

# Look – Act – Prevent

## Safety Concept of HTW Berlin for the Prevention and Handling of Sexualised Discrimination and Violence (SDV)

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## Foreword

In August 2020, HTW Berlin adopted an Anti-Discrimination Directive that formulates a mission statement and prohibits discrimination on the basis of specified characteristics, as well as specifying structures for prevention, counselling, (anonymous) reporting and complaints, and outlining general responsibilities and procedures.

By its very nature, a directive cannot answer fundamental detailed questions, e.g.: what is the basic procedure when clarifying incidents? Who must be informed or involved? How can the incident be clarified while preserving the anonymity of those affected? How can it be ensured that those affected are not burdened or damaged further during the clarification process? How can university members learn to interact with each other in ways which enable them to address behaviour that violates boundaries? What forms of (legally permissible) intervention exist and are appropriate? Our university explored these questions in depth in 2021 and 2022 and is now presenting its findings in the form of this Safety Concept.

Studies on sexualised discrimination and violence in society, at work and at university show that there is a need for action.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, young women (from migrant backgrounds), women with physical impairments and trans people are affected by assaults with particular frequency, but men can also experience sexualised discrimination and violence. Although this issue has received a great deal of (media) attention in recent years, especially because those affected have started to speak out increasingly, more research is required. Only a few, largely unrepresentative studies on the extent and characteristics of sexualised discrimination and violence at German universities exist, for instance. Nevertheless, those university officials are aware that sexualised discrimination and violence is an issue, because they are occasionally confronted with incidents. It can be assumed that the number of unreported cases is relatively high, because this topic is often taboo for those affected, and also because sexualised discrimination and violence is usually not perpetrated by strangers, but by people from within one's own environment.

By addressing the issue and establishing a compulsory and transparent process, HTW Berlin becomes a safer place for everyone. The university encourages those affected to actually make use of the rights to consultation, report or complain to which they are entitled and enables staff to meet their responsibilities.

In order to achieve the goal of making HTW Berlin a safer place for all, it is necessary to define the regulations laid down in the Anti-Discrimination Directive in concrete terms. These stipulations are made in the present Safety Concept. The **first section** sets out the principles that apply to the handling of sexualised discrimination and violence at HTW

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<sup>1</sup> A helpful overview of the available relevant national and international studies is provided by this topic-specific website of the Center of Excellence Women and Science <https://www.ge-sis.org/cews/topics/gender-and-sexualised-violence/research-overview>.

Berlin. It explains the appropriate use of language and the principles designed to ensure that the interests of the affected persons are protected in the best possible way. The **second section** describes the structure that HTW Berlin has created for its anti-discrimination work. The various responsibilities are also clarified here. The **third section** explores the three pillars of anti-discrimination work at HTW Berlin: prevention, counselling and the reporting and complaints procedure. It explains the difference between a complaint and a report and describes how complaints and reports are handled. The section elucidates the way in which the principles set out in the first section are implemented in practice. The **annex** contains the Action Plan 2023-2025 for the implementation of the measures.

**This Safety Concept was adopted by the University Board on the 9th of November 2022.**

## 1 Principles of HTW Berlin when handling sexualised discrimination and violence

### 1.1 Culture of looking, acting and preventing

In the Anti-Discrimination Directive of HTW Berlin, the following principles are formulated for the collective cooperation of all university members<sup>2</sup>:

“HTW Berlin promotes the goal of being a safe, non-discriminatory and non-violent place to learn, teach and work, characterised by a climate of acceptance and trust as well as a fair, respectful and appreciative organisational culture whose members are in solidarity with one another. The diversity of its members is viewed as a valuable asset and enhancement of the university. Individuality as well as social cohesion are encouraged, so that everyone has the opportunity to develop their particular strengths, regardless of gender, ethnic origin, racial constructions, religion, world view, disability, chronic illness, stage of life, language, sexual and gender identity, social status or responsibility for children and/or dependent relatives.

HTW Berlin promotes a culture of acknowledging and naming discriminatory, abusive or violent behaviour. It encourages its members to take responsibility for themselves and others. All members of HTW Berlin contribute through their behaviour to a work and study climate in which the personal integrity and self-esteem of all employees, students and guests are respected. Those affected by acts of discrimination receive the best possible security and protection. Perpetrators must answer for their actions.

HTW Berlin stresses that it does not tolerate discrimination and assumes responsibility for safeguarding the personal rights of its members, this within the limits of its range of authority.”

*[→ Anti-Discrimination Directive of HTW Berlin, Preamble]*

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<sup>2</sup> The grounds for discrimination specified are largely identical to those of the Anti-Discrimination Ordinance of the State of Berlin. Within current social discourse, there is a struggle regarding the linguistic appropriateness of the terms, among other aspects. Laws are a reflection of this struggle and the mutability of concepts.

In addition, HTW Berlin sets out the following principles in its Safety Concept: commitment to affected persons, justice for affected persons, “do no harm”, confidentiality, “need-to-know”, case-appropriate penalties, dealing with exaggeration and false accusations, and procedural quality. These principles are explained below.

## 1.2 Appropriate language

In order for trust to grow in the university and for those affected to actually seek and find adequate support, it is crucial to choose the relevant terms carefully. This is because the language we use has a significant influence on how we perceive and classify situations. The following linguistic interpretations therefore apply to HTW Berlin:

According to the Anti-Discrimination Directive of HTW Berlin, ~~sexualised discrimination and violence~~ are understood to be all sexualised behaviours that are unwanted, unwelcome, inappropriate or non-consensual. This ranges from lewd remarks and jokes to inappropriate invitations to private dates, extending as far as sexual offences. The only decisive factor in how an experience is evaluated is that the affected person feels discriminated against. Whether discrimination was intended or not is irrelevant. [→ *Anti-Discrimination Directive of HTW Berlin, § 3 Forms of Discrimination*]

**Affected persons** are university members who have experienced behaviour that violates boundaries or is abusive or coercive. By calling them “affected persons” rather than “victims”, they are not reduced to their experience of violence, but rather this is highlighted as *one* aspect – albeit a serious one – in addition to many other facets that make up their person and shape their behaviour. This is important for the self-empowerment of affected persons.

A **person** comes **under suspicion** when an affected person reports an incident or complains. It is the alleged misconduct that is to be condemned, not the individual. Moreover, it is important to avoid prejudgement. It follows that it is only possible to refer to a “perpetrator” when a person under suspicion has been proven to have committed a crime or when they have confirmed that they committed the infringement of which they have been accused.

## 1.3 Commitment to affected persons

A commitment to affected persons means consciously putting the needs and perspectives of those affected in the foreground in order to create a protective space for them and to empower them.

HTW Berlin takes its responsibility to provide the best possible support to affected persons seriously. This may include referring affected persons to an external psychosocial and/or legal counselling centre. Such facilities support the affected persons as they navigate and process their experience of violence; counselling and support are exclusively oriented towards the needs of the affected persons. This task can be too much for university members, who are often not appropriately qualified, and who may also have to take into account their duty of care towards other (potentially) affected persons and people under suspicion. Within the university, therefore, the ability to uphold a commitment to affected persons is thus limited, and the university therefore draws on the advisory infrastructure of the State of Berlin and the federal government.

## 1.4 Justice for affected persons

Justice for affected persons requires a paradigm shift, renouncing the idea of being able to judge incidents objectively and to be able to “solve a case”. As a rule, the perspectives and interests of affected persons differ greatly from those of the people under suspicion, with the result that those responsible for case handling are usually faced with the dilemma of “wanting to believe” and “not being in a position to know”. An important objective for the organisation is to prevent future incidents and, if necessary, to penalise misconduct. To achieve this, it is unnecessary to resolve the described dilemma by “solving the case”; instead, those in positions of responsibility must be aware of this dilemma and nonetheless be able to act.

Fostering justice for affected persons means taking every report of an incident and every complaint seriously, investigating every report of an incident or every complaint and, if necessary, taking appropriate action, providing protection and taking a clear stance against the act as a university establishment.

Promoting justice for affected persons also entails treating those courageous individuals who have observed or experienced sexualised discrimination and violence with respect and appreciation. They, and their viewpoint alone, determine which behaviour justifies a report or complaint [→ *Anti-Discrimination Directive of HTW Berlin, § 3, para. 11*]. They are given space and time to recount their experiences in a protected setting. Their perspective is placed at the centre of the clarification of presumptions and accusations.

Actions of responsible parties which result from a report or complaint shall be guided by the principle “if in doubt, believe affected persons”, and must take account of potentially affected persons who have not yet spoken up. Every intervention must include, in its subtext, the message that reporting is worthwhile.

In the past, HTW Berlin has experienced the phenomenon that affected persons confided in one person at the university but refused to take any further steps. At that time, affected persons were obliged to agree to an intervention or case handling, but no other ways of taking action on the basis of a report or complaint existed. As a result, university staff who became aware of unacceptable behaviour were forced to remain passive. This had the unacceptable effect of protecting perpetrators or people under suspicion, and not affected persons themselves.

Now the university has implemented another regulation: the interests and wishes of affected persons must be weighed responsibly against the university’s goal of becoming as safe a place as possible for everyone. When an incident is reported, an intervention becomes *causal* – respecting the personal rights of those affected as well as those under suspicion.

It is essential that affected persons are aware of the difference between “justice for affected persons” and “commitment to affected persons” (see above) as well as the various support and processing options that accompany these approaches. In this way, they can thus make an informed decision about whether, when and how they would like to communicate with someone internally or externally. This also allows them to maintain control over their experience. A commitment to affected persons is a guiding principle for independent counselling centres. Here, the focus is placed absolutely and exclusively on the affected persons, and the counselling is fully oriented towards their needs and wishes. During the preliminary and referral counselling offered by the university, staff cooperate with external counselling centres, act as guides and, if the affected person so wishes, support them as they make contact with such establishments.

If an affected person chooses to make an internal report or complaint, it is important to make decisions which they can easily comprehend, and to take their needs and concerns into account in the stepwise approach, this in line with the principle of care. They may then be in a better position to accept specific decisions despite inner resistance.

### 1.5 “Do no harm”

HTW Berlin is committed to protecting affected persons and other people involved in the case from (further) harm. Therefore, those responsible conduct a case-based risk assessment to mitigate potential harm and weigh up the possibilities of anonymised case handling.

### 1.6 Confidentiality

HTW Berlin ensures the necessary confidentiality for those affected, people under suspicion, persons of trust, witnesses, those reporting cases and others in order to prevent them from coming to harm.

### 1.7 “Need-to-know”

All university members who need to know about the case are obliged to pass on information received within the context of a case report strictly according to the “need-to-know principle” (passing on information only as far as absolutely necessary) and with the greatest possible protection of the interests of the affected person. Information that may lead to the identification of individuals is only disclosed if it is indispensable for case clarification, or in the event of imminent danger.

### 1.8 Case-appropriate penalties

Sexualised discrimination and violence are never tolerated, constituting as they do a serious violation of human dignity and threatening a climate of peace at the university. The measures to be taken always refer to individual cases. They are designed to highlight misconduct, prevent repetition and demonstrate that such behaviour will not be tolerated.

*[→ Anti-Discrimination Directive of HTW Berlin, § 11 Penalties]*

### 1.9 Exaggeration and false accusation

No disciplinary action will be taken against university employees or third parties who report suspected cases with good intentions in the event that said report or complaint later proves to be false or misdirected. However, if it is established that a university member or a third party has deliberately exaggerated an incident or made a false allegation, appropriate measures will be taken to protect all those involved.

## 1.10 Procedural quality

Information is passed on anonymously in accordance with the reporting obligations [*Anti-Discrimination Directive of HTW Berlin, § 13*]. As part of the evaluation of the Safety Concept, the Anti-Discrimination Council of HTW Berlin receives anonymised information regarding reports and complaints.

HTW Berlin strives to offer the best possible support to all parties involved in cases of sexualised discrimination and violence and is open to feedback and continuous learning. The Anti-Discrimination Council of HTW Berlin takes up these suggestions where appropriate.

All those responsible for counselling and/or case management are offered further training and supervision sessions on a regular basis. As university staff members have a particular duty to act in an empathetic, informed and professional manner, they are expressly encouraged to take advantage of the training opportunities.

## 2 Anti-discrimination work at HTW Berlin

### 2.1 The structures of anti-discrimination work

#### 2.1.1 Persons of trust

Each member of HTW Berlin can become a **person of trust**, namely when people who have observed or experienced sexualised violence turn to them for support. Support can take many different forms, ranging from a confidential conversation to being accompanied to a counselling appointment. If a person confides in another university member, it may also be the case that support cannot be offered for reasons of self-care, for instance; this is the decision of the person who is being asked for support.

#### 2.1.2 Contact persons in faculties and central institutions

**Contact persons in faculties and central institutions** are people who have been trained in conducting conversations, and to whom affected persons can turn when seeking low-threshold and informal support. The contact persons are familiar with the relevant laws and internal university guidelines on equality and anti-discrimination as well as the structures of the anti-discrimination management policies in place at HTW Berlin and, if necessary, provide guidance for those affected.

#### 2.1.3 Anti-Discrimination Council

The **Anti-Discrimination Council** is the body responsible for implementing the anti-discrimination work undertaken at HTW Berlin. To this end, it draws up an action plan, establishes networks between the university's various advisory structures and advises committees, commissions and management staff. It is made up of representatives of all member groups, who chiefly perform advisory tasks at the university through their work or position.

#### 2.1.4 Anti-Discrimination Office

The **Anti-Discrimination Office** supports the Anti-Discrimination Council in drawing up and implementing the Action Plan, and is responsible for the organisation and implementation of events and further training for students, employees and management staff. It acts as a guide for those seeking advice, and creates networks with external counselling centres for the affected persons as

well as establishing links with primary psychosocial care facilities. As the central counselling office in cases of discrimination, it conducts initial consultations as well as individual and group counselling and conflict management for all member groups at HTW Berlin. It acts as a Complaints Office under the German General Equal Treatment Act (*Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz, AGG*).

### 2.1.5 Preliminary and referral counselling

In addition to the Anti-Discrimination Office of HTW Berlin as the central counselling office, university members can also use the **general counselling and committee structure of HTW Berlin** to voice their concerns. Students can contact the General Student Advisory Service, the full-time and part-time Equal Opportunities Officers for Women and their deputies, the Representative for Disabled and Chronically Ill Students, the members of the Faculty Student Councils and the Students' Union (AStA) and the student members of the Faculty Councils. The Staff Council, the full-time and part-time Equal Opportunities Officers for Women and their deputies and the Disability Representative are responsible for all other member groups. The aforementioned individuals or officers offer confidential **preliminary and referral counselling**, which means that they talk to affected persons and witnesses and inform them of internal and external support options as well as the reporting and complaints procedures. With the consent of the affected persons or witnesses, they may seek a low-threshold conflict resolution and document reports and complaints on behalf of the affected persons or witnesses in accordance with data protection law.

### 2.1.6 Confidentiality Team

The **Confidentiality Team** is responsible for the process of case handling, i.e. it acts as a collection point for reports and complaints, is responsible for documenting reports and complaints and identifies who needs to be involved in further case handling, e.g. the dean of the department concerned or a member of the University Board. These persons are included in the Confidentiality Team on a case-specific basis. Affected persons as well as witnesses can address their reports and complaints directly to the Confidentiality Team, which is possible orally as well as in writing and anonymously.

The Confidentiality Team includes:

1. A staff member from the Anti-Discrimination Office,
2. The full-time Equal Opportunities Officer for Women,
3. One person who has completed the HTW Berlin mediator training and
4. If applicable, the person of trust of the affected person in the role of the individual responsible for case handling.

A suitable deputy shall be appointed for roles 1 to 3. Attention shall be paid to a diverse composition of the Confidentiality Team, in particular with regard to the representation of the attribute "gender".

The members of the Confidentiality Team contribute the following knowledge and skills:

- Knowledge of the relevant legal foundations (in particular the German General Equal Treatment Act (AGG), the Berlin State Anti-Discrimination Act (LADG) and Berlin State Equal Treatment Act (LGG) as well as HTW Berlin's internal guidelines (in particular its Anti-Discrimination Directive and Safety Concept for Sexualised Discrimination and Violence)



- Identification with the Safety Concept for Sexualised Discrimination and Violence of HTW Berlin
- In-depth knowledge of the causes of sexualised discrimination and violence as well as victim protection; experience in dealing with allegations or incidents
- Counselling, moderation and mediation skills
- Unconditional reliability, confidentiality and integrity

Ideally, the members of the Confidentiality Team are trained professionals in the prevention of sexualised violence in their professional lives.

The University Board selects the members of the Confidentiality Team on the basis of the functions to be represented and their skills and suitability profiles. The Academic Senate confirms these appointments. The Confidentiality Team shall serve in this composition for two years. If a member resigns prematurely of their own volition, the University Board shall fill the vacancy.

### 2.1.7 Responsible person

The **responsible person** is the person who maintains contact with the affected person during the handling of a specific case. This can be the person of trust of the affected person or a member of the Confidentiality Team. The affected person decides who will assume task of being the responsible person. If necessary, the responsible person shall be a member of the Confidentiality Team for the duration of the case handling process.

## 2.2 The three pillars of anti-discrimination work at HTW Berlin

### 2.2.1 The first pillar: Prevention

Stereotypical images, as well as hierarchies, patriarchal power imbalances and relationships of dependence constitute the breeding ground for sexualised discrimination and violence at universities. Efforts must be made to raise awareness of the effects of gender stereotypes and structures, which must be reduced as far as possible.

Preventive measures aim to sensitise university members and, in the best case, to improve the way these problem are addressed, and can be assigned to different fields: public relations, awareness-raising and training, identification of potential danger zones on campus and in the virtual space.

Concrete preventive measures are taken in accordance with the current **HTW Berlin Equality Guidelines** and the **HTW Berlin Action Plan**, developed by the Anti-Discrimination Council<sup>3</sup>.

The Anti-Discrimination Council and the full-time Equal Opportunities Officer for Women shall report on the current state of implementation to the Academic Senate every two years at a minimum. The latter comments on the reports.

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<sup>3</sup> The Action Plan 2023-2025 in the Field of Action Sexualised Discrimination and Violence can be found in Annex I of the Safety Concept.

## 2.2.2 The second pillar: Counselling

HTW Berlin affords all of its members who feel affected by discrimination the right to seek counselling. Individuals who exercise their right to counselling, as well as those who support the individuals concerned, must not experience any personal, study-related or professional disadvantages.

Counselling tasks are carried out by the Anti-Discrimination Office of HTW Berlin as the central counselling office, the contact persons in the faculties and central institutions, the above-mentioned individuals responsible for preliminary and referral counselling, as well as the members of the Confidentiality Team.

University members who learn of an (alleged) incident in the course of preliminary and referral counselling are subject to a statutory duty of confidentiality from which they can only be released by the person seeking counselling. If the affected person is considering making a report or complaint, the possible limits of confidentiality are discussed transparently in the counselling consultation. All further steps are taken in consultation with the affected persons as well as with those supporting them, where appropriate.

## 2.2.3 The third pillar: Complaints and reporting procedures

### 2.2.3.1 *Difference between a complaint and a report*

The German General Equal Treatment Act (AGG) and the Anti-Discrimination Directive of HTW Berlin apply when making a **complaint**. Affected persons have a legal right to defend themselves against structural discrimination or behaviour by others that they perceive as problematic by filing a complaint. A complaint can only be made by the person who feels affected by sexualised discrimination and violence.<sup>4</sup> An anonymous complaint is also possible. If people share an experience of discrimination, they can make a joint complaint.

The Anti-Discrimination Directive of HTW Berlin offers the additional option of **reporting incidents**. In this way, HTW Berlin has created a lower-threshold version than the complaint, which nonetheless exceeds the legal minimum standard and which goes hand in hand with the voluntary commitment to follow up reports just as seriously and consistently as complaints.

You can report (suspected) incidents of sexualised discrimination and violence at HTW Berlin that affect you or other people. Reports can also be made anonymously. By reporting observed (suspected) misconduct, university members treat each other responsibly and attentively, are there for affected persons and contribute to a culture of looking at instead of looking away – elementary prerequisites for removing the taboos of sexualised discrimination and violence and destroying their very foundations.

Because HTW Berlin has committed itself to not distinguishing between complaints and reports in its basic approach to case handling, affected persons do not have to decide whether they want to file a complaint, but can file a report and, if necessary, only clarify for themselves during further case handling whether they want to convert the report into a complaint. As far as this question is concerned, affected persons should contact the offices that provide preliminary counselling

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<sup>4</sup>In the case of minors, a parent or guardian shall make the complaint.

and referral consultation, or receive counselling from a member of the Confidentiality Team.

There is no deadline for reports and complaints. Instead, they can be made months and even years after an incident.

The similarities and differences between complaining and reporting are clarified once again in abbreviated form in the following table:

<b>Aspects</b>	<b>Complaint</b>	<b>Report</b>
Legal basis	German General Equal Treatment Act (AGG; federal law) Anti-Discrimination Directive of HTW Berlin (internal HTW Berlin directive)	Anti-Discrimination Directive of HTW Berlin (internal HTW Berlin directive)
as an affected person	possible	possible
as a witness	not possible	possible
anonymous	possible (by affected person)	possible (by affected person and witness)
In the event of the lifting of the duty of confidentiality by affected person and/or witness, Confidentiality Team commences its work	yes	yes
Confidentiality Team takes action (consequence)	yes	yes
Confidentiality Team maintains contact with the affected person and/or witness during case handling and subsequently issues a definitive decision (does not apply in the case of anonymous report or complaint)	yes	yes

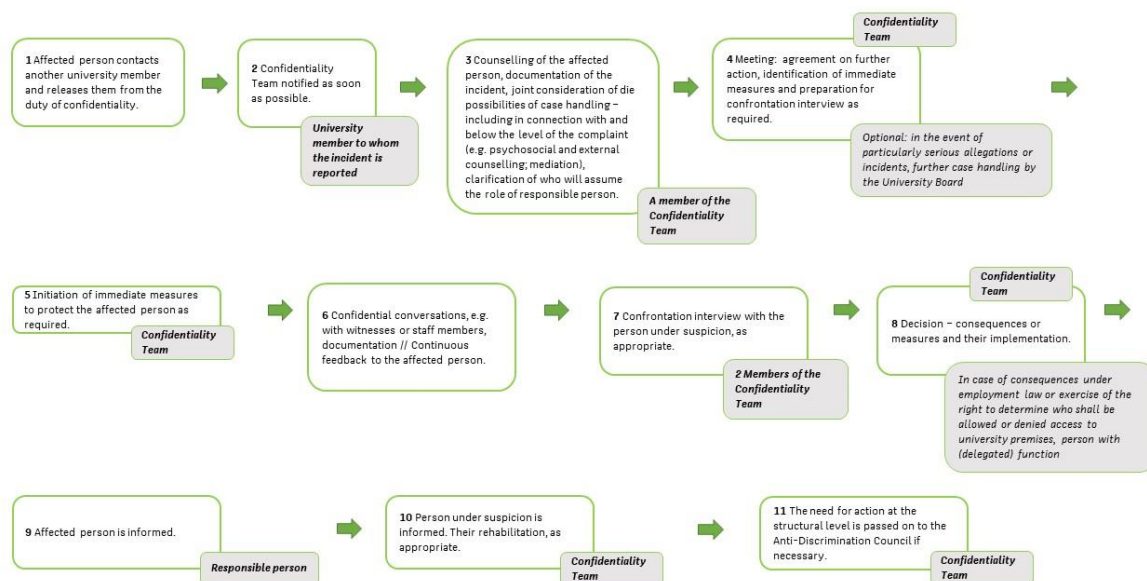
### 2.2.3.2 Handling complaints and reported incidents

Affected persons and witnesses are free to choose which university member to contact if they wish to report an incident. This can be a person of trust, a colleague, a supervisor, a contact person in a faculty or a central institution, a member of the Anti-Discrimination Council, a member of the preliminary and referral counselling team, the Anti-Discrimination Office or a member of the Confidentiality Team. Individuals are recommended to contact one of the individuals institutionally designated and trained by the university [→ Section 2.1].

Reports can be made verbally or in writing. A form is available on the HTW Berlin website for this purpose [<https://www.htw-berlin.de/einrichtungen/vertretungen-beauftragte/antidiskriminierungsbeauftragte>]. Reports can be made in one's own name or anonymously. Anonymous reports are also investigated, but, in this case, affected persons or witnesses are not informed about the progress and outcome of the case.

The main features of the procedure after a report has been made are described below.<sup>5</sup> Because each case is considered and dealt with individually, there is no standard procedure, but rather a

case-specific procedure. Legal requirements for dealing with complaints from employees (German General Equal Treatment Act, AGG), the university's internal guidelines for dealing with complaints from students (Anti-Discrimination Directive of HTW Berlin) and the principles formulated above [Section 1] are binding in this regard.



#### Reports and complaints procedure

An affected person confides in another university member; this can be a person of trust or a person involved in preliminary counselling or referral consultation procedures. So that actions aligned with the principle of justice for affected persons can be taken, affected persons are encouraged to release the person in whom they have confided from the duty of confidentiality. If the affected person releases said individual from the duty of confidentiality, the latter shall contact the **Confidentiality Team as soon as possible** (within one working week). Members of this team follow up every reported incident.

A **member of the Confidentiality Team** asks the affected person to report the incident and documents this. The affected person can supplement, correct etc. the documentation if necessary. The affected person can also authorise the person in whom they have confided to report on the incident and does not need to be present at the interview if they so wish. The preferred procedure of the affected person must also be clarified and documented. Numerous options exist here, e.g. referral to an external, psychosocial counselling centre, professional mediation by a neutral third party or a complaint on the basis of the German General Equal Treatment Act (AGG). In the event of a complaint, the affected person or the person in whom they have confided will be informed of the significance of such a report and the consequences, in particular of the possible limits of anonymised case handling. In addition, the person **responsible** for the affected person is also clarified. This can be a member of the Confidentiality Team or the person of trust in whom the affected person has confided. In the latter case, the person of trust shall become a temporary member of the Confidentiality Team for the individual case. The responsible person is the permanent contact person during case handling

<sup>5</sup> The following explanations also apply in the event that a witness makes a report.

for the affected person. For reasons of self-protection, the affected person undertakes to contact the responsible person exclusively with questions, concerns, need for support, further information on the incident, etc. and not to involve other university members without consultation. Each of the following steps is recorded on the documentation sheet. The final decision to submit a report or a complaint is also noted here.

The **Confidentiality Team** holds its first meeting, obtains an initial picture of the severity of the incident, clarifies whether immediate measures are to be taken, advises on the course of action (e.g. other persons to be involved), prepares the **confrontation interview**<sup>6</sup> with the person under suspicion (as necessary) and decides who will conduct said meeting. If the person under suspicion is a student, they may be invited to a “formal interview”, while if said individual belongs to another member group, they may be invited to an “official interview”.

In the event of behaviour that violates boundaries or is abusive, the reintegration of the person under suspicion through insight and behavioural change is the goal. A low-threshold culture of speaking up and apologising should be established, which gives people under suspicion the opportunity to admit to behaviour that violates boundaries or is abusive (this reduces the dilemma of “wanting to believe” and “not being in a position to know” → Section 1.4), to apologise to the affected person and to refrain from the misconduct in the future.

Two members of the Confidentiality Team, but not the responsible person, conduct the **confrontation interview** if necessary, this within one month (depending on the specific case, this can also be much earlier, especially in case of imminent danger) of receipt of the report; the person under suspicion may take a person of trust with them to the interview. A confrontation interview is not mandatory, especially if the affected person wants to preserve their anonymity. Alternative interventions are possible, e.g. faculty training on the Safety Concept of HTW Berlin for the prevention and handling of sexualised discrimination and violence.

The Confidentiality Team assumes further **case handling** and, if necessary, conducts confidential discussions with other persons. The aim is to assess the **severity** of the incident and decide how to proceed. In the event that consequences under employment law or the exercise of the right to determine who shall be allowed or denied access to university premises are necessary, the President, the Chancellor or a member of the Confidentiality Team to whom the relevant powers have been delegated shall decide on this and arrange for their implementation.

The responsible person **informs** the affected person.

The Confidentiality Team **informs** the **person under suspicion**. In the case of a false accusation, the Confidentiality Team decides on an appropriate manner of **rehabilitating** the person under suspicion.

In order to complete the case handling, the Confidentiality Team **explores** whether a **need for adaptation** of the existing regulations or a **need for action** at the structural level exist and, if necessary, passes on its conclusions to the Anti-Discrimination Council.

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<sup>6</sup> Depending on the severity of the incident, other versions of the confrontation interview include awareness-raising and / or an interview based on the principles of care. The latter may be necessary if any psychological impairment of the person under suspicion is assumed.

### 3 Annex: Action plan of HTW Berlin in the Field of Action Sexualised Discrimination and Violence (SDV) 2023-2025

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Target group</b>	<b>Timing of implementation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<b>Appointment of the Confidentiality Team by the University Board</b>	All university members	After adoption of the SDV Safety Concept by the University Board	University Board
<b>Development of a mission statement, university communication, corporate culture</b> Communicating the principles of good cooperation	All university members	In progress	All academic self-administration committees as well as all representatives
<b>Public relations</b> Integration of an “SOS” button on the HTW website (in the menu bar) to be used for all types of discriminatory incidents – link to a sub-page with details of all representatives contact persons	All university members	WS 2022/23	Central Communication Office / University Board / Students’ Union (ASTA)
<b>Public relations</b> Development and implementation of a campaign on the occasion of the publication of the SDV Safety Concept	all university members and employees of external companies (e.g. Studierendenwerk, security and cleaning company)	from WS 2022/23 25.11.2022, 25.11.2023, 25.11.2024, 25.11.2025 Campaign Day with flags at both locations on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women	Central Communication Office with the Gender Equality & Equal Opportunities Department (ZRVI) / University Board

<sup>7</sup> Modelled on the Liszt School of Music Weimar (Hochschule für Musik Franz Liszt Weimar) (<https://www.hfm-weimar.de/ueber-uns/notsituationen>).

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Target group</b>	<b>Timing of implementation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<p><b>Risk analysis</b></p> <p>Identification of real and virtual spaces with potential for danger, advice from the police or a specialised lawyer; campus walk with Students' Union (AStA) after dark to identify areas of fear</p> <p>Participation of HTW Berlin in a warning app (Fraunhofer) for university-specific threat scenarios</p>	All university members	In progress	Full-time Equal Opportunities Officer for Women / Technical Support (ATD) / security company / University Board
<p><b>Development of a Safety Concept for events</b></p> <p>Special consideration of student parties as well as educational offers for children and young people</p>	Students, minors	2023	Students' Union (AStA) / Gender Equality & Equal Opportunities Department (ZRVI)
<p><b>Empowerment</b></p> <p>WenDo / self-defence courses</p>	All university members	Every semester from WS 2022/23	University sports
<p><b>Further training</b></p> <p>Two-day training session on the SDV Safety Concept; topics: key terms, role clarification, talking to affected persons, reporting and complaints procedures</p>	Staff involved in preliminary and referral counselling (various representatives, committee representatives, staff of internal HTW Berlin counselling centres)	End of WS 2022/23 Beginning of SS 2023 Beginning of WS 2023/24 Beginning of SS 2024 Beginning of WS 2024/25	Human resources development in cooperation with the Gender Equality & Equal Opportunities Department (ZRVI)
<p><b>Further training</b></p> <p>Three-hour training session to introduce the SDV Safety Concept</p>	University staff members	Beginning of SS 2025 Beginning of WS 2025/26	

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Target group</b>	<b>Timing of implementation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<p><b>Further training</b> Supervision (fixed annual group)</p>	<p>Staff involved in preliminary and referral counselling</p>	<p>Quarterly as of mid-WS 2022/23</p>	
<p><b>Further training</b> One-day higher education didactic seminar on the prevention of violence in digital teaching; topics: forms of discrimination and necessary technical ??? and verbal ways of reacting; software security settings; protection of personal data</p>	<p>Lecturers from all faculties</p>	<p>Mid-SS 2023 Mid-SS 2024 Mid-SS 2025</p>	<p>Human resources development in cooperation with the Teaching Support Centre</p>
<p><b>Further training</b> One-day higher education didactic seminar on the prevention of violence when teaching in laboratories and workshops</p>	<p>Lecturers and students from all faculties</p>	<p>Mid-SS 2024 Mid-SS 2025</p>	
<p><b>Networking and evaluation</b> “Safe University Dialogue Forum” – discussion on the effectiveness of the implemented measures and the preparation of the Action Plan 2025–2027</p>	<p>all interested university members</p>	<p>Mid-SS 2025</p>	<p>Anti-Discrimination Council</p>