

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

## **The 1752 Group**

### **Misconduct Disclosure Scheme for Higher Education Institutions**

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

1. Prevention: Embedding the Values of Diversity, Inclusion, and Respect into Recruitment, Hiring, Admissions, Retention, Promotion, and Advancement
2. Response: Improved Communication and Increased Transparency
3. Response: Improved Policies

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

[The 1752 Group](#), a campaigning and research organization working to address sexual misconduct in higher education, produced [a briefing note in January 2024 on the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme](#) with information for Higher Education Institutions [on why they should join the scheme](#).

The Misconduct Disclosure Scheme was launched in January 2019 to address the specific problem of known sexual abusers moving between organizations undetected. The Scheme complements other vetting processes, such as police checks, as it picks up perpetrators who have had disciplinary processes completed against them, or who are subject to ongoing investigation, but who may not have committed crimes or been investigated by the police.

The Scheme is currently implemented by over 240 organizations worldwide. Organizations that have signed up to the Scheme include two United Nations agencies, several of the most renowned organizations operating in the humanitarian and development sectors (Oxfam, CARE, Save the Children, Islamic Relief, the British Red Cross, to name a few), as well as a growing number of private sector organizations such as Tetra Tech and M&C Saatchi. Between 2019-2022, 60,900 checks were carried out via the scheme, with 230 hiring processes affected by the scheme.

Higher education institutions (HEIs) internationally have long faced problems with staff moving institution during investigations into gender-based violence or harassment. While there exist some [locally-specific schemes or legislation](#) to tackle this issue in the US, due to the international nature of academic employment, an international approach is needed. The Misconduct Disclosure Scheme provides such an international solution to address the problem of 'pass-the-harasser'.

By joining the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme, HEIs will:

- 1) demonstrate a public commitment to address the specific issue of repeat perpetrators of gender-based violence and harassment moving between organizations;

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2) reduce the risk of gender-based violence and harassment in the institution, by supporting safer hiring decisions by reducing employing abusers; and

3) take steps to prevent sexual harassment of employees and students

The Scheme consists of two main commitments:

- a commitment to systematically check with previous employers about any sexual harassment issues relating to potential new hires
- a commitment to respond systematically to such checks from others

The Scheme holds no information on specific cases of abuse. Rather, it facilitates the systematic bilateral sharing of misconduct data between recruiting organizations and previous employers. As such, it simply gives employers a common framework to share the relevant information they need to make better hiring decisions, in this way reducing organizational risk.

The Scheme can be embedded at the stage of recruitment that organizations choose. The 1752 Group recommend that checks are carried out at the shortlisting stage, ahead of interviews. This means that if any findings come up, employers can add an interview question to explore any issues identified.

The Scheme recommendation is that the previous five years of employment is checked. However, in HE, a longer period of time checks is likely to be needed as staff tenure in organisations can be lengthy. As such, The 1752 Group recommend checks are carried out for the past ten years of employment. However, ultimately this decision is at the discretion of employers.

Unfortunately, the Scheme does not pick up cases where there have not been any formal reports. As such, joining the Scheme needs to be one action within a wider comprehensive institution-wide approach for preventing and responding to gender-based violence and harassment.

**Website for further information (if applicable):** <https://misconduct-disclosure-scheme.org/>

or for a briefing note specifically aimed at higher education institutions see:

<https://1752group.com/briefing-notes/> (Briefing Note #4)

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