

Frequently Asked Questions:
Report on the 2019 AAU Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Misconduct
Stanford University
(Westat Stanford Report)

Content Note: We feel that it is important to share survey information with our community. We also know that the content may be difficult for some to read as it deals with sexual violence and sexual harassment. Some of the questions in the survey, and some sections of this report, use explicit language including anatomical names of body parts and descriptions of sexual acts.

Please decide for yourself how to engage with this information and seek support if you are distressed.

The [Confidential Support Team](#) (650-725-9955) is available for student consultation at all times. The Confidential Support Team is comprised of mental health professionals who specialize in working with students who have experienced sexual or relationship violence. Other resources are available at sexualviolence.stanford.edu.

1. What was the response rate for Stanford for the 2019 AAU Survey?

Overall: 62% (N = 10,098)

Undergraduate students: 63% (N = 4,536)

Graduate students: 61% (N = 5,562)

(Westat Stanford Report, Section 2.5, Page 4, Line 25 and Page 5, Table 1)

By comparison, the overall response rate was 22% for all 33 participating universities and 31% for participating private institutions. (Westat Report on the AAU Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Misconduct (for all schools), Section 2, Page 5, Lines 25 and 28 and Page 6, Table 2)

2. What is the prevalence rate of nonconsensual sexual contact at Stanford? Why does the Westat Stanford Report provide multiple, different estimates for the rates of nonconsensual sexual contact? What are the differences?

The report provides estimates for many different combinations of types of sexual contact, tactics, groups of students, and time periods. These different estimates answer different questions about the prevalence of sexual violence and harassment.

- For example, one estimated rate (per 100 students) presented in the report is for the percent of undergraduate women who experienced nonconsensual sexual contact (attempted or completed penetration or sexual touching) either due to **physical force** or **inability to consent** since entering Stanford: 23.8% (Westat Stanford Report, Section 3.3, Page 18, Line 21; Westat Stanford Tables, Table 3.1). This estimate represents the prevalence rate of nonconsensual sexual contact for all undergraduate women who took the 2019 AAU survey, aggregating students across all years in school (first through fourth year and beyond).

- The report also provides a prevalence rate for undergraduate women in their **fourth year or higher** who experienced nonconsensual sexual contact either due to **physical force, inability to consent, coercion, or without ongoing, voluntary consent** (including additional tactics not included in the rate above) since entering Stanford: 38.5% (Westat Stanford Report, Section 3.5, Page 30, Line 9; Westat Stanford Tables, Table 4.9). This estimate represents the prevalence rate of nonconsensual sexual contact for undergraduate women during their full academic career at Stanford.

3. I want to compare the 2019 AAU Survey results to the results from the Report on the 2015 Stanford Campus Climate Survey. Where can I look to see how Stanford is doing since 2015?

The survey administration, terminology, instrument, and analysis were entirely different in 2015 and 2019. Therefore, it is not possible to use the results from the two surveys to make valid inferences about whether Stanford's prevalence of sexual violence and harassment increased or decreased between 2015 and 2019.

With the important differences in survey instruments in mind, if we compare prevalence rates for undergraduate women across the broadest number of combinations of types of nonconsensual sexual contact and tactics included in the 2015 and 2019 survey reports, we find that:

- In 2015, 19.3% of undergraduate women in their fourth year or higher in 2015 experienced nonconsensual penetration/oral sex (either attempted or completed) accomplished by any tactic. (2015 Stanford Campus Climate Survey: Additional Findings, Page 11, Table 2a, Column 4, Lines E) ¹
- In 2019, 19.1% of undergraduate women in their fourth year or higher in 2019 experienced penetration by any tactic. (Westat Stanford Tables, Table 4.9)
- In 2015, 46.2% of undergraduate women in their fourth year or higher in 2015 experienced prohibited sexual conduct (nonconsensual penetration/oral sex or nonconsensual sexual touching) by any tactic. (2015 Stanford Campus Climate Survey: Additional Findings, Page 13, Table 2c, Column 4, Line I²)
- In 2019, 38.5% of undergraduate women in their fourth year or higher in 2019 experienced nonconsensual sexual contact (penetration or sexual touching) by the following tactics: physical force, inability to consent or stop what was happening, coercion, or without ongoing voluntary agreement. (Westat Stanford Report, Section 3.5, Page 30, Line 9; Westat Stanford Tables, Table 4.9)
- However, it is important to note that the 2015 survey included a different set of sexual contact types and tactics than the 2019 AAU survey, making comparisons between these two surveys difficult and any inferences about changes in prevalence rates problematic.

¹ <https://provost.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2019/09/2015-Stanford-Campus-Climate-Survey-Additional-Findings.pdf>. Table 2a, page 11

² <https://provost.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2019/09/2015-Stanford-Campus-Climate-Survey-Additional-Findings.pdf>. Table 2c, page 13

4. How did the survey define “sexual assault” and “sexual misconduct”?

Westat provided the following definitions in Section B of the survey instrument:

“Sexual assault’ and ‘sexual misconduct’ refer to a range of behaviors that are nonconsensual or unwanted. These behaviors could include remarks about physical appearance or persistent sexual advances. They also could include threats of force to get someone to engage in sexual behavior such as nonconsensual or unwanted touching, sexual penetration, oral sex, anal sex or attempts to engage in these behaviors. These behaviors could be initiated by someone known or unknown including someone you are in or have been in a relationship with.” (Westat Stanford Report, Appendix A1.4, Section B, Page A1-22, Line 2)

In the report, “nonconsensual sexual contact” is used to refer to specific combinations of types of sexual contact and tactics that are used to compute prevalence rates. See Question 5 for more detail.

5. How is “nonconsensual sexual contact” defined?

Incidents of “nonconsensual sexual contact” refer to specific combinations of types of sexual contact and tactics. As Westat explains in the report:

“To be counted as a victim of this type of incident, the respondent had to answer ‘yes’ to one of five different questions that asked about two different types of sexual contact—penetration and sexual touching. The survey defined each of these as:

- Penetration:
 - *Putting a penis, finger, or object inside someone else’s vagina or anus*
 - *When someone’s mouth or tongue makes contact with someone else’s genitals*
- Sexual Touching:
 - *Kissing*
 - *Touching someone’s breast, chest, crotch, groin, or buttocks*
 - *Grabbing, groping, or rubbing against the other in a sexual way, even if the touching is over the other’s clothes”*

(Westat Stanford Report, Section 3.3, Page 16, Line 10 – Page 17, Line 6)

The prevalence rates for nonconsensual sexual contact refer to sexual contact that occurred because the perpetrator used physical force or threats of physical force, the respondent was unable to consent, the respondent was coerced, or the respondent did not provide active, ongoing voluntary agreement. The survey defined each of these tactics as:

- Physical Force: *“Physical force was defined on the survey as: ... someone holding you down with his or her body weight, pinning your arms, hitting or kicking you, or using or threatening to use a weapon against you.”*
(Westat Stanford Report, Section 3.3, Page 17, Lines 10-12)
- Inability to consent: *“The inability to consent or stop what was happening was defined with the following: ... [the respondent was] unable to consent or stop what*

was happening because you were passed out, asleep, or incapacitated due to drugs or alcohol.”

(Westat Stanford Report, Section 3.3, Page 17, Lines 13-18)

- **Coercion:** *“For the purposes of the survey, coercion was defined as: ... threatening serious non-physical harm or promising rewards such that you felt you must comply(.) Examples include:*
 - *Threatening to give you bad grades or cause trouble for you at work*
 - *Promising good grades or a promotion at work*
 - *Threatening to share damaging information about you with your family, friends or authority figures*
 - *Threatening to post damaging information about you online.”*

(Westat Stanford Report, Section 3.4, Page 26, Lines 7-14)

- **Without active, ongoing voluntary agreement:** *“defined as incidents that occur: ... without your active, ongoing voluntary agreement(.) Examples include someone:*
 - *initiating sexual activity despite your refusal*
 - *ignoring your cues to stop or slow down*
 - *went ahead without checking in or while you were still deciding*
 - *otherwise failed to obtain your consent.”*

(Westat Stanford Report, Section 3.4, Page 27, Lines 8-14)

Finally, Westat provides the following clarification on how they counted students who reported more than one type of sexual contact in the same incident:

“If the student reported both penetration and sexual touching in the same incident, the penetration was counted in the estimates described... This hierarchy rule conforms to the counting rules established by the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Uniform Crime Reporting Program (U.S. Department of Justice, 2013) and used by schools in disclosing the annual crime statistics required under the Clery Act.”³ (Westat Stanford Report Section 3.3, Page 17, Lines 19-23)

6. How did the survey define “sexual harassment”? Does “nonconsensual sexual contact” include sexual harassment?

As defined in the Westat Stanford Report, “nonconsensual sexual contact” does not include sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is measured separately on the AAU survey and encompasses a different set of behaviors (see below).

In the AAU 2019 survey, “sexual harassment” is defined as:

“... a series of behaviors that:

- *interfered with the victim’s academic or professional performance,*
- *limited the victim’s ability to participate in an academic program, or*
- *created an intimidating, hostile, or offensive social, academic, or work environment.*

This definition is consistent with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the U.S. Department of Education’s definitions of ‘hostile environment.’

³Clery Act Hierarchy Rule: 34 CFR 668.469(c)(9)

The specific behaviors referenced on the survey were taken from several different scales measuring harassment. The respondent was asked if:

... a student, or someone employed by or otherwise associated with [University] did the following:

- *made sexual remarks or told jokes or sexual stories that were insulting or offensive to you?*
- *made inappropriate or offensive comments about your or someone else's body, appearance, or sexual activities?*
- *said crude or gross sexual things to you or tried to get you to talk about sexual matters when you did not want to?*
- *used social or online media to send offensive sexual remarks, jokes, stories, pictures, or videos to you or about you that you did not want?*
- *continued to ask you to go out, get dinner, have drinks, or have sex even though you said 'no'?*

Respondents who answered 'yes' to one or more of these items were then asked whether these behaviors led to any of the following consequences:

- *Interfered with your academic or professional performance,*
- *Limited your ability to participate in an academic program, or*
- *Created an intimidating, hostile or offensive social, academic, or work environment."*

(Westat Stanford Report, Section 3.6, Page 30, Line 17 – Page 31, Line 19)

7. What is TGQN? How are gender non-binary students categorized in the report? Why does the Westat Stanford Report group TGQN undergraduate and TGQN graduate students?

Note: Sexual orientation and gender identities were measured separately in the survey. People who are transgender, nonbinary, etc., are included in the TGQN group regardless of their sexual orientation (e.g., heterosexual, LGBTQ).

Westat provides the following definition of the term "TGQN" (Westat Report on the AAU Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Misconduct (for all schools), Glossary of Terms, Page vi, Lines 1-8):

"TGQN, TGQN students, and TGQN respondents are used interchangeably and denote students who listed their gender identity [on the survey] as one of the following categories:

- *Transgender woman,*
- *Transgender man,*
- *Nonbinary/Genderqueer,*
- *Gender Questioning, or*
- *Gender Not Listed"*

A primary reason for this aggregation is to ensure the privacy of students given small numbers of respondents in these categories.

In addition, Westat states:

“Collapsing groups into the TGQN category helps to maintain an adequate sample to generate estimates. Prior surveys have shown that TGQN students and women have significantly higher rates of victimization than men. However, very few campus surveys have produced statistically reliable estimates for students that identify as TGQN. A very small percentage of the student population identifies as TGQN and because of this, the number of students completing the surveys is small. Approximately 1.8 percent of Stanford students selected one of the TGQN categories (Table A). This is an inadequate number of respondents to generate reliable estimates if the data are disaggregated by student affiliation (undergraduate and graduate/professional [degree] categories). Separating by affiliation will result in many cells being suppressed because of small sample, especially for graduate and professional [degree] students. In the interest of including as many results as possible for this group, this report combines data across student affiliation categories for TGQN students.” (Westat Stanford Report, Section 3, Page 8, Line 18 – Page 9, Line 4)

8. Does the report provide prevalence rates by sexual identity/orientation? How does the report refer to LGBTQ students?

The 2019 AAU survey asked students to identify their sexual identity/orientation from among the following options (selecting as many as applied): Heterosexual or straight, Gay or lesbian, Bisexual, Asexual, Queer, Questioning, Not listed, Decline to state. The Westat Stanford Report combines Bisexual, Asexual, Queer, Questioning, and Not Listed into one group – “Other/multiple categories” – separate from students who selected “Gay or Lesbian” only. In some instances, the report also combines “Other/multiple categories” and “Gay or Lesbian only” into one “Non-Heterosexual” group.

9. Are any groups particularly vulnerable?

In the Westat Stanford Report, undergraduate women (23.8%) and TGQN (undergraduate and graduate combined, 21.7%) had the highest prevalence rates of nonconsensual sexual contact through physical force or inability to consent since entering college. (Westat Stanford Report, Section 3.3, Page 18, Line 21 and Line 25; Westat Stanford Tables, Table 3.1 and Table 3.5)

Students who identified as non-heterosexual⁴ or non-married or who reported having a disability⁵ also had high prevalence rates. (Westat Stanford Report, Section 3.3, Page 21, Lines 1-10; Westat Stanford Tables, Table 3.6) See Pages 20-21 of the Westat Stanford Report and Table 3.6 for more information.

10. What does the word “respondent” mean in the Westat Stanford Report?

In this report, “Respondent” means a student who responded to the survey. Westat uses constant terms across all 33 universities that participate in the survey. We understand that at

⁴ In the Westat Stanford Tables, “non-heterosexual” refers to students who identify as either (1) “Gay or lesbian only” or (2) “Other/multiple categories.” The latter group combines students who identified as: Bisexual, Asexual, Queer, Questioning or Not listed. The prevalence rates of sexual violence and harassment are likely different for these various sub-groups of students.

⁵ Respondents were asked, “Do you identify as a student with any of the following? Learning disability, ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, mobility-related disability (e.g., spinal cord injury), sensory disability (e.g., low vision), chronic mental health condition (e.g., depression), chronic medical condition (e.g., diabetes), or other disability or chronic condition.” (Westat Stanford Tables, Table A, Footnote 1)

Stanford we also use the term respondent to mean a person who is accused of and responding to an allegation of bad conduct. For the purposes of this report, “respondent” only means a student who responded to the survey.

11. Where can I find definitions of terms used in the Westat Stanford report?

Here is a [glossary of terms](#).

12. How are students assigned to categories in the report (e.g. Gender, Student Degree Affiliation, and other demographic groupings)?

Student demographic and enrollment data, such as gender, degree affiliation, and race/ethnicity, are self-reported and derived from answers to questions in the AAU survey. Stanford administrative data were not used in the report.

The categories in the report do not always reflect the way Stanford commonly reports on student data. Therefore, population percentages in the Westat report are not necessarily comparable to other Stanford reports. (For example, on the AAU survey, a student enrolled in a coterminal master’s program could self-identify as an undergraduate student, while the university might have categorized them as a graduate student based on their tuition plan.) In addition, the report aggregates groups that are often disaggregated in Stanford reporting, such as Master’s, PhD, and professional degree students. (See Question 15 for more information).

13. I indicated on the survey that I had experienced an incident of sexual violence or harassment. I am now worried about the anonymity of my responses. Should I be?

Strict measures are in place to protect your privacy; no one at Stanford has access to identifiable survey responses. The survey was administered and analyzed by a third-party independent research firm – Westat – in part to help ensure the confidentiality of your responses. When you completed the survey, the link between your survey responses and your email and IP address was broken so that no one will be able to connect your email or IP address with your survey responses. Information on who completed the survey was not provided to Stanford or anyone else outside of Westat.

The report was designed to protect survey-takers’ privacy. The results are presented in summary form so no individual can be identified. If the number of responses for a given cell is less than three, the response is suppressed in the report. (See Question 14 for more information).

14. What does an uppercase letter S or a dash (-) or a 0% mean in a table or on a graph?

As stated in the Westat Stanford Report:

- “An uppercase letter ‘S’ indicates the cell was suppressed for confidentiality reasons (when that cell had fewer than three cases).” (Westat Stanford Report, Section 3, Page 9, Lines 6-7)
- “The symbol ‘-’ indicates there was no data for that cell.” (Westat Stanford Report, Section 3, Page 9, Line 8)
- A 0% indicates that there were more than two cases, but less than 0.5% of the population.

15. Why are graduate students and professional degree students grouped together? How are co-term students categorized in the report?

Student degree affiliation (undergraduate versus graduate) is based on self-reported data. Therefore, if a student is enrolled in a co-terminal master's program, and self-identifies as an undergraduate student, they are classified as an undergraduate student in the report (or vice versa). (Students could only select one degree program affiliation.)

The AAU survey was conducted at 33 colleges and universities. In order to be able to report on survey data in a systematic fashion across all institutions, Westat grouped all graduate students and professional degree students together.

This has important implications for interpreting the results in the Westat Stanford Report, since Stanford offers a diverse array of graduate programs – ranging from 6+ year doctoral programs to 3-year law programs to 1-year master's programs. The prevalence rates of sexual violence and harassment are likely very different for these different groups of graduate and professional degree students, given the differing amounts of time spent on campus.

16. Why were postdocs not included in the survey and reporting?

The 2019 AAU survey was conducted at 33 colleges and universities and, unfortunately, the AAU consortium and Westat, which led the development and administration of the survey, chose not to include postdoctoral students in the current iteration of the survey due to differences in postdoc populations and classifications across these campuses. Stanford is committed to better understanding how these issues effect postdocs on our campus, but our participation in this national survey precluded us from expanding or altering the survey eligibility criteria.

Please know, however, that the office of the Vice Provost for Graduate Education (VPGE) is continuing to work with postdocs to ensure their voices are heard on this issue. All members of our community are invited to share concerns. For non-confidential reports or policy/practice suggestions in matters involving students, contact the **Title IX Office** at titleix@stanford.edu or (650) 497-4955; for non-confidential reports or policy/practice suggestions in matters not involving students, contact the **Sexual Harassment Policy Office** at harass.stanford.edu or (650) 724-2120. Additionally, anonymous concerns can be reported to the **Stanford Compliance Hotline** (650) 721-2667.

17. Does the report provide prevalence rates of sexual misconduct or sexual harassment for international students?

The Westat Stanford Report and Westat Stanford Tables do not currently provide prevalence rates of sexual misconduct or sexual harassment for international students. However, the 2019 AAU survey asked students, "Are you a US citizen or permanent resident?" Future analysis will investigate whether or not students' responses to this question can be used to estimate prevalence rates for international students.

18. Why did Westat use weighting and imputation? What is hot deck imputation? What is raking?

The goal of the report is to characterize the prevalence of sexual violence and harassment among all Stanford students. However, not all Stanford students responded to the survey.

Therefore, Westat chose to report weighted data in order to provide prevalence rates that are statistically representative of the whole Stanford student population.

Westat used two statistical techniques to compute the weights applied to the survey data: raking and hot deck imputation.

Raking is a statistical method that assigns respondents in the data a weight, such that (1) the sum of the weights is equal to the total number of students in the census population and (2) the weighted proportions of the respondents match the proportion of students in the census population with respect to key demographic variables.

Westat further explains in the technical appendices:

“Non-response bias is an issue that all surveys have to address. As described in the weighting section of the report, non-response bias occurs when the survey variables are correlated with response propensities. For example, if those that do not respond have different rates of victimization as those that do respond, then the estimates of victimization will be biased because of non-response. The survey weights were obtained from the raking procedure that is intended to adjust for non-response (Westat Stanford report Section 2.6). This adjustment used characteristics that are related to both non-response and many of the survey outcomes. For example, the adjustment used gender, which is highly related to all types of victimization and response propensity. However, there is still the potential that the estimates are subject to non-response bias if there are other differences between respondents and non-respondents that the adjustment does not account for. For example, if women victims of assault are more likely to participate than women who are not victims, then there is potential for non-response bias even after the weight adjustment by gender.”
(Westat Stanford Report, Appendix 6, A6-1, Lines 2-14)

Random hot deck imputation is a statistical method for replacing missing data from a respondent in a dataset with observed values from a similar respondent in that same data set. A “donor pool” of similar respondents is assembled based on observed characteristics from the missing and non-missing respondents; a single donor is then selected randomly from that pool and the missing respondent “receives” the donor’s observed value for the missing field. Gender, Age Group, Year in School/Program, and Race/ethnicity were used as the basis for computing the weights. On average, 0.45% of survey respondents had to be imputed for these variables. (Westat Stanford Report, Section 2.6, Page 6, Line 14)

See Section 2.6 in the report (Page 6) and Appendix 6 for more information about hot deck imputation and raking.

19. The report provides percentages of students who experienced sexual violence or harassment. Can I tell how many students responded in the survey having experienced sexual violence or harassment based on these percentages?

Because the report provides the percentages based on weighted data, rather than the raw survey data, there is no way to identify the exact number of students who responded that they had experienced sexual violence or sexual harassment. Calculating the number of individual students at Stanford who indicated experiencing an incident of sexual violence or sexual harassment based on the rates presented in the report would yield a number different than the number of students who indicated having experienced an incident of sexual violence or

harassment on the survey. (See Question 20 for more information about interpreting prevalence rates.)

20. How should I interpret prevalence rates in the report?

In the report, Westat explains, “Prevalence is estimated by counting the number of individuals that have been a victim of a type of incident at least once over the time period of interest.” (Westat Stanford Report, Section 3.3, Page 18, Line 17) In the data tables accompanying the report, Westat states that, “unless otherwise specified, estimates [of prevalence rates] are for victimizations reported [on the survey] since entering college.” (Westat Stanford Tables, Footnote 1)

21. Can rates of sexual touching and penetration sum to rates of nonconsensual sexual contact? (Why do the percentages in Tables 3.1-3.5 not add up?)

When asked about nonconsensual sexual contact, respondents were given follow up questions about tactics for up to four incidents that they indicated experiencing. Therefore, one respondent can be counted multiple times in rows for different types of contact (e.g. sexual touching, penetration) or tactics (e.g. physical force, inability to consent). Data points that break out type of contact and/or tactic do not add up to aggregated victimization rates because each respondent is only counted once in aggregated totals. In other words, when reporting on prevalence rates, the unit of analysis in the report is an individual not an incident (and individuals are only counted once when estimating rates that may include multiple incidents, types of contact, or tactics). The report also provides estimates of how many incidents each student indicated having experienced. (Westat Stanford Tables, Table 3.7)

22. Will we receive any more results from the survey data, other than what is covered in the report?

The Office of Institutional Research & Decision Support (IR&DS) will continue to analyze and report on the survey data in the coming months. For example, the university understands the importance of disaggregating prevalence rates among different types of student groups (e.g., undergraduate, graduate and professional degree students).

23. Will the raw data be made available to researchers?

Similar to data from the 2015 AAU survey, data from this survey will be housed at the University of Michigan’s Institute for Social research at the ICPSR: <https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/>. Those at AAU institutions will be able to apply for this data in 2020; however, all other researchers will have to wait one year.

24. Where can I find the Westat report with results from all universities from the 2019 AAU survey?

You can access the Westat Report on the AAU Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Misconduct on the Stanford Campus Climate webpage [here](#).

25. Were all students invited to take the survey? Why was I not invited to take the survey?

Invitations to participate in the 2019 AAU survey were sent to enrolled or recently enrolled Stanford students. In order for a Stanford student to participate, an undergraduate, graduate, or professional degree student must have received an email invitation from Stanford. Students

who were under 18 were not eligible to take the survey. For more information about the administration of the survey, please see the FAQs [here](#).

26. Who can I contact if I have questions not answered by these FAQs? How can I provide feedback to the university?

If you have any additional questions or feedback regarding the survey or report, please email aausurvey@stanford.edu or use the [anonymous feedback form found here](#).