



Student Support Quick Guide: A student reports a sexual assault

What should you look out for?

Students are more likely than others to be subjected to sexual assault. Encountering this and other forms of sexual misconduct can have a devastating effect on their experience of higher education. The effects can be very varied, and may include anger, distress, numbness, crying, insomnia, flashbacks, inability to concentrate, and withdrawal from friends, family and university life.

It is possible that at some point a student may approach you looking for support as a victim of a sexual assault. A student might, for example share with you the fact that they were a victim recently and have not yet reported this to anyone, or they might tell you that they are continuing to experience the after-effects of an assault that happened some time ago which in turn is still having an impact on their day-to-day life and studies. The University has a detailed set of protocols which will be enacted when we receive notification of an alleged sexual assault, but paramount in the first instance is to get the student the immediate guidance and support they need. It may also be worthwhile consulting the [Quick Guides on 'A student reports discrimination, victimisation or harassment'](#) and ['A student is a victim of crime'](#) (can we hyperlink to these Quick Guides?).

What should you do?

It is the student's decision whether or not to report the assault. This can be a very difficult decision and we must be sensitive to their wishes. If they have not made a report, seek to ensure that the student has the support they need to think through their next steps.

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We suggest that you:

- Encourage them to report the assault through the university's [Report + Support online reporting portal](#). They can report anonymously or to an adviser. You can also make a report on the student's behalf if they consent to this.
- Ask if the student would be willing to speak with someone in the university's Safeguarding team at safeguarding@napier.ac.uk. They can request to speak with either a woman or a man, depending on their preference.
- Suggest that they seek support from the university's [Counselling & Mental Wellbeing service](#). Personal development tutors and other members of academic staff are not expected to take on roles that should rightly be delivered by specialists such as counsellors or the Safeguarding team. If, at any point, you feel you need to seek advice and support from specialist services, please contact Counselling & Mental Wellbeing at counselling@napier.ac.uk
- Provide information about specialist support services, including the [NHS Sexual Assault Response Coordination Service](#) (if the assault has taken place in the past 7 days), and [Rape Crisis Scotland](#).

We recommend that you don't:

- Ask them to go into detail about the assault – your role is not to investigate.
- Ask them to disclose the name of the alleged perpetrator – there are limits to confidentiality and the student should be made aware of these before disclosing the name of an alleged perpetrator.

These recommendations are based on trauma informed best practices.

What happens next?

What happens next will depend on the individual circumstances of the case in question and the wishes of the survivor, and the University will follow the approach confirmed in our [Information for students who have experienced sexual assault](#) guidance.

If the student makes a report through [Report and Support](#), or agrees to speak with someone in the [Safeguarding team](#), they will be contacted by a trained adviser who will support them to consider options for wellbeing support, as well as formal reporting options.

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The need to support the student is of paramount importance and will shape our response. University Security are experienced in responding to sexual offences and liaising with partners in the Police. Referring students to university support services for ongoing support will ensure they receive the help they need. To coordinate our response, the University may, with the consent of the student, hold a case conference (generally chaired by the Safeguarding Manager, involving colleagues from across the University and key partners) to agree a way forward.

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For further information or to provide feedback about this Quick Guide, please [contact dlte@napier.ac.uk](mailto:dlte@napier.ac.uk)



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