

LINKS Institute Sexual Violence Prevention Policy, 2025 revision

****Scope****

This policy applies to all members of the LINKS Institute community, including students, instructors, staff (full-time, part-time, contract), volunteers, visitors, and practicum supervisors. It governs conduct both in-person and in virtual learning environments, including practicum placements and other off-site Institute-related activities. The Institute is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from sexual violence and harassment.

Certain populations in Canada are at increased risk of experiencing sexual violence. These include, but are not limited to:

- Young women and girls
- Indigenous women
- People living with cognitive or physical disabilities
- Members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community
- Newcomer, ethnocultural, and racialized individuals

The Institute acknowledges that many vocational learners may be part of these groups and is committed to fostering a learning environment that is safe, inclusive, and supportive for all.

This policy defines sexual violence and harassment, outlines processes for disclosures and complaints, and describes institutional procedures for prevention and education.

****Consultation and Feedback****

Students and members of the Institute community are invited to submit confidential feedback on this policy via the Institute's website. This input will be reviewed annually and formally integrated into policy revisions every two years.

****Awareness and Prevention****

The Institute will implement ongoing initiatives to prevent sexual violence and foster a culture of consent and respect:

- A sexual violence prevention session will be delivered during every new student cohort's virtual orientation.
- A digital awareness campaign, including email bulletins and resources, will be sent to all students at least once per academic term.
- All staff and instructors will complete training during onboarding and participate in annual refresher sessions. Training records will be maintained for accountability.
- The Institute's policy will be posted on its website and shared with all new students and practicum placement partners.

****Definitions****

The following definitions inform the scope of this policy. They draw from the Criminal Code of Canada and relevant best practices in post-secondary education.

****Consent**:**

A voluntary, ongoing, and affirmative agreement to engage in sexual activity. Consent cannot be assumed, implied, coerced, or obtained from someone who is intoxicated, unconscious, or manipulated through a power imbalance. Consent may be withdrawn at any time.

****Sexual Violence**:**

Any sexual act or act targeting a person's sexuality, gender identity, or expression that is committed, threatened, or attempted without that person's consent. Includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexual assault (unwanted sexual activity)
- Sexual harassment
- Stalking (including cyberstalking)
- Indecent exposure
- Voyeurism

- Sexual exploitation
- Grooming

****Sexual Harassment**:**

Any unwelcome conduct, comment, gesture, or contact of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. Examples include:

- Sexual jokes or remarks
- Display of sexual images
- Unwanted touching or physical contact
- Repeated sexual propositions
- Inappropriate staring or leering
- Sexual solicitation by a person in authority

****Sexual Misconduct**:** Includes all forms of sexual violence and harassment, and other behavior of a sexual nature that creates a hostile or unsafe environment.

****Cyber Harassment/Stalking**:** Repeated, unsolicited, or threatening behavior via digital platforms, including email, text messages, social media, or forums, with the intent to harass or intimidate.

****Disclosure**:** The act of sharing information about an incident of sexual violence with someone other than law enforcement or judicial officials. A disclosure does not constitute a formal complaint.

****Survivor**:** An individual who has experienced sexual violence. The term “survivor” is used to honor personal agency, though not all individuals who disclose identify with this term.

****Survivor Blaming**:** Any suggestion that a survivor is in any way responsible for the harm they experienced.

****Trauma-Informed Approach**:** A framework that emphasizes safety, trust, choice, collaboration, and empowerment when supporting individuals who have experienced trauma.

****Complaint and Disclosure Process****

Any member of the Institute community may disclose or report an incident of sexual violence to a member of the Institute's leadership team. The survivor will remain in control of the process, and may choose among the following options:

1. File a police report at their discretion.
2. Seek medical attention, where appropriate.
3. Initiate a formal complaint within the Institute.
4. Disclose the incident without initiating a formal complaint, for the purposes of emotional support and/or academic accommodations.

All disclosures will be acknowledged within 48 hours. The survivor may have a support person present during any meeting or conversation related to the disclosure or complaint.

****Formal Complaint Process****

Formal complaints will be handled by an impartial member or subcommittee of the leadership team, independent of any party involved. The investigative process will include:

- Interviewing involved parties and any witnesses.
- Reviewing available evidence.
- Providing both complainant and respondent an opportunity to present their perspectives.

Interim measures may be taken to protect the safety and well-being of the complainant, such as course or schedule changes and no-contact directives. Outcomes of the investigation will be communicated in writing. The complainant will be informed of the resolution to the extent permitted by law.

An appeals process will be made available to both parties.

****Student Misconduct Protocol****

If a student is found to have committed sexual violence or harassment, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken, up to and including suspension or expulsion. The disciplinary process will be fair, timely, and consistent with institutional values.

****Staff Misconduct Protocol****

If a staff member is found to have committed sexual violence or harassment, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken, up to and including termination, in accordance with relevant human resources procedures and applicable legislation.

****Policy Accessibility****

This policy is available in alternative formats upon request. Anyone requiring an accessible version may contact the Institute via the website or by emailing the designated accessibility officer.

****Public Reporting****

To promote transparency and accountability, the Institute will publicly report the following on its website and in printed materials:

- The names and contact information of those responsible for responding to sexual violence complaints.
- Summary data (without personal identifiers) on disclosures, formal complaints, and outcomes.

****Policy Review****

This policy will undergo a comprehensive review every two years. The review will include broad consultation with students, staff, and survivors, with efforts to ensure confidentiality and emotional safety throughout the feedback process. Updates will be publicly communicated.

For more on consent, visit: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/youarenotalone/consent.html>

Historical and public reporting

There have been no disclosures, formal complaints or outcomes regarding sexual violence since it's inception in 2021.

Initial complaints are to be submitted to the CEO, John Jackson, RPN, MPN: info@links-institute.ca

An introduction to the sexual violence prevention policy is provided to students in an orientation session each new intake. The sexual violence prevention policy is provided to all to all LINKS Instructors and reviewed as part of hiring policy. It is also provided to all practicum sites.

Suggestions and feedback regarding the sexual violence prevention policy have been received from students over time and treated in a confidential manner as per student requests.