

# **2024 Public Description of Work for Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education**

## **MIT**

### **MIT Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Survey for Faculty and Employees**

#### **Relevant Rubric Area(s):**

- Evaluation: Measuring the Prevalence of Sexual Harassment
- Evaluation: Using Climate Assessments to Inform Action
- Response: Providing Anonymous and Non-mandatory Reporting Resources and Tools

#### **Description of Work:**

##### **Purpose and goals:**

To respond to the landmark [2018 National Academies Report on the Sexual Harassment of Women](#), MIT [developed and advanced a series of recommendations](#) to combat sexual harassment on campus. MIT has completed all 12 of the recommendations – the final of which was the creation and dissemination of the Institute’s first Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Survey for Faculty and Staff. The survey looks to:

- Aid the community in understanding and recognizing the full range of experiences that constitute sexual harassment, sexual violence, and sexual assault;
- Provide comprehensive metrics on staff and faculty experiences (including postdoctoral scholars);
- Serve as an evaluation of existing policies, procedures, services, and prevention programs; and
- Offer information about support and reporting options.

The following are the survey’s thematic categories:

- Sense of Belonging
- Intent to Continue Working at MIT
- Mental Health
- Experience with Sexual and Gender Harassment while at MIT
- Experience with Stalking while at MIT
- Experience with Dating Violence while at MIT
- Experience with Sexual Exploitation while at MIT
- Experience with Sexual Violence/Assault while at MIT
- Impacts of the Experience
- Bystander Intervention
- Knowledge of Resources

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### Planning and implementation:

Provost Cynthia Barnhart, Vice President for Human Resources Ramona Allen, and Executive Vice President and Treasurer Glen Shor launched the employee survey on September 12, 2023; it closed on October 6 of the same year. Participants were informed that the survey is anonymous and voluntary. Additionally, all comments from participants that included potentially identifying information were de-identified to make those comments anonymous. The assessment length varied between 10 and 25 minutes based on employee experiences and any resulting follow-up questions.

The planning and roll-out process took a year. With the help of climate survey experts Rankin Climate, who have considerable experience in seeking feedback in higher education, we designed a survey to assess the sexual misconduct experiences of a population that hasn't been adequately studied in the MIT context (faculty and staff, including postdoctoral scholars). Questions were also designed to understand the intersection of experiences among diverse populations. Rankin Climate administered the feedback survey via Qualtrics software. MIT's Institutional Research, an organization that provides analytical support to the MIT community, managed the survey production and led the planning process alongside stakeholders from the Provost's Office, the Chancellor's Office, the Treasurer's Office, HR, Violence Prevention & Response, and the Institute Discrimination & Harassment Response Office.

As the sensitive topic of this survey could elicit an emotional reaction, we ensured our communications about the survey listed confidential and other support resources that our community can access. For instance, in several communications asking employees to take the survey, MIT provided multiple types of support services specific to the employee community, including confidential emotional support resources, 24/7 resources for employees and their family members, and where to access counseling support. Support resources were also linked prominently on the survey web page.

MIT students were not part of this survey – they were surveyed in 2024 separately on this topic in coordination with peer institutions and in line with Massachusetts legal requirements. The employee survey instrument was used as a template for building the student survey.

### Next steps:

MIT's Provost tasked the employee survey planning team with creating a working group to be codirected by a representative from HR and a faculty member. The working group's charge is analyzing the results of the survey and creating a report and action plan in response to survey findings by late 2024. *The report will identify specific kinds of behavior that is occurring, evaluate existing policies, procedures, services, and prevention programs, and develop interventions targeted towards combating the identified behaviors.*

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