

## Press release:

### **New survey reveals unwanted sexual behaviour towards students at Danish universities**

1,194 students at Danish universities have experienced unwanted sexual behaviour, harassment or violations during their studies.

These are the findings of a new survey conducted by the agency Analyse & Tal for the National Union of Danish Students and Universities Denmark. The survey, which was conducted via a questionnaire sent to 150,000 enrolled students in May 2018, provides new knowledge about the nature and the experiences of unwanted sexual behaviour at universities.

"We are affected by the stories revealed by the survey, and we take the results very seriously. Students should be able to expect a study environment, where they do not experience harassment or abuse," says chair of the National Union of Danish Students, Sana Mahin Doost.

Anders Bjarklev, chair of the Danish Rector's Conference and Rector at DTU says:

"It must be clear that unwanted sexual behaviour at the universities is exactly what it says. Unwanted. This applies to students and it applies to employees. We need to talk openly about this issue and, together with the students create a culture that clearly objects to this behaviour. There are things we must do better, and we are working on this, and this report can help us proceed."

### **Initiatives already underway**

On the basis of the survey, the National Union of Danish Students and Universities Denmark as well as each single university will address the key issues highlighted in the survey. Especially three initiatives are in focus.

All universities will work to make it clear who to contact in the case of unwanted sexual behaviour, harassment or violations. Help must be available in a secure and confidential framework, and there must be a clearer procedure for handling cases.

The universities also want to include questions about unwanted sexual behaviour in the study environment surveys, which the universities regularly carry out. This will ensure continued up-to-date knowledge of and focus on the issue both locally and centrally.

The National Union of Danish Students and Universities Denmark will continue the systematic dialogue in this area with a view to increased sharing of experience in relation to options, actions and issues with unwanted sexual behaviour towards students.

### **Main findings of the analysis:**

The survey was conducted as an online questionnaire sent by email with a link to 150,000 students enrolled at the eight Danish universities as of May 2018. The students were asked to complete the questionnaire if they had experienced unwanted sexual behaviour, harassment or violations during their studies.

1,194 students said 'Yes' and completed the questionnaire with details about their experience. As several respondents had mentioned more than one experience with unwanted sexual behaviour, the survey contains data for a total of 1,969 experiences.

### **All percentages and shares calculated in the report and in the conclusions refer only to those students who have chosen to participate in the survey and cannot be scaled up to the total student population**

The incidents described can have taken place in the period during which the current students have been enrolled - for those enrolled for the longest time presumably August 2012 to May 2018, but may also go further back in time if the student has had a longer course of study.

The report summarises the results as follows:

- A majority of the respondents who have replied that they have experienced sexually offensive behaviour are women. 82% of the 1,194 respondents who have replied that they have been subjected to unwanted sexual behaviour are women. 16% are men. The remaining 2% have not wished to answer or have responded "other" when asked about their gender.
- The most common unwanted sexual behaviour among the responses is offensive verbal comments of a sexual nature and unwanted physical touching. 37% of the unwanted sexual behaviour is offensive verbal comments of a sexual nature, and 36% is unwanted touching. 2% of the unwanted sexual behaviour concerns sharing of sexually explicit material online, and 3% is where someone has been forced to have sex.
- It is most common to experience unwanted sexual behaviour during the first year of the Bachelor's programme. For 41% of the respondents, the incident took place during the first year of the Bachelor's programme. For 13% of the respondents, the incident took place at graduate level.
- It is most common among the respondents to have been sexually offended by a fellow student. For 50% of the respondents, the sexually offensive behaviour was done by fellow students. For 11% of the responses, it is a first-year counsellor and/or student tutor, who has behaved offensively. In 10% of the responses, it is a teacher, who has been offensive.
- It is most common to have been subjected to unwanted sexual behaviour in connection with social events at the university. For 34% of the responses, the unwanted sexual behaviour took place in connection with a social event at the university. 19% of the unwanted sexual behaviour took place in the respondent's spare time outside the university context, 16% occurred in connection with the programme's teaching and/or preparation, and, finally, 16% occurred during the introduction programme and/or introduction camp.
- More than 4 out of 5 of the 1,194 respondents have told someone about the unwanted sexual behaviour. 14% of those who have been exposed to an unwanted sexual experience have not told anyone about it. It is most common to tell fellow students (63%), friends outside the programme (52%), boyfriend/girlfriend or spouse (34%) and family (20%). It is not common to talk to the

educational institution about it. For instance, few talk to the administration at the programme (2%), the management of the programme/university (2%) or student counsellors (2%).

- Less than 1 out of 5 of the 1,194 respondents is aware of where at the university to turn for help and support in relation to experiences with unwanted sexual behaviour. 18% say that they are aware of who to contact at the university.
- More than 1 out of 8 of the experiences with unwanted sexual behaviour involve persons employed at the university. For 10% of the respondents, it is a teacher, who has been offensive. For 3% of the respondents, it is an assistant teacher or an instructor, who has been offensive. For another 3% of the respondents, it is a student counsellor, who has been offensive. And in 1% of the cases, the offender was part of the administrative staff.

### Structure and approach

The data material is based on a questionnaire in Danish and English sent to all students enrolled at Copenhagen Business School, Technical University of Denmark, IT University of Copenhagen, University of Copenhagen, Roskilde University, University of Southern Denmark, Aalborg University and Aarhus University in May 2018.

The survey is not designed as a representative survey. This is because the aim of the survey is to find out more about the *nature* of the unwanted sexual behaviour at the universities. In the questionnaire, students were asked about unwanted sexual behaviour, including the type of unwanted sexual behaviour, where and when it took place, and who displayed the unwanted sexual behaviour. In addition, the respondents were asked whether they had talked to others about the experience.

In continuation of answering the questionnaire, respondents were given the possibility to further describe their experiences and make recommendations to the universities in relation to how they can help. A number of respondents chose to use this option. These detailed responses have been used throughout the report to exemplify the unwanted behaviour while the respondents' recommendations for the continued efforts at the universities are summed up at the end of the report.

The full report (Danish only) can be downloaded from [dkuni.dk](http://dkuni.dk)

### Contact

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