

# Sex and relationships: Understanding your rights in Australia

## Information for international students about abuse, violence and sexual assault



Most international students have a positive experience studying in Australia. However, it's important to remember that violence against women, non-binary or gender diverse individuals can happen here, just like in any other country. International students at universities, TAFEs or private colleges may be at risk of experiencing intimate partner violence or sexual assault. **If these things happen to you, this information can help.**

## You have the right to be **safe** in Australia

### **i** Sexual assault

Sexual assault is any sexual act that happens without your consent. It includes things like:

- Being pressured, tricked or forced to do sexual things.
- Someone having sex with you when you had been drinking, using drugs or medication.
- Sending nude photos or filming you having sex when you didn't agree to it.
- Removing a condom during sex when you didn't agree to it.

**Sexual assault is illegal  
in Australia.**

### **i** Intimate partner violence

Intimate partner violence is abusive behaviour in a relationship. It can include:

- Physical violence (hitting, kicking, punching)
- Emotional abuse (threats, verbal abuse)
- Sexual violence (forcing you to have sex)
- Controlling behaviour (extreme jealousy, saying who you can or can't spend time with)
- Online abuse (cyber stalking)

**Threatening, hurting or  
controlling a partner is against  
the law in Australia.**

# You can get support in Australia

If you experience sexual assault or intimate partner violence, there are services that can help you.

## National counselling service

**1800-RESPECT** provides free and confidential counselling, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you experience sexual assault or intimate partner violence anywhere in Australia, you can contact them by phone **1800 737 732**, SMS **0458 737 732** or online chat or video call **1800respect.org.au**. Their website provides information in 29 languages, and you can get an interpreter if you need one.

## Support services in your state or territory

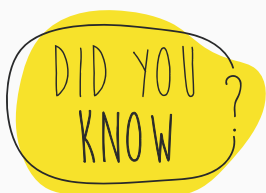
Community organisations can provide confidential and free support and advice for international students. **You do not need to use your health insurance to access them.** To find services available in your state or territory see <https://www.1800respect.org.au/services>

## Services for migrant women

- **inTouch** (Vic), phone 1800 755 988
- **Immigrant Women's Support Service** (QLD), phone 07 3846 3490
- **Multicultural Centre for Women's and Family Safety** (NSW), phone 02 8111 7077
- **Ishar Multicultural Women's Health Services** (WA), phone 08 9345 5335
- **Women's Safety Services Migrant women's support program** (SA) 08 8152 9260

## Your university, TAFE, or college

Australian universities have free and confidential support services for all students affected by sexual assault or intimate partner violence. These services are sometimes called "Safer Communities" or "Safer Campuses". All universities, TAFEs, and colleges should also offer free counselling or mental health support.



Getting help for sexual assault or intimate partner violence will **not** affect your visa or your course enrolment.

# Frequently asked questions

## What will happen if I report abuse, violence or sexual assault to the police?

The police can take legal action to protect you. They can help you apply for a court order to stop the person who hurt you from coming near you again. If you want them to, the police can investigate and may charge the person with a criminal offence.

## What if I don't want to report to police? Who else can I report to?

If you don't want to report to the police, that's OK. If you want to, you can report to your **university, TAFE or college**. They should have a process for following up complaints and taking action. You can also report to the **National Student Ombudsman** ([www.nso.gov.au](http://www.nso.gov.au)). The Ombudsman is independent and can investigate complaints about sexual assault or intimate partner violence on your behalf.

## If I report abuse, violence or sexual assault, will it affect my student visa?

**No**, your visa and your course enrolment will not be affected if you report abuse, violence or sexual assault to the police, Ombudsman, or your education provider.

## If I tell a service or the police about what happened, will they tell my family?

**No**. If you have experienced abuse, violence or sexual assault, **it's your decision** who to tell. The police or support services in Australia won't inform your parents or other family member unless you want them to.

