

As at March 2022

University Name: Australian Catholic University (ACU)		
Recommendation no.	Action taken since last milestone report in February 2019	Planned/future action
<p>1</p> <p><i>Vice-Chancellors take direct responsibility to implement recommendations, including decision-making and monitoring and evaluation of actions taken. Establish an advisory body. Develop an action plan.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Catholic University (ACU) has a long-standing commitment to preventing and addressing sexual assault and sexual harassment within the University. • Respect. Now. Always. Advisory Committee (RNAAC) continues to be chaired by ACU's Vice-Chancellor and President with the Provost being the Deputy Chair. • The R.N.A. Advisory Committee has expanded to reflect a broader representation from all student-focused areas across the University including representatives from academic staff, senior staff, students, student accommodation, student services and independent members of NSW Police. • The R.N.A. Advisory Committee meets three times a year. • An annual report of the R.N.A. Advisory Committee's progress on the R.N.A. action plan is provided to the Senior Executive Group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The R.N.A. Advisory Committee continues to meet three times a year for consultation and advice on the implementation of the University's Action Plan. • The R.N.A. Advisory Committee representation will continue to be reviewed to ensure the relevant University representatives are engaged and involved. • The R.N.A. Advisory Committee is near completion of the University's Action Plan and will look to develop a new strategy for Respect.Now.Always impending the results of the 2021 National Student Safety Survey. • With the new Gender Equality Strategy 2021-2025 in development the new strategy continues to focus on ACU's commitment to gender equality, inclusivity and diversity and to continue to advance ACU's Gender Equality. ACU's commitment to gender equality is reflective in the membership quota of the R.N.A. Advisory Committee.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi-annual Student Incident reports are submitted to the Vice-Chancellor and Senior Executive Group. • ACU's progress towards the implementation of the Australian Human Rights Commission's recommendations is published on the ACU website annually. • 47 action items have been completed with only 1 remaining action item required to ensure full compliance to all of the Australian Human Rights Commission's recommendations. • ACU's de-identified student sexual misconduct incident data is reported on the ACU website annually. • The Vice-Chancellor and President delivers messages to students and staff around the promotion and importance of safety on campus through ACU Student News and the ACU Staff Bulletin. Messages are sent out in accordance with the R.N.A. Communication Plan. • In 2015 ACU the Vice-Chancellor released ACU's Gender Equity Strategy (2015-2020) to continue to build upon ACU's strong gender equality foundations in the University's planning and core business. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The R.N.A. Advisory Committee will continue to implementation of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and the Catholic Safeguarding Standard. • Progress on ACU's Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk Action Plan including activities and strategies implemented is a standing agenda item at R.N.A. Advisory Committee meetings.
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- In 2020 and 2021 ACU was awarded the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) Employer of Choice for Gender Equality citation for the ninth consecutive year.
- ACU has appointed a National Manager, Safeguarding and Student Safety to assist in the coordination, implementation and reporting of the Respect. Now. Always Action Plan.
- In April 2020, Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk was included as a standing agenda item on all R.N.A. Advisory Committee Meetings.
- In August 2020, the Vice-Chancellor and President endorsed ACU's Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk Action Plan which consists of activities and strategies for implementation to address the requirements of the Australian Human Rights Commission National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and Catholic Professional Standards Ltd Safeguarding Standards. Principles of ACU's Safeguarding Action Plan complement ACU's Respect. Now. Always program and strengthen ACU's policies, practices and systems for all students on and off-campus
- In September 2020, ACU undertook a Desktop Review with the assistance of Universities Australia to evaluate, review

	<p>and improve the information and support available for ACU students, and ensure the University's approach to sexual assault and sexual harassment aligned with the recommendations. The review found ACU's commitment to safe campuses and its role in the R.N.A. initiative was clearly evident in the documentation provided and that the University had made significant progress. Inconsistencies highlighted in messaging across the documents has now been rectified.</p>	
<p>2 <i>Universities develop a plan for addressing the drivers of sexual assault and sexual harassment that includes education programs, and identifies existing resources and communications campaigns that reinforce key messages</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and student communication plans are developed and implemented yearly to raise awareness of Respect. Now. Always program across the University. The plan is monitored by the R.N.A. Advisory Committee. The plan includes regular messaging promoting consent and reporting. • R.N.A. promotions continue to be held during O-Week and in student orientation sessions. • Collateral is distributed to students at Orientation, campus events and in student accommodation promoting safety on campus. During Covid-19, collateral was sent to all new students in their induction package. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to promote respectful relationships and behaviours through various communications on the Student Portal, at Student Life and student events, at ACU sports workshops and tournaments and within student accommodation. • Continue to promote the ACU Consent and Bystander Behaviour video. • Continue to increase student engagement through collaboration with the School of Arts. • Promote R.N.A initiative through campus posters, screensavers, flyers and collateral/merchandise.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commencing undergraduate students are required to undertake facilitated discussion sessions on respectful relationships as part of a compulsory unit – the UNCC100 ‘Self and Community’. • ACU created an illustrated Consent and Bystander Behaviour video https://youtu.be/ZkfzO6CoHgA. The video is promoted through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o ACU public website; o Student Portal; o Staff Bulletin; o Online student accommodation application portal; and o ACU Sporting club workshops. • An R.N.A. Education, Awareness and Training Programs Working Group was established to oversee the implementation of R.N.A. education programs for staff and students. • ACU held student competitions in 2019 centred around the concept of respect. These competitions were aimed to engage, inform and raise awareness of R.N.A. and of the role each individual plays in developing a safe and respectful community. Competitions were held in the following areas: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to roll out the Bystander Awareness Training Program (MATE) to high-risk areas of the University and ACU student leaders. • Utilise student posters as collateral around University campus and online.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Oratory Competition<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Theme: Respect is essential to driving positive change.o Photography Competition<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Theme: Respect through the eyes of others.o Creative and Performing Arts Showcase<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Theme: Respect = Courage and Integrity• In 2019, ACU counsellors provided a national teleconference training session for student leaders, educating them on:<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Responding to a disclosure of sexual assaulto Sexual harassmento Self and other harm▪ In 2020, ACU incorporated R.N.A. poster designs as one of the assessments in the Design Unit. Students had a choice to enter their work into a competition.▪ Education and compliance online modules developed for all continuing and fixed-term staff; the modules cover:<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Dealing with Discrimination, Harassment and Bullyingo Online Privacy Awarenesso Critical Incident Management Awareness	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In January 2020, five (5) ACU staff across high-risk areas of the University participated in a train-the-trainer MATE Bystander Awareness program run by Griffith University. • Bystander Awareness Training Program (MATE) was delivered to staff and student leaders working in high-risk areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Living and Learning Communities ○ Student Life ○ Student Experience ○ Sports, Health and Wellbeing • In 2020, Bystander Awareness Training (MATE) was added to ACU's Leading with Impact program as an opportunity for ACU students to develop particular leadership skills. • In 2021, ACU introduced compulsory Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault: What are the drivers and how can staff respond? training for all new and existing staff. • In 2022, ACU introduced compulsory Respectful Relationships training for all clubs, societies, associations, sports clubs and residential students. 	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular communication on ACU's support services is provided to staff and students in accordance with ACU's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous implementation of the actions articulated in the annual R.N.A Communication Plan.

<p><i>Universities should ensure students and staff know about support services and reporting processes for sexual assault or sexual harassment</i></p>	<p>R.N.A Communication Plan. All information is publicised and available on the ACU Student Portal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of the SafeZone app and drop-in counselling services are regularly promoted. • In 2021, ACU introduced compulsory Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault: What are the drivers and how can staff respond? training for all new and existing staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the R.N.A. section on the ACU public website and on the Student Portal is continually updated. • In 2022, ACU is looking to introduce a Safety Support Network made up of Safety Support Officers within each of ACU's 7 campuses. The role of these officers is to be first responders for students and for staff with whom students have disclosed to ensure that the students are receiving the most appropriate support service and are understanding of the reporting options available at ACU.
<p>4</p> <p><i>Within a year, universities should commission an independent, expert led review of existing university policies and response pathways in relation to sexual assault and sexual harassment, to assess effectiveness and make specific recommendations to</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2019 the R.N.A. Advisory Committee decided to create a standalone Policy and Procedure for students – ‘Student Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy and Procedure’. The Student Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy and Procedure was endorsed by ACU’s Vice-Chancellor and President and released in May 2020. • The University Critical Incident Management Policy now has a separate reporting category for sexual assault and sexual harassment. • In March 2020, the University removed Sexual Misconduct from the Discrimination and Harassment Policy and developed a new Staff Sexual Misconduct Policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to undertake internal reviews of existing university policies, procedures and processes to ensure they are compliant to UA’s best practice guides as appropriate.

<p><i>universities about best practice responses.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2022, ACU reviewed and updated the Student Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy and Procedure to ensure its compliance with the recommendations and recommendations from the R.N.A Desktop Review. 	
<p>5 <i>Universities should conduct an assessment to identify staff members and student representatives within their institution most likely to receive disclosures of sexual assault and sexual harassment and ensure those identified receive appropriate training.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Leaders have been identified for training on ACU's commitment to a safe environment for its students. This is included in Student Association/Clubs and Societies Leaders' Induction Seminar and Training Sessions. UA's principles to guide interaction between supervisors and postgraduate students have been adopted. Progress is reported to the R.N.A. Advisory Committee. ACU counsellors provided a national teleconference training session for student leaders in 2019, educating them on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responding to a disclosure of sexual assault Sexual harassment Self and other harm In 2021, ACU introduced compulsory Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault: What are the drivers and how can staff respond? training for all new and existing staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2022, ACU is looking to introduce a Safety Support Network made up of Safety Support Officers located on each of ACU's 7 campuses. The role of these officers is to be first responders for students and for staff with whom students have disclosed to ensure that the students are receiving the most appropriate support service and are understanding of the reporting options available at ACU. The Safety Support Network was developed after it was identified that key staff within the University did not have the skills or did not feel comfortable in receiving student disclosures and that students were not familiar with where or how to report. The Student Support Officers will be required to undergo training and vetted to ensure their suitability for the role.

<p style="text-align: center;">6</p> <p><i>Universities should ensure that information about individual disclosures and reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment is collected and stored confidentially and used for continuous improvement of processes.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2021, ACU Universities reporting systems was undertaken. Following the review, a recommendation was made to streamline the monitoring and reporting of all student incidents. • In 2019, a streamlined process to collect and store confidential information related to disclosures and reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment was established, consistent with ACU’s Critical Incident Management Policy. • De-identified reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment incidents are submitted bi-annually to the Vice-Chancellor and tabled at the Senior Executive Group. • ACU’s de-identified student sexual misconduct incident data is reported on the ACU website annually. • ACU adopted a victim centric approach to the critical incident management of sexual assault and sexual harassment incidents to ensure students’ needs and wishes are placed as a priority in the management and handling of all incidents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The R.N.A Advisory Committee will continue to publish the de-identified incident statistics annually on the ACU website to provide clear visibility and transparency of incidents. • Training will continue to be conducted with selected staff and student leaders on best practice process for handling an individual disclosure including the report handling process and guides to supporting the victim and the alleged offender.
<p style="text-align: center;">7</p> <p><i>Within six months of this report, universities should</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous reviews of the Student Support Services Directorate including Counselling, have been conducted annually: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling statistics and data will continue to be reported to the R.N.A. Advisory Committee for transparency and accountability.

<p><i>conduct an audit of university counselling services to assess adequacy of capacity and training and undertake data collection.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2016: External review ○ 2017: Internal review – The capacity of the Counselling Service to respond to students’ request for counselling. ○ 2019: Internal review – Manager, Counselling and Disability Services reviewed the student waiting times and the number of urgent/crisis requests received. 84% of students in Semester 2, 2019 were seen within a week (76% in Semester 2, 2018). 101 crisis requests received in 2019 (112 in 2018). ○ 2020: Internal review – In Semester 1, 2020 77% of students were seen within a week. In Semester 2, 100% seen within a week. ○ 2021: Internal review – In Semester 1, 2022 77% of students were seen within a week. In Semester 2, 88% were seen within a week. • All ACU counsellors are qualified psychologists with APA accreditation or qualified social workers registered with the AASW and have at least 5 years of clinical experience. • A new student appointment system was launched in 2019. The new system: 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enables closer monitoring of student waiting times for appointments ○ Provides the student with reminders of appointments ○ Strengthens reporting capabilities • The Out-of-hours crisis counselling line was launched in February 2020. The service, run through Lifeline, operates from 5 pm to 9 am (AEST) on weekdays and 24 hours on weekends and public holidays. 	
<p>8</p> <p><i>Universities should engage an independent body to conduct the National university student survey of sexual assault and sexual harassment at three yearly intervals to track progress in reducing the prevalence of these incidents at a sector-wide level.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACU participated in the 2021 National Student Safety Survey. • ACU received 1621 responses and received a response rate of 16.2% which was 4.6% above the national average placing ACU in 4th place in ranking of overall responses • ACU opted to include a common set of questions relating to student accommodation 	

<p style="text-align: center;">9</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Residential colleges and university residences should consider implementing report recommendations, and commission an independent, expert-led review of the factors which contribute to sexual assault and sexual harassment in their settings.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An 'R.N.A. Statement' is included in the ACU Student Accommodation Handbook and is part of the formal lease documents signed by residents before check-in occurs. • The ACU Consent and Bystander Behaviour video is included in the online student accommodation application process and is required to be viewed by residents before check-in occurs. • Student interviews are conducted to assess their suitability to live in student accommodation. • Continuous promotion of R.N.A. initiatives is conducted as set out in the ACU R.N.A. Communication Plan. • Review of ACU student accommodation, focussing on factors which contribute to sexual assault and sexual harassment and the level and nature of staff supervision was conducted in 2021 after being postponed due to Covid-19. The review addressed the current Learning and Living Communities Model and will provide opportunities for the University to improve its position in response to any sexual harassment and assault in student accommodation settings. The approach includes: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACU is awaiting the final report to develop a new R.N.A. strategy which is due early 2022.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ A comprehensive review of current policies and procedure to ensure they align with current best practice in the Australian University College Environment.○ Input from staff and senior students to shape the scope and direction of the review.○ Quantitative and qualitative research through online surveys and focus groups.<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ One-on-one interviews with students, staff and alumni.	
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