



Larry Hogan  
Governor

Boyd K. Rutherford  
Lt. Governor

Mary Pat Seurkamp, Ph.D.  
Chair

James D. Fielder, Jr., Ph. D.  
Secretary

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## 2022-2024 MHEC Institutional Guidelines for the Sexual Assault Campus Climate Survey

Additions to this cycle:

- MHEC removed most of the formatting requirements of past cycles
- MHEC encourages the use of charts, tables and other visuals, as many Narrative report prompts ask trend-related questions.
- MHEC added to the Narrative Report prompts and altered the questions to capture trend analysis and a data
- MHEC partnered with the State's Department of Health and included materials from the Department of Health regarding:
  - Hotspot Mapping - information on participating
  - Guidance on reporting survey data
  - Recommendations to question wording and recommendations for additional survey questions

### Key Takeaways

- Institutions may choose their own survey instrument but must ensure the results of the survey can provide the data/information required for the prompts in these guidelines
- Institutions must perform a campus climate survey within the reporting cycle and prepare a narrative report for June 2024 submission
- Institutions can change surveys from cycle to cycle; ensure that is noted in the narrative report
- Nothing tied to federal reporting or revised federal regulations changes any aspect of what is required to collect and report to MHEC.
- Report prompts begin on page 2 of this guidance
- A sample survey instrument accompanies these guidelines
- The link to submit materials via Google form is here: <https://forms.gle/hdQf1riLu1q3mGYr5>

### Guidance from MHEC and Federal reporting

MHEC regularly reviews federal guidance/Title IX regulations in relation to the state requirements. As stated in prior guidance, **the changes to the Title IX regulations that went into effect in August 2020 do not preclude MHEC from continuing to collect the same data of incidents of sexual assault and other sexual misconduct as MHEC has collected in the past. Similarly, the activities taking place within the federal government between 2022 and 2024 regarding Title IX should not change any aspects of what institutions are required to report for State reporting.**

MHEC is aware of activity tied to a federal campus climate survey. This requirement would not change reporting to MHEC. Institutions should contact Barbara Schmertz at [barbara.schmertz@maryland.gov](mailto:barbara.schmertz@maryland.gov) if they have additional questions about the federal survey and the state survey requirement.

### Guideline Purpose

Since 2015, all higher education institutions are required by statute (Md. Education Article, Section §11-

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601) to conduct and report the results of a sexual assault campus climate survey, and to provide institution-level data on incidents of sexual assault and misconduct. The first statewide report summarizing these reports was completed in November 2016.

The following guidelines are meant to aid institutions in the administration of the 2022-2024 cycle of the survey and the preparation of the required report. These guidelines were developed in collaboration with a workgroup consisting of representatives from all segments of higher education in Maryland, and strengthened through feedback from institutional representatives. The guidelines serve to help answer questions and address concerns related to the statute's requirements in an effort to help ensure that the data from the survey can be useful to students, colleges and universities, and the public.

### Requirements

All Maryland institutions are required to conduct a sexual assault campus climate survey every other year. For this cycle, all surveys must have been administered within two years of the last survey cycle; the results of this survey must be submitted to the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) on or before June 1, 2024. MHEC is required to compile a report on school-specific survey results and submit to the General Assembly. Along with a narrative summary provided by MHEC, the Commission will include, unedited, the institutional reports that are submitted.

Given the size and scope of assessing the campus climate, and recognizing the unique needs of individual campuses, this document should not be considered exhaustive. Campuses should rely on their institutional experts (e.g. IR staff, faculty, legal counsel) for guidance on the administration of a survey instrument and the analysis and reporting of the survey's results. This document provides guidelines and includes requirements for the narrative report.

### Narrative report guidelines and prompts

#### General guidelines

Institutional reports must address all required topic areas, ensuring all prompts under each section are discussed in the report; if institutions collect data on prevalence, they are asked to briefly address the prompts in Section E. Page limits are four –five pages total (approximately 1800 words) for institutions reporting only on Sections A to D. For those institutions also addressing prompts in Section E, the page limits extends to accommodate the additional narrative.

\*\*\* NEW\*\*\* Due to the need for institutions to report on changes over time, trends and other questions related to comparing cycles, institutions are strongly encouraged to use tables, charts and other tools that help report these results in a succinct, efficient manner.

- A. Survey Administration (approximately 400 words)
  - a. What survey instrument was used in the 2022-2024 cycle? How was it developed or obtained? Has it changed significantly since the previous cycles? If so, why?
  - b. Please discuss whether your institution used the additional Maryland Department of Health questions and prompt edits provided in 2022? Why or why not.
  - c. Who received the survey and how did the institution select those participants?
  - d. How did the institution conduct the survey?

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- e. How was it administered and what was the rate of response among those who could have responded (e. g., if you surveyed only undergraduates, how many [and what percentage of] undergraduates responded)?
  - f. What steps were taken to encourage responses from the surveyed population?
  - g. How does the respondent population compare to the general population on campus (e.g., race and ethnicity, gender, age, on-campus/off-campus residents)?
  - h. What changes to the survey administration were made since the last survey cycle, if any?
- B. Perceptions of Safety and General Campus Climate (approximately 400 words)
- a. How do respondents perceive the safety of the campus and the general campus climate?
  - b. How have these perceptions changed over the past four cycles (2016-18, 2018-20, 2020-22, and 2022-24)? Discuss and use charts/graphs.
- C. Perceptions of Institution's Readiness and Ability to Address Issues of Sexual Violence (approximately 400 words)
- a. How do respondents perceive the institution's readiness and ability to address issues of sexual assault and sexual violence in such areas as:
    - i. Training and education
    - ii. Support for persons reporting sexual assault and other sexual misconduct
    - iii. The administrators responsible for investigating misconduct
  - b. How have these perceptions changed over the past four cycles (2016-18, 2018-20, 2020-22, and 2022-24)?
- D. Institutional Analysis and Action Steps (approximately 600 words)
- a. What relationship, if any, do you find between the changes in the incident data over the past four cycles (2016-18, 2018-2020, 2020-22, and 2022-2024) and the trends you are finding in the survey data? Discuss and use charts/graphs.
  - b. What have been the results of changes implemented since the 2020-2022 survey cycle? Over the past four cycles (2016-18, 2018-20, 2020-22, and 2022-24)?
  - c. What activities, services, programs, or other results have arisen from what was learned from the survey results?
  - d. What have you learned from an analysis of respondents' answers to questions tied to education and training received and questions gauging their knowledge on how to report? Are they aligned or are there gaps?
- E. Prevalence of Sexual Assault and Other Sexual Misconduct (Complete only if your institution collects these data via the survey) (approximately 300 words)
- a. What are the rates of prevalence of sexual assault and other sexual misconduct found from the survey data?
  - b. How do these rates compare to the incident data collected and reported in this cycle?
  - c. Of those data collected from the survey, what are the rates of those who choose to report to the institution and those who choose not to? Of those who choose not to, what are the primary reasons given for not reporting the incident?

### Formatting requirements

\*\*\* NEW\*\*\* Many of the formatting requirements stated in previous cycles are no longer applicable. Institutions are preparing documents in pdf format. Ensure charts and other visuals are not distorted

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when converting to PDF.

Generally, please ensure:

- 1 " margins
- Single spaced lines
- Left justified text
- 11 or 12 point font

**Otherwise, you are welcome to use tables, graphs, other visuals, bulleted text, a cover page, color, headings, footers, font of choice.**

### Survey Administration Timeline and Guidelines

All institutions of higher education in the state of Maryland are required by law to administer a sexual assault campus climate survey within two years of the last survey cycle. Results of the survey must be submitted to MHEC on or before June 1, 2024. Submissions will be submitted via Google form.

<https://forms.gle/hdQf1riLu1q3mGYr5>

The guidelines listed below seek to balance the unique needs of individual higher education institutions with the requirements of the State law. Following the guidelines below will ensure consistency and reliability in the results reported by institutions to MHEC and by MHEC to the public.

- Institutions may administer the model survey instrument (see editable one included in materials) an existing survey instrument, or an instrument of their own design or selection. Institutions may utilize internal resources or may retain an outside expert to create and administer the survey.
- Should institutions choose to use the model survey, they may make modifications to suit the needs of their campus communities. Alterations can include: adaptations of the question scales, removal or editing of questions/introduction, conclusion, clarification of definitions or terms, additions/subtractions to question options and alterations to the order of questions
- Institutions may choose among methods of survey administration, including web-based and pen and paper. Institutions may choose to use multiple methods, depending on their needs and resources.
- Institutions are encouraged to survey students 18 and older. Should institutions wish to survey minors (ages 17 and under), it is a strong possibility that parental permission will have to be sought prior to those students' completion of the survey. They should consult experts at their institutions, including IR staff and IRB personnel.
- Institutions should implement a number of measures to ensure the reliability of data. For example, the length of the instrument, the time of year and the length of time when the survey is administered, the incentives offered, and the institutional outreach and communications strategy all affect response rates and reliability of results.
- Institutions should consult their institutional research office and other experts regarding the pros and cons of various forms of survey administration and the best methods to ensure that a representative sample is obtained.
- Institutions may select the target population(s) to be included in the survey administration. The State is especially interested in the experiences and perceptions of undergraduate students ages 18 to 24, but institutions are encouraged to survey other groups, especially those institutions that serve primarily non-traditional students. Populations can include faculty, staff, and students (graduate and undergraduate). Institutions will be responsible

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- for explaining what populations were selected for the survey, and why, within the narrative report submitted to MHEC.
- Institutions must determine if the survey will be disbursed to all members of the selected population(s) or a representative sample. Surveying a sample can be cost-effective and easier to administer but can limit interpretation of results and diminish the ability to set benchmarks. Using a census method can be cost- and time-prohibitive but allows for easier benchmarking and parsing of data regarding subgroups.
  - Each institution must designate an official point of contact to work with Commission staff on submission of the survey data. These guidelines have been sent to the institutional point of contact who submitted the 2022 materials. Institutions must notify the Commission immediately of any change in the identity of the point of contact. Please email Dr. Barbara Schmertz ([barbara.schmertz@maryland.gov](mailto:barbara.schmertz@maryland.gov)) with any changes.
  - All efforts must be made to protect student privacy in the collection and reporting of data.

If you have additional questions or concerns regarding these guidelines, please contact Dr. Schmertz via email ([barbara.schmertz@maryland.gov](mailto:barbara.schmertz@maryland.gov)).