

Progress report 3: Universities UK taskforce on violence against women, harassment and hate crime affecting university students

The taskforce met for the third time on Friday 10 June. The meeting focused primarily on reviewing a series of potential recommendations. These have been developed in light of the evidence collated so far, including feedback from a seminar held at Universities UK (UUK) on 19 April, input from the sector and wider stakeholders and a comprehensive literature review.

The draft recommendations concentrate on supporting and encouraging senior leaders to tackle the issues examined by the taskforce, and specific actions they might take to address prominent areas of concern.

UUK will also develop a template which institutions can use to support development of an institution-wide approach to addressing issues. This template will respect institutional autonomy and is intended to help universities consider their own approach and where improvements can be made.

Over the summer UUK will draft the final report for consideration by the taskforce at its final meeting in September 2016. This will include an analysis of the evidence received and a number of case studies.

Review of the Zellick guidelines

Following the meeting of the taskforce in March, UUK issued a press release announcing the taskforce's decision to review the Zellick guidance. A steering group for the review has now been established. This will consist of a sub-group of the taskforce plus additional representatives from the Association of Heads of University Administration (AHUA) and the National Union of Students (NUS). Over the summer, UUK will be working with the steering group and a law firm with expertise in this area to develop new guidance to supersede Zellick. The new guidance will be published as close as possible to the taskforce report.

Sector engagement

UUK continues to engage extensively with the university sector and external stakeholders. UUK has recently presented to the Academic Registrars Council and AHUA North and will be presenting to AHUA London and the Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education annual conference in July. UUK will also be meeting Tell MAMA in July to gather more evidence on Islamophobia.

Parliamentary activity

UUK submitted a [response](#) to the Women and Equalities Committee inquiry which is examining sexual harassment in schools. This sets out the initial findings from the taskforce

and highlights the importance of ensuring that behavioural expectations are set early and that school-age students understand the implications of their behaviour, and are acquainted with a culture of zero tolerance well before progressing to university. In the long-term, effective school-based initiatives will ultimately result in a more positive experience for those who go on to enter higher education. The committee is expected to publish its report in July 2016.

UUK held a private roundtable with key stakeholders such as student representative groups and parliamentarians to inform the taskforce on promoting a positive experience for Jewish students in UK universities. The emerging themes of the taskforce recommendations were discussed in the context of anti-Semitism and the discussion will inform the final report.

National conference, 3 November 2016

UUK will host a conference on 3 November 2016 to promote the findings from the taskforce and to provide an opportunity to share good practice from both within and outside the sector. Details of the conference and how to register will be published soon. The conference will feature a number of sector representatives and hopefully an international speaker to give a perspective from abroad.

Final meeting of the taskforce

The final meeting of the taskforce will be held on 9 September 2016. At this meeting, the taskforce will sign off the final report and recommendations.

Further information

For further information on the taskforce or to submit any comments or evidence of relevance, please contact harassmenttaskforce@universitiesuk.ac.uk