shared the need for education and training focused on prevention and response.

*"How to handle disclosures made by students who have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace and how best to communicate that disclosure to the employer so that the student can be supported and change can be made in the workplace."*

*"I am unsure of what types of professional development our employers have access to. Some of them seem to have very little, and that is a challenge. As a university, I think we could make a difference to them, and I would like to be able to do that."*

Knowledge of, and access to, supports for persons affected by sexual harassment was also identified as a need for employers and EL providers. Participants named the importance of supports being provided both through the PSI and the employer or EL provider. Some also shared that where there are supports available through an insurance or benefits program, that employers and EL providers should, where possible, provide these resources to students.

*"Being aware of all the help that is out there that a student may need should they encounter sexual harassment."*

*"Likely better understanding of supports for any employee in their organization first and foremost."*

*"More active communication from colleges around supports available to their students that can work in tandem with supports provided by the employer."*

Participants were also asked what *preventative* supports they need from PSIs to better meet the needs of students participating in EL opportunities. An overwhelming majority said that training for students prior to starting their EL position would be most helpful.

*"Provide students with training on sexual harassment in the workplace as a mandatory integrated part of any co-op program, including awareness of heightened risk to students, real-world examples, what to look out for, recommended actions, and supports available."*

*"Would be great for the school to also provide training before co-op starts to make sure there are no gaps between employer and school, but also so that if a student does not feel safe to report to the employer they feel safe to report to the school (or even safe to ask questions)."*

*"Students are new to the workplace and they may not understand what is an acceptable interaction and what is crossing the line into harassment. They may also be worried that since they are reporting to a senior on their team that any report will look poorly on them (he said he said/she said she said scenario). Training prior to placement would be very beneficial."*



Some participants also spoke to the need for a strong, collaborative relationship between the PSI and the employer or EL provider.

*“More collaboration between what the institution does and what the employer does.”*

*“Review and exchange on policy, mechanism to report, resources that should be available. Jointly make the students fully aware that they would be fully supported if a situation was to develop.”*

One participant provided insight into how employers and EL providers can take a preventative approach through reflection and ongoing attention to workplace culture.

*“Consider the environment you oversee and consider how a student may be integrated into the space. Explicitly reflect on the culture within your workplace and consider the social norms that govern the space. Consider the identities you know of the student and how their identities may blend or clash with the workplace environment. Use this reflection as an opportunity to create change within your workplace if you identify any concerns or discomfort for an incoming student. This not only benefits the student but keeps an organization engaged in the workplace culture and expectations of professionalism and collegial work.”*

## Survey Questions for *Possibility Seeds*’ National Survey of Employers and Experiential Learning Providers

### About your workplace

1. Which province/territory do you work in?
  - Alberta
  - British Columbia
  - Manitoba
  - New Brunswick
  - Newfoundland and Labrador
  - Northwest Territories
  - Nova Scotia
  - Nunavut

- Ontario
- Prince Edward Island
- Quebec
- Saskatchewan
- Yukon

2. What sector or industry does your workplace fall under?

- Accommodation and food services (hotels, resorts, motels, bed and breakfasts, campgrounds, cottages and cabins; preparing meals, snacks and beverages)
- Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services (activities that support the day-to-day operations of other companies and waste management activities)
- Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting
- Arts, entertainment and recreation
- Construction
- Educational services
- Finance and insurance
- Health care and social assistance
- Information and cultural industries (publishing, motion picture/ sound recording, telecommunications, data processing, hosting)
- Management of companies and enterprises
- Manufacturing
- Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction
- Private household (nanny, caregiver, meal preparation, household maintenance)
- Professional, scientific and technical services (legal services, accounting, tax preparation, bookkeeping, design services, computer systems, design,

management/ scientific/ technical services, research and development services, advertising, public relations services)

- Public administration (public administration - federal, provincial, territorial, local, municipal and regional, Aboriginal, International and other extra-territorial)
  - Real estate and rental and leasing
  - Retail Trade (store or non-store)
  - Transportation (air, rail, water, truck, transit, etc., postal service, couriers, messengers)
  - Utilities (electric, gas, water utilities)
  - Warehousing and storage
  - Wholesale trade
  - Other services (except public administration) (repair and maintenance; personal and laundry services; religious, grant-making, civic, and professional and similar organisations)
  - Other, please specify: [OPEN TEXT]
3. Please select the option that best represents the size of your workplace (not just the department or unit you work in).
- Small (1-99 employees)
  - Medium (100-499 employees)
  - Large (500 + employees)
  - Unsure
4. Are the experiential learning opportunities provided to students at your workplace **paid or unpaid?**
- Paid** opportunities are provided to students
  - Unpaid** opportunities are provided to students
  - Both paid and unpaid** opportunities are provided to students

Unsure

*[If response to question 4 is “unpaid opportunities are provided to students” or “unsure”, skip to question 6.]*

5. What types of compensation/payment are provided to students completing **paid** experiential learning opportunities at your workplace (please check all that apply):

Honorarium (i.e one-time payment)

Hourly wage

Other, please specify: [OPEN TEXT]

6. Are the students completing experiential learning opportunities at your workplace doing so as part of a requirement of their professional accreditation or education program (Ex. Provincial Social Work & Social Services Work College Accreditation Process; Provincial Early Childhood Educators Licensing & Regulations Compliance Process)?

Yes, all students

Yes, some students

No

Unsure

7. Does your workplace **hire** students in **paid** employment positions following the completion of their experiential learning opportunity?

Yes, all of the time

Yes, sometimes

No

Unsure

8. Please describe your role within the workplace (please check all that apply):

Employee

Executive Director/ Upper management

- Human Resources
- Supervisor/ Manager
- Other, please specify: [OPEN TEXT]

9. Please choose the option that best describes your professional relationship with students participating in experiential learning opportunities:

- I have supervised or acted as the primary workplace contact for students participating in experiential learning opportunities
- I have shared the responsibilities of supervising or acting as primary workplace contact for students participating in experiential learning opportunities
- I have never supervised a student participating in an experiential learning opportunity or acted as a primary workplace contact, but work in an environment where students are participating in experiential learning opportunities

### **Sexual Harassment Policies, Procedures & Protocols Within Your Workplace**

10. Do you have specific policies, procedures and protocols in place to respond to sexual harassment at your workplace?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

*[If response to question 10 is "no" or "unsure", skip to question 15.]*

11. In your view, are your workplace sexual harassment policies and procedures written in a way that are easy to understand?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

12. Do you know where to go to find your workplace's sexual harassment policies and procedures?

Yes

No

Unsure

13. Do these policies, procedures and protocols **apply to students** in experiential learning opportunities?

Yes

No

Unsure

14. What do you know about your workplace's policies, procedures and protocols in response to incidents of sexual harassment **involving students** participating in experiential learning? [OPEN TEXT]

15. Is reporting sexual harassment **mandatory** at your workplace?

Yes

No

Unsure

16. What mechanisms exist at your workplace to **report** sexual harassment **involving students** (Ex. critical incident report)? [OPEN TEXT]

17. Are there different reporting mechanisms/processes for sexual harassment **involving students** (e.g., is there someone designated to report to the post-secondary institution, in addition to the workplace?) [OPEN TEXT]

## Sexual Harassment Policies, Procedures & Protocols at Post-Secondary Institutions

18. What do you know about the sexual harassment policies, procedures and protocols that exist at students' post-secondary institution(s)? [OPEN TEXT]

19. What do you know about the expectations/ requirements post-secondary institutions have of employers/ experiential learning providers who take on students (ex. Training, resources, education, contracts)? [OPEN TEXT]

### Supporting Students in Experiential Learning

20. What **supports** do you know of that exist for students following a disclosure of sexual harassment in the experiential learning contexts (including within their post-secondary institution, the community, and your workplace)? [OPEN TEXT]
21. What tools or improvements do employers/ experiential learning providers need to better **support students who experience** sexual harassment in experiential learning opportunities? [OPEN TEXT]
22. What **preventative** supports do employers/ experiential learning providers need from post-secondary institutions to better meet the needs of students conducting experiential learning opportunities (Ex. pre-placement training on sexual harassment etc.)? [OPEN TEXT]
23. Is there anything else you'd like to share? [OPEN TEXT]

## Appendix E: Case Study Analysis

In fall 2022, *Possibility Seeds* invited students, staff, and faculty to participate in interviews and focus groups that would inform a case study on sexual harassment in experiential learning (EL) at one post-secondary institution in Canada. The case study was one part of *Possibility Seeds' Sexual Harassment in Experiential Learning Research-to-Action Project*. The purpose was to gain an in-depth understanding of the impact of sexual harassment in EL contexts, students' experiences reporting or seeking support regarding instances of sexual harassment, and/or barriers to accessing available resources to address sexual harassment.

### Methodology


Eligible participants in the case study were either: (1) a current student at the case study institution who had participated in an EL opportunity for their degree; or (2) current staff or faculty working at the case study institution who worked in a role that supports students who are engaging in EL as part of their degree. Up to five student participants were invited to participate in an interview, and up to twenty staff and faculty members were invited to participate in one of two focus groups.

Participants were recruited using a non-random, voluntary response sampling method. Email invitations were sent to students, staff, and faculty through a contact at the case study institution. Those interested in participating were asked to complete a brief online form to confirm eligibility and provide their consent to be contacted by the researchers. Interested and eligible participants were then contacted directly and invited to participate in an interview or focus group.

*Possibility Seeds* provided a \$100 honorarium to student participants for their time and contributions. Staff and faculty participants did not receive an honorarium for their participation.

Participants in the interviews and focus groups were not anonymous to the researchers, nor were they anonymous to other participants in the case of the focus group, but efforts were made to protect confidentiality of all participants. Each focus group participant was asked to agree not to share the identity or information shared by other focus group participants with anyone in the consent form and reminded at the start of the focus group.





Interviews and focus groups took place in password protected Zoom meetings. Audio recordings were collected with consent of all participants. The audio recording was used to create transcripts of the interviews and focus group and subsequently deleted. During transcription, the researchers removed any identifying information about participants. Participants were then able to review the transcript from their interview or focus group, and amendments were made as requested.

To protect confidentiality, no identifying information about the participants or case study institution will be published. Where direct quotes are used, identifying information has been removed.

In total, five students participated in interviews, three staff members participated in a focus group, and a fourth staff member participated in an interview as there were no additional participants for a second focus group. The same questions were used in the staff interview as in the staff focus group.

Because a representative sample was not gathered and the sample size was small, the findings shared in this case analysis are only reflective of the experiences of participants and do not paint a complete picture of the case study institution or EL in post-secondary settings more broadly. However, understanding the experiences of these participants is incredibly valuable as it adds to our knowledge and understanding of the issue, helping us to identify areas for further exploration, and providing recommendations for possible interventions and promising practices.

All interviews and focus groups were conducted over Zoom and took approximately 1 hour each. Interviews and focus groups followed a semi-structured format. The interview and focus group guides were drafted by the research team and reviewed by the Sexual Harassment in Experiential Learning Research-to-Action Project Advisory Committee members. Student participants were asked introductory questions about their program and EL opportunity, followed by questions about their experiences or observations of sexual harassment in their EL opportunity, and, finally, questions about institutional practices and responses. Staff participants were asked introductory questions about their role, followed by questions about their knowledge of sexual harassment in EL, questions about institutional practices and responses, and, finally, questions about promising practice and areas for improvement.

A trauma-informed approach was taken with all interviews and focus groups. To that end, the following practices were used in interviews and focus groups:

- participants were provided with a list of available resources and supports prior to, during, and after the interview or focus group;
- participants were provided with the interview or focus group guide ahead of time, and given information about the types of questions that are coming up throughout the interview or focus group;
- participant questions about the study and/or the interview or focus group were answered;
- participants were reminded they can skip questions, pause or end/leave the interview or focus group at anytime;
- participants were offered opportunities for grounding (e.g., engaging in a breathing exercise) throughout the interview or focus group, as needed;
- questions were asked in a gentle, non-judgemental way;
- participants were reminded that their feelings are valid, they are believed, and there is no “right” way to respond to an experience of sexual harassment.

Data gathered in the case study was analysed using a thematic analysis approach. A hybrid coding technique was used to identify key themes in the interview and focus group transcripts. A set of predefined codes were chosen based on previous research related to sexual harassment in EL, and codes were amended or added as need throughout the coding process to best reflect the data. The use of thematic analysis introduces additional limitations, including opportunities for subjectivity bias and over-simplification. To help address these concerns, multiple members of the research team engaged in coding and theme identification and themes were reviewed alongside additional research on the issue.

## Background

Sexual harassment in EL is a prevalent issue at the post-secondary level. This case study explores the issue through an in-depth analysis of one post-secondary institution in Canada, referred to as “the University.”

The University is a large, public teaching and research university, with a diverse offering of programs in the arts, humanities, sciences, social sciences, engineering, business, law, and healthcare at the undergraduate and graduate levels, as well as in continuing and professional education. EL at the University is decentralized across faculties, departments, and programs.

Student participants were in the final years of undergraduate programs in healthcare, sciences, and social sciences. EL was a program requirement for students in healthcare, and an optional opportunity for students in the sciences and social sciences. Students participated in EL with providers who were external to the University, as well as those who were internal to the University.

Staff participants represented a range of roles across faculties and offices, including managerial or program lead positions, as well as instructors and direct student support and advisor roles. All staff had experience in their current or previous roles working directly with students and employers or EL providers.

## Case Analysis

The following case analysis is based on the interviews and focus groups held with student and staff participants. It provides key themes that emerged about why students chose to participate in EL; sexual harassment, including what it looks like, contributing factors and power dynamics, as well as its impacts; barriers to disclosing and reporting sexual harassment for students; and institutional responses, including both areas for improvement as well as promising practices. The final section of the case analysis offers recommendations from the participants to the University to address sexual harassment in EL.

## Why do students choose experiential learning?

Student participants shared various reasons for participating in EL. For some, EL was a requirement for their degree. For those where EL was optional, the main reason they shared for choosing EL was that they saw EL as a way to complement their degree post-graduation, gain work experience, and to strengthen their applications for graduate school and post-graduate job opportunities.

*"I feel like [experiential learning] is the only way to get [future] internships and work experience." — student participant*

*"And I also thought it would be a good way to complement my degree or strengthen my degree as I go either into grad school or into a career after graduation." — student participant*

## Sexual Harassment in Experiential Learning

### What does Sexual Harassment look like?

Both student and staff participants shared how sexual harassment manifests in EL contexts.

A common theme that emerged when students and staff were asked about the sexual harassment they experienced, witnessed, heard or were told about was a question about whether something was considered "serious enough" to be considered sexual harassment. Accounts from students and staff underscored how regularly sexual harassment happens in subtler forms.

*"There were a few times where he made a joke about a client, so there wasn't necessarily harassment, I guess, but sexual jokes." — student participant*

*"I knew about it, but I don't think I've ever like fully accepted that that was sexual harassment." — student participant*

*"There's still lots of behaviors that people would not necessarily think of as harassment, that we in fact know is harassment." — staff participant*

Students and staff shared how sexual harassment was minimized or normalized because of a lack of education on what it is and what it can look like.

*"I guess I've never really had the language to describe, like anything, relating to sexual comments or anything. I just thought of it as a crude joke." — student participant*

The minimization or normalization of sexual harassment was also identified by participants as a systemic issue, where concerns of sexual harassment are ignored by industries, professions, and institutions.

*"I think a lot of [sexual harassment] in [health care] gets swept under the rug, like, 'That's just patient care. That's just what it's like, as a health care worker. This is just what healthcare is like, you need to kind of toughen up and learn how to deal with it.'" — student participant*

A common experience students shared was being subjected to unwanted sexual comments and jokes. These comments and “jokes” were most commonly made by male peers, colleagues, supervisors, and patients, although participants also shared that female colleagues and supervisors also made sexually harassing comments. Comments and “jokes” were directed at the student, or were made to or in front of the student about others, such as a client.

*“And gender also, I think, plays a role based on the experiences that I've dealt with, it seems to be like, either a male supervisor or male colleague, kind of providing those comments.” — staff participant*

*“My supervisors made a lot of sexual jokes about things that are pretty general in nature, but there were a few times where he made a joke about a client.” — student participant*

This types of sexual harassment was typically ongoing, happening multiple times over the course of a student’s EL opportunity.

*“When I first went there I definitely didn't notice at first. It wasn't something he did, like every day, but maybe in October, there were a lot of [comments].” — student participant*

Another experience of sexual harassment students shared was colleagues spreading rumours about their sexual activity and relationships with other students.

*“I don't remember what exactly she said, but it made me feel really uncomfortable. Because, [myself and the other student are] just friends and we're co-workers and that's why we're close. But some of [our colleagues] try to almost make it as if we are engaging in more than a co-worker relationship.” — student participant*

## Contributing Factors

Students and staff shared how gender shaped the sexual harassment they experienced, witnessed, heard or were told about. Specifically, they shared that female students were more likely to be subjected to sexual harassment. They discussed how workplace culture and attitudes contributed to this, especially in male-dominated fields.

*“It definitely centers around gender roles. You know, we see students who go to a meeting and our female students are the ones that are going to be asked to take notes or grab coffee and our male students aren't.” — staff participant*

*"For our female identifying students, I think they often feel like they have to sort of 'man it up' a bit to be taken seriously in the workplace." — staff participant*

*"I think in the business workplace especially, there's still a lot of very, very old school kind of thinking. It tends to still be a space where it is white male dominated." — staff participant*

Students and staff also discussed how workplaces are often not safe spaces for queer and trans students who are subjected to sexual harassment based on their gender identity.

*"I've noticed that misgendering people is very common." — student participant*

*"One incident I'm aware of...that I had disclosed to me from a student was more around gender identity and sexualities. So being in a workplace where maybe being gay, for example, is frowned upon and you just kind of get that sense from the environment you're in." — staff participant*

Race also factored into students experiences of sexual harassment. This was a particular concern for racialized women, and in workplaces where there was a lack of diversity. These environments fostered feelings of isolation and of not belonging.

*"In the cases that I have heard, I think definitely race has been an issue, any of the comments that have been made, whether it's like sexual violence or bullying or any harassment in the workplace, race is a factor."*

*"A patient that we had was making one of my peers uncomfortable with other comments because she was Black and Muslim and wears a hijab." — student participant*

Students and staff also discussed the power dynamics that shape EL and how these power dynamics played into the sexual harassment students were subjected to. These power dynamics were especially pronounced where students were easily identifiable, such as in healthcare settings where students wore visual identifiers.

*"We just wear [...] specific colour scrubs. So, we're very easily identifiable as students, whether that's a pro or con. People very quickly get to know [that you are a student], you can see [students] around the hospital." — student participant*

The role of the student also caused confusion for some around boundaries with other co-workers, especially when students participated in EL at the PSI itself.

*"I walk past the person that I talked to in the hallway, I'm like, should I say hi? Are we co-workers? But also, you know, as a student, [there's] kind of a lot of layers there with my identity at the university, like am I an employee, am I a student, what am I?" — student participant*

## Impacts of Sexual Harassment

Student participants shared how being subjected to sexual harassment negatively impacted their lives. They shared about the effects of sexual harassment on their mental, emotional, and physical well-being, the impacts it had on their academics, and how it affected their EL and future career pathways.

Students shared how sexual harassment made them feel frustrated, amplified feelings of stress and anxiety, and that it impacted their ability to sleep. Staff also shared that they noticed negative impacts on students' mental health, including anxiety and burnout.

*"I think, like, the physical and mental and emotional toll is there as well. I'm having a hard time differentiating that from the lack of sleep and the general stress that accompanies clinicals. I think it's all very closely tied together." — student participant*

*"[There's] general stress and anxiety about going into these experiences for sure. And just dread and wanting the clinical to be over." — student participant*

*"So every time I'm near [the person making sexually harassing comments], I don't want to be alone, even though I know he wouldn't do anything like that, but it's still kind of scary. If you just even joke about stuff like that sometimes." — student participant*

Both students and staff named how sexual harassment impacted students' academic and career trajectories.

*"The ramifications for students of reporting an instance of harassment goes well beyond us just being able to pull them from the placement, make sure they're safe because then they can't get back into their classes depending on what time of year we're taking that action. They're losing out on missed income, they're losing out on a reference, they're losing out on that professional development. Maybe they were planning to be there for eight months and now they're done at three months and they can't put that on their resume." — staff participant*

Students shared how the sexual harassment made them feel uncomfortable in their positions. For some, this meant that they did not seek out guidance or direction from their supervisors, and for others, it affected their ability to build relationships with their coworkers.

*"I am so scared to ask [my supervisor] questions or seek his guidance or learn from him...I'm not getting what I could be getting." — student participant*

*"I think it gave me, or left me, an impression that maybe I shouldn't get as close to my coworkers. I don't know if I would ever want to be as friendly or get in close contact with a male coworker who is similar to my age next time because I don't know what other people will think." — student participant*

Some students shared how the sexual harassment, when compounded by the of their program and a lack of support from their institution, led to students leaving their program or pursuing different career pathways.

*"I think [sexual harassment] combines with other stressful factors for sure. Or maybe it even amplifies the stress that you feel in the program. But I think for a lot of people, this, combined with other experiences, not this alone, but it does really make us question our decision to go into the field and I think a lot of us have looked at other careers outside of [our field] and you know, perhaps even left the program because of experiences like this." — student participant*

This was a particular concern for student in healthcare settings who would change their area of focus to avoid adult male patient populations in order to protect themselves from sexual harassment.

*"[Sexual harassment] does affect where we decide to work... I think a lot of [my peers] are really pivoting away from working with adults, because of this, and also because of other reasons, but a lot of them state that they're uncomfortable around that power dynamic." — student participant*

For one student, their experience of sexual harassment led to them turning down an opportunity to continue in their position after their EL had ended. Another student shared that the sexual harassment they experienced would be a factor in their decision whether to accept future opportunities with the organization where they participated in their EL.



*"My supervisors said if I wanted to come back to the [organization] next summer and next spring, they would love to have me back. But I don't think I would go back."*  
— student participant

## Barriers to Disclosing and Reporting Sexual Harassment in Experiential Learning

Staff shared that while they understood the prevalence of sexual harassment in EL to be high, it is severely under-disclosed and underreported.

*"I mean, thankfully, I haven't received a lot of disclosures of sexual harassment. Does that mean I think they don't happen? No. I think it's very underreported in general, and I'm sure in experiential learning activities is no exception."* — staff participant

*"I can't recall a specific instance, you know, that a student necessarily came to me with a concern, although I'm sure it does happen [more] than we are told."* — staff participant

Students and staff identified a number of barriers to disclosing or reporting sexual harassment in EL settings, including that they didn't think it was "serious enough;" they didn't believe it would make a difference or that it was "worth it;" they were afraid of negative consequences; and the power dynamics at play.

Students and staff shared that not thinking something was "serious enough" or not recognizing sexual harassment was a significant barrier to disclosing or reporting it. Staff suggested that this, in part, could be attributed to power dynamics that obscure sexually harassing behaviours and make it difficult for a student to process and identify. Staff also shared that oftentimes when students did reach out for support they did not always make the connection between their concerns about burn out or anxiety and being affected by sexual harassment. For students, there was a hesitancy to name something as sexual harassment and make a disclosure or report because of how normalized many of these behaviours were.

*"I knew about it, but I don't think I've ever like fully accepted that that was sexual harassment."* — student participant

*"I think because of the power dynamics with interns in particular, they're very vulnerable [and] it takes them quite a bit longer to identify what's happening."* — staff participant

*"I felt like a few jokes wouldn't be enough [to report], and my coworker seemed kind of used to it."* — student participant

*"I didn't feel that it was very important. That's why I didn't bring it up." — student participant*

Another barrier to disclosing or reporting sexual harassment for students was that they didn't think that it would make a difference, or that it was "worth it." For some students, the limited time spent in a workplace influenced their decision not to report sexual harassment. In these cases they felt it was easiest to try to ignore the issue rather than make a report, which they didn't feel would be addressed appropriately or would be too time-consuming.

*"Because at work [sexual harassment is]...brushed under the rug just to keep the peace. And because it's just the culture they are kind of desensitized to it." — student participant*

*"I don't know if I should talk to somebody about it or just let it slide by because it's just these few months and it'll be over anyways." — student participant*

*"Realistically they're not listening to students. Which is horrible but, because I'm a student, I feel like the mentality is more to stick it out because, that's probably how they're thinking like, she's gonna leave sooner or whatever." — student participant*

*"I think mainly it's just my perception that [the reporting process] will be long, or there's a back and forth between supervisors, coworkers and people have to talk it through...So that's maybe why I don't want to go through that." — student participant*

Students were also concerned about potentially negative consequences of disclosing or reporting sexual harassment, sharing that they chose not to report to avoid workplace tension or further issues with their EL opportunity. This was of particular concern for racialized students in predominantly white EL settings, as sexual harassment was tied in with racism and students were concerned about being easily identifiable if they chose to make an anonymous report. Staff also shared their perspectives on students choosing not to report to avoid further issues, noting concern about the impact it could have on their academic and career pathways.

*"I just didn't want to create more problems in a sense. I didn't want to go through the process, talk to my supervisor about it or [...], talk to anyone about it, because that would just make my co-workers uncomfortable." — student participant*

*"I knew my supervisor was already really busy. So I don't want to create more work for him." — student participant*

*"So, I didn't want to report it because I'm the only one who is not white in the unit. It'd be very obvious who [made] the report." — student participant*

A final theme that arose in the context of barriers to disclosing and reporting sexual harassment was around reporting procedures and power dynamics. Some students shared concerns with reporting procedures that required students to speak with their supervisor prior to making a report.

*"It is the hospital's policy that you first go to the manager and then if that can't be resolved, then you will make a formal complaint but if that relationship with the manager's already kind of shot then you have no real way to disclose anything."  
— student participant*

*"[My manager] seemed to care more for his reputation, almost. All my coworkers would say if you have a problem, go to the manager, but I didn't feel like that was a viable option for me." — student participant*

Students also shared that students are less likely to speak to a supervisor who may have influence over their grades and standing in their program. This was also a concern for students who were hesitant to report to faculty members at the University for similar reasons.

*"So there is a bit of pressure to not make trouble per se even though we know that it's not making trouble." — student participant*

*"There's no way to formally report any of this really, other than talking to the faculty who all know each other. And I'm assuming most of them like each other. So, there's definitely a power imbalance there." — student participant*

## **Institutional Gaps**

Participants identified a number of institutional gaps when it comes to addressing sexual harassment in EL, including gaps in training and education, policies and protocols, and supports for students.

One gap identified by both students and staff was around training and education for staff and faculty. Staff shared that the University does not adequately prepare them to respond to a student who discloses an experience of sexual harassment. They spoke to how they often filled this institutional gap themselves and relied on experiences and their colleagues.

*"There isn't anything for me currently if a student discloses something that I can say, 'Hey, do you want to fill out a report so the university's aware?' or, you know, just like, 'There's an individual that can talk through some of these things.' And, so, a lot of it does come from experience and doing coaching, training or participating in professional development or having supportive colleagues and things like that." — staff participant*

*"Can they do a bit better job? Absolutely. And part of it is to like how to best support [students]. Sometimes I feel like there's still a little uncertainty there. Certainly for me, I'm sure there is for a lot of people. How to best support students who come forward with these disclosures because it's a tough thing." — staff participant*

Students shared that they wanted staff and faculty to receive more training on how best to support students who have been affected by sexual harassment. They felt staff and faculty did not have enough training, which can mean some are not able to respond appropriately. Students also highlighted the fact that some clinical instructors are not fairly compensated, which results in high turnover rates and ultimately less consistency in the level of training and education they have around how best to support and respond to students.

*"I think the clinical instructors receive minimal training, if any, on how to support students in learning, especially through violence. I think they're often not very supportive when you talk to them about issues or they don't know how to talk about it,[...] I think more training for the clinical instructors, more training for faculty [is needed]." — student participant*

*"If you set up your clinical instructors to be compensated well and have more security in their job, there'll be more ways to educate them as well and have more consistency year to year." — student participant*

Participants also noted that students are not provided the training and education needed when it comes to sexual harassment in their EL opportunities. Students shared that they don't receive training or education around sexual harassment that is specific to their program or profession. They shared how they needed to understand what sexual harassment is as well as how to respond.

*"You don't really get any education actually whatsoever [in my program] about sexual harassment, and sexual assaults." — student participant*

*"We don't ever really learn about like sexual harassment is something that [people in my profession] experience, I think they tend to shy away from, from really speaking about the realities of something's this hard. So there's an uncomfortableness to talk about it with faculty." — student participant*

*"We don't get any supports on how do you address [sexual harassment]? And we know sometimes addressing it head on cannot be good. And like, it's a very nuanced issue. I think we just need more education on it." — student participant*

When students did receive training, they shared that the training was ineffective and didn't stand out as important or relevant at the time.

*"I actually did some of my own training, optional training, but there was mandatory harassment training, but I don't even remember it. It was so non descriptive, vague and just bland that I don't really recall anything from it." — student participant*

*"I had to do a few training manuals at the beginning...[the] training didn't really mean anything to me, didn't really get me anywhere. And in the employees training, I'm pretty sure there was a sexual harassment like section, but I guess it wasn't a priority for me to look through that...I was just like, skimming through most of the sections...I didn't realize the importance of recognizing my right as experiential learning student." — student participant*

Another gap identified by staff and students was around policies and protocols to address sexual harassment in an EL context in particular. For students, the gap was in their knowledge of policies and protocols. Only student participants whose EL positions were internal to the University and required a knowledge of institutional policies and protocols shared that they knew and understood the policies.

*"I don't know what the procedures are. I just know that there is confidentiality and there will be something done about it." — student participant*

For staff, the gap was in the existence of institutional policies or protocols specific to sexual harassment in EL. Staff shared that how they responded to sexual harassment was based on agreed upon practices, but that these practices weren't part of an institutional protocol, set of procedures, or policy. They also acknowledged challenges around developing a protocol or having a defined procedure.

*"I don't know if there's any formalized policy piece around [sexual harassment in EL] that I can think of other than for our own workplace." — staff participant*

*"I don't think there's anything ever written down. You know, the difficulty is that a lot of this is there, there are best practices, but they're not necessarily codified anywhere. And I hadn't really thought about that, you know, and even in terms of our processes for how we deal with, you know, problematic employer partners, and we understand that this is what we do, but I don't I don't know that it's actually written down anywhere.*

*"How do we write this down where it doesn't create new problems, because I feel that every time we do something, we always encounter something new." — staff participant*

*"So that's the challenge...it's not like an 'x and y equals z' kind of outcome process manual that we can develop." — staff participant*

A final gap identified by participants was around supports for students. Students share that there are gaps in the supports available and in how available supports are communicated to students.

*"The supports are just not there. A lot of the time if you even try to go to a clinical instructor and say this happened, the result is, you know, they'll try and maybe change your patient assignment or just wait until the patient is discharged or like, try and make it so that you don't have to interact with them." — student participant*

*"But it is kind of up to each unit and some way to advertise and generate that like, knowledge about their own service. And so some units might be better than others, some services might be better than others. But the Office of Safe Disclosure, for example, I never would have heard of—I don't think—unless I did my internship [at the University]. So I knew vaguely about the Sexual Assault Centre and other services, but not every student would." — student participant*

*"I think there's kind of a big issue even with how the whole system is set up. It's just not set up for student support, it's set up to get the most amount of students as possible, while not compromising safety through the program to graduate seniors as well. Saving as much money as possible towards making money as an institution." — student participant*

Staff shared a concern that even when students are supported by the institution, there's a disconnect when they enter their EL opportunity that the University can do a better job of addressing.

*"I think in terms of...experiential learning...we create this safe environment and supportive environment and are there to answer questions and provide that support for students. But I think once they get out working, it's like they're part of the organization and they don't often make that connection, even though it's there, that they are still a student...there's a bridge that could be built that, to help say: 'Hey, these are our policies on harassment and sexual violence and what has to happen and what's not okay,' things like that." — staff participant*

## Recommendations

Students and staff identified a number of recommendations for the University to address sexual harassment in EL. These recommendations fall under three overarching goals: ensure staff, faculty, and instructors are educated on sexual harassment; ensure students are adequately prepared to participate in EL; and ensure students are adequately supported during their EL opportunities.

### Ensure staff, faculty, and instructors are educated on responding to sexual harassment

Both students and staff spoke to the need for staff, faculty and instructors to be educated on how to respond when a student is affected by sexual harassment in their EL position.

*"I would want...instructors to be comfortable receiving a disclosure of sexual harassment and knowing how to respond in a way that's, that's empathetic and appropriate." — student participant*

*"Can [the University] do a bit [of a] better job? Absolutely. And part of it is how to best support [students]. Sometimes I feel like there's still a little uncertainty there. Certainly for me, I'm sure there is for a lot of people, on how to best support students who come forward with these disclosures because it's a tough thing." — staff participant*

*"I really value a lot of the professional development that's available...and just kind of having those safe conversations. And then training also through the sexual assault center, just in terms of disclosure, not that this particular student disclosed that, but just*

*knowing where [and] how to have those conversations and create an opportunity for that student to have a voice was super helpful.” — staff participant*

Students shared that the University should prepare staff and faculty to support the autonomy of students who have been subjected to sexual harassment by providing them with all necessary information about what options are available to them, including disclosure, reporting, and support options. Students shared how some staff at the University did a good job informing them of their options and validating their experiences, reaffirming the importance of ensuring that all staff are trained to respond in a similar way.

*“I was very happy with how [my coordinator] handled it. They made sure that it was my decision and not just something that [was] pushed on me which was very different unfortunately. I wouldn't change anything [about] how they addressed it.” — student participant*

*“[The coordinators] just gave me a lot of different options that they let me choose which was really empowering because I felt kind of stuck being like a student and a clear minority.” — student participant*

*“Just having that conversation with [the coordinators] really helped me feel more validated.” — student participant*

Staff shared that they needed education or training on responding to disclosures that included information about limits to confidentiality and other responsibilities or obligations that might affect how they respond to a disclosure.

*“Knowing my limits and knowing where...does confidentiality end and I think that's another place the university needs to do a better job at so that the students are aware [if] we have to intervene.” — staff participant*

Both students and staff also highlighted the importance of engaging staff, faculty, and instructors who might not seek out their own training or education when it's optional.

*“I think part of the challenge is that a lot of times people that most need to take these sessions don't know. Right? So I took them because I'm passionate about it, but...the people who most need to hear the message obviously are not part of these learning opportunities.” — staff participant*



## Ensure students are adequately prepared to participate in experiential learning

Both students and staff spoke to the need for students to be given the information and tools they need to recognize sexual harassment and pursue the disclosure, reporting and/or support pathway that will best meet their needs.

*"I feel like there's a lot more specifics that have to go into it, such as the types, whether it's sexual abuse, sexual harassment...and then also where to go in certain cases."*

— student participant

*"I feel like with programs related to the University, there has to be some form of general module or training or something that introduces you to these concepts that unfortunately exist, but like how you can deal with it if it does happen." — student participant*

*"I would like to see more of, 'Oh, if you are currently in the situation, you should talk to [this person].'" — student participant*

*"I think at the end of the day, our biggest responsibility is to the students. So we have to make sure they feel really well informed and empowered of how they reach out in these circumstances." — staff participant*

Students also spoke to the need for education and training around by-stander interventions, specifically where there are power dynamics that can be barriers for students.

*"Maybe there needs to be some training or some policy around that. For me, it's like, 'Should I step into it?' I say something, but it feels a little bit difficult to do [because] there's that sort of employee to employer relationship there." — student participant*

Staff also spoke to the importance of ensuring that any training, education, or professional development opportunities available to students are representative of all identities and experiences.

*"We can't do much about the workplaces necessarily that they go to, but we can make sure that they see that they are represented in that professional avenue, at least in terms of our speakers and panels and things for conferences and all of that." — staff participant*

*"That's something we're really trying to be really intentional about is having that diversity, gender, racial, you name it so that there's a whole kind of range of voices that students can hear from." — staff participant*

## Ensure students are adequately supported during their experiential learning opportunities

Student participants shared the need for better communication of available supports. They asked for staff and faculty to be educated and knowledgeable on what resources and supports are available to students so that they can share that information with students. They also shared the need for supports to be readily accessible.

*"I feel like immediate action is probably the most important thing. I think you see a lot of things that happen when action is delayed and people think that the problem is not that big. But I think immediate action, like finding out who your supervisor is, discussing with your supervisor. And finding out options on how to bring up this kind of topic would be helpful as well. I feel like a lot of people don't know how to just go and say, 'Oh, this person is bothering me.'" — student participant*

Students discussed the need for information about resources and supports that are outside of the University and the organization they are doing their EL with, and some spoke to the value of having access to supports through employee benefit programs.

*"I'd say probably what's actually been most helpful is my union in making me aware of those resources and showing me that like, there are supports outside of your workplace that if you need." — student participant*

*"I guess we do have an employee benefit program, so you get access to a therapist, 24-hour counseling or whatever if you need that. And so that's something I could see myself using, I have used in previous jobs when I was feeling really overwhelmed or really stressed with work." — student participant*

Other students spoke to the need for more resources for student-run supports. They shared the value of student-run supports as accessible and affordable options for students, as well as how student-run supports are better able to understand the pressures and concerns of being a student in these positions. They also shared the role they can play in

creating a safe space for students to destress and share experiences and how they can support community-building and advocacy.

*"I feel like [student-run clinics are] a good way for universities to like get students to talk about sexual violence concerns in student run environments." — student participants*

*"A lot of student-run clinics are much more affordable for people." — student participant*

*"They know that there's academic pressure on you, they know that you don't want to lose your position, and you don't want to ruin this opportunity for yourself. They know that there's this fear of talking to people that are higher in the power dynamic. So I feel like it's a little bit more understanding when it comes to talking to students who know how it is for students to find opportunities like this and not want to throw it away." — student participant*

Students also shared the need for targeted supports for their program or type of EL. They spoke to the fact that students in healthcare, for example, may have different needs than students in another program, or that students in a lab may have different needs than students in another type of EL.

*"I think different contexts is also important just because if you're in an office setting, compared to the lab setting, I feel like there is a bit of a difference. I feel like in the office, there's a lot more conformity to just deal with it and keep going...Whereas in a lab, it's a little bit more secluded." — student participant*

Some student participants shared that they would have liked to have more frequent check-ins from their supervisor throughout their EL opportunity.

*"I think it would have been better if [my supervisor] checked on me and my coworker more often." — student participant*

Staff participants also spoke to check-ins with students, and named the importance of check-ins that are conducive to students being able to share concerns or make a disclosure.

*"We do our check ins, but it's often sometimes not enough or it's not creating the space for disclosure. So for example, in the site visits, the supervisor, me and the student are talking about workplace performance, but that's not really the space that any of this can come up. The student's not going to say, 'Well, you said this comment to me and that's*

*really offside.' They're never going to do that because of power dynamics." — staff participant*

Importantly, students also identified the need for a policy and practices to avoid disruptions to a student's academic trajectory, especially when they may need to leave an EL opportunity as a result of sexual harassment.

*"I've heard of student cases where stuff has gone wrong with their internships [...] their degree is in jeopardy as well. It's because if you've agreed to do an internship or it's required for your program, and then something goes wrong, and you sort of want to get out of that and there's no really process for that or no policies or anything, that creates sort of a bias for a student who might feel like, 'Oh, I can't stay in this particular degree.' Or if they do leave, maybe they won't be able to finish their degree or they're required to withdraw or something like that. So I think having a policy around this would be really useful." — student participant*

Students also spoke to the role of the EL provider in supporting them during their EL opportunities. Specifically, they spoke to the importance of fostering trust in the EL setting through empathy and by listening to the needs of the students in all aspects of their role.

*"[My supervisor] created a trust that I can trust him and he wants the best for me, and he trusts me as well as a coworker. So we have a trust built from these conversations. And overall, he would always check on me if I was doing okay." — student participant*

*"My supervisor listened to the smallest details and it really surprised us all that he had a bunch of other things to be doing but he was really nitpicky and made sure that all of [the] stuff that we [needed] was easily accessible." — student participant*

*"I would have felt comfortable approaching my supervisor [about my coworker] but I didn't really realize it [was sexual harassment] at the time. I think about it now and I definitely would be comfortable approaching my supervisor." — student participant*

Staff shared how creating a environment where students are able to safely and comfortably disclose or report experiences of sexual harassment was pivotal to creating safer opportunities for all students. For example, one staff participant shared how a student's disclosure was the catalyst for change within their EL setting and created a safer experience for future students.

*"And in one case that we had last year, the employer actually took a proactive approach to change the culture, which was really, really awesome. Because the student had the courage to report it and kind of talk about it. And so they actually filed a formal report and they were able to change the culture and then we were able to kind of continue that internship partnership with a new intern and everything's going well so far because of that culture change." — staff participant*

Finally, students shared how having a supportive work environment that allowed them to debrief with colleagues in a safe and trusting space was important, particularly where their position involved interacting with the public.

*"I debriefed a lot with the people that I worked with...so if something was like up, it would just be us telling each other or texting each other, explaining it to each other." — student participant*


*"Our office has this policy that our confidentiality is sort of an 'umbrella confidentiality' with everybody in the office and so we're allowed to debrief...And I've done that and that has helped quite a bit." — student participant*

*"I think without my colleagues, I don't know if I could survive more than a couple of weeks here." — student participant*

*"There's a deeper level of empathy there, because we have a similar experience. And so I think that's really helpful. And the response is not critical at all, like, 'oh, you should have just given this to us right away.' It's very understanding, very empathetic, like, 'Oh, I know this can be really hard, how are you feeling?' Those supportive listening skills, [...] are pretty essential. And just practicing non-judgmental listening, and empathetic listening. And so I'd say that's sort of been really, really helpful. And it's also knowing that you can go and talk [to your supervisor] if you need to." — student participant*

## Conclusion

*Possibility Seeds* spoke to students and staff at a large, public teaching and research university to better understand the issue of sexual harassment in EL. Their experiences and understanding of the issue aligned with the research and findings from *Possibility Seeds'* broader research into the issue at post-secondary institutions across the country. Participants in this case study identified many of the same gaps and challenges, and



offered recommendations that were reflective of those that came out of our national surveys, consultations, and conversations.

While not generalizable, this case study reinforces the urgent need for attention and action on this issue. We hope it will contribute to continued research, dialogue and collective commitment to prioritizing the safety and well-being of students.