



Counselling & Wellbeing

Guidance for Higher Education Students Subjected to Sexual Violence



arul.ink/sva

This guidance is intended to give you clear information about the options open to you at ARU if you have been subjected to sexual violence.

It is important to know that what you have experienced was not your fault. No one deserves to be treated this way, no matter the circumstances. You deserve support, and you deserve to have your voice heard. ARU will handle disclosures equally.

If you would prefer to talk through things with a person, please email sva@aru.ac.uk where you can access confidential, specialist, sexual violence advice and support.

The purpose of this guidance is to help you understand the support available if you have experienced sexual violence.

The guidance will cover these areas:

Seeking support	8
Anonymous reporting	9
Reporting to the University: Informal Reporting	10
Reporting to the University: Formal Reporting	12
Formally reporting a staff perpetrator	13
Formally reporting a student perpetrator	14
Reporting to the Police	15
Support and reporting links	16

What do we mean by Sexual Violence?

In this booklet we have used the term sexual violence to include what happened outside the University space. You will hear different words for sexual violence and at the University we refer to this as sexual misconduct as we have a code of conduct. We define sexual misconduct as any unwanted or attempted unwanted conduct of a sexual nature. This includes, but is not limited to:

- sexual harassment
- sexual assault
- rape.

You can find more information in the University's Sexual Misconduct Policy (within **ARU's Rules, Regulations and Procedures**) which outlines the University's commitment to a supportive, trauma-informed, victim focussed approach where students can continue to study, and are treated with dignity, courtesy, and respect.

Our principles

1. If you are a victim/survivor of sexual violence, it is important to know that what you have experienced was not your fault.
2. No one deserves to be treated this way, no matter the circumstances. You deserve support, and you deserve to have your voice heard.
3. When supporting you we will listen and believe.
4. We will offer practical support and advocacy.
5. Support will be confidential* and non-judgemental.
6. We will not ask you to repeat your disclosure to multiple members of staff.
7. Your education and your right to be at ARU should never be affected as a result of being subjected to sexual violence.
8. What happens next is your choice; ARU is victim/survivor led and understands that every victim/survivor has different needs and priorities. There is no pressure to access support or make a report.

**subject to limitations outlined in our confidentiality policy*

Considering your options

If you have been subjected to sexual violence (whether historic or recent) you have options and you will be offered support.

Seeking support can help you to explore the options available to you for your next steps, and can help you to make the choices that are right for you. You can find more information about the support available to you in the next section.

Exploring the options available to you within ARU if you have experienced sexual violence

Support without reporting (page 8)	Anonymous report (page 9)	Informal report (page 10)	Formal report (page 12)	Report to the police (page 15)
Support is available to everyone	Available to everyone	For cases where the perpetrator is a current student	For cases where the perpetrator is a member of the ARU community (staff or student)	Available to everyone
<p>There are lots of different internal and external support options available to you including support from the university's Sexual Violence Advocate (SVA).</p> <p>You don't have to report to the university to access the support we provide and support may help you decide your next steps.</p> <p>SVAs offer practical support and advocacy.</p>	<p>If you're not ready to share your name, you can still let us know something has happened by making an anonymous report through the Report and Support platform.</p> <p>You can still receive support from the SVAs.</p>	<p>You can report informally to the university and this won't start a formal investigation.</p> <p>Instead, we will meet with you and discuss options to keep you safe on campus, including the option of a no contact agreement with the other student.</p> <p>This doesn't lead to a disciplinary finding.</p> <p>This is not formally recorded on either student's record.</p>	<p>You can report the matter formally to the university.</p> <p>This will start a formal investigation which will have an outcome at the end and could lead to disciplinary action.</p>	<p>You can still raise an informal or formal report to the university at the same time as making a police report.</p> <p>If you have also made a 'formal report' we would usually need to put our investigation on hold but can take steps to keep you safe.</p>

Seeking support

ARU understands that every incident of sexual violence is different, and each victim/survivor will have different needs. All victims/survivors are entitled to seek support. There will be no pressure put on you to disclose details of the sexual violence you have been subjected to or make a report to ARU or the police; those decisions are yours.

You can access support from the ARU Sexual Violence Advocate (SVA). **See (page 16) for supporting and report links.** The SVA service is based within the Counselling and Wellbeing Service.

You can choose to meet the SVA at ARU campuses, or via teams or telephone to ensure confidentiality.

If you are unsure about what steps to take, or just want to explore your options, you can book an Informed Choices session with the SVA. The SVA will not pressure you to make any decisions but can provide information so that you can make the decision that is right for you.

The SVA can help you to explore options which include, but are not limited to:

- Referrals to emotional support. Being a victim/survivor of sexual violence can lead to many feelings, like isolation, shame, or self-blame. Your SVA can help you to access support through the ARU Counselling and Wellbeing service to work with an ARU Counsellor, or Mental Health Advisor.
- Practical advocacy.

- Anonymous reporting
- Informal reporting to ensure you can continue your studies safely, without a formal investigation.
- Formal reporting via a formal complaint if the perpetrator is a student or member of staff and you would like ARU to investigate what happened.
- Reporting to the police.

Find out more about SVA support or email: **sva@aru.ac.uk**.

Anonymous reporting

Want to Report Something Anonymously?

It's not usually possible to make a formal report while remaining anonymous, as the nature of the situation may make it clear who has come forward. If you're unsure, we encourage you to speak with us before submitting a report.

If you're not ready to share your name, you can still let us know something has happened by making an anonymous report through the Report and Support platform.

You won't be asked for any personal details. While anonymous reports don't usually lead to formal action, they help us understand what's happening and improve support and prevention across the university.

You can also choose to message an adviser anonymously. If you opt in, you'll receive a unique access code—please save it, as it won't be sent or stored. Without it, you won't be able to return to your message.

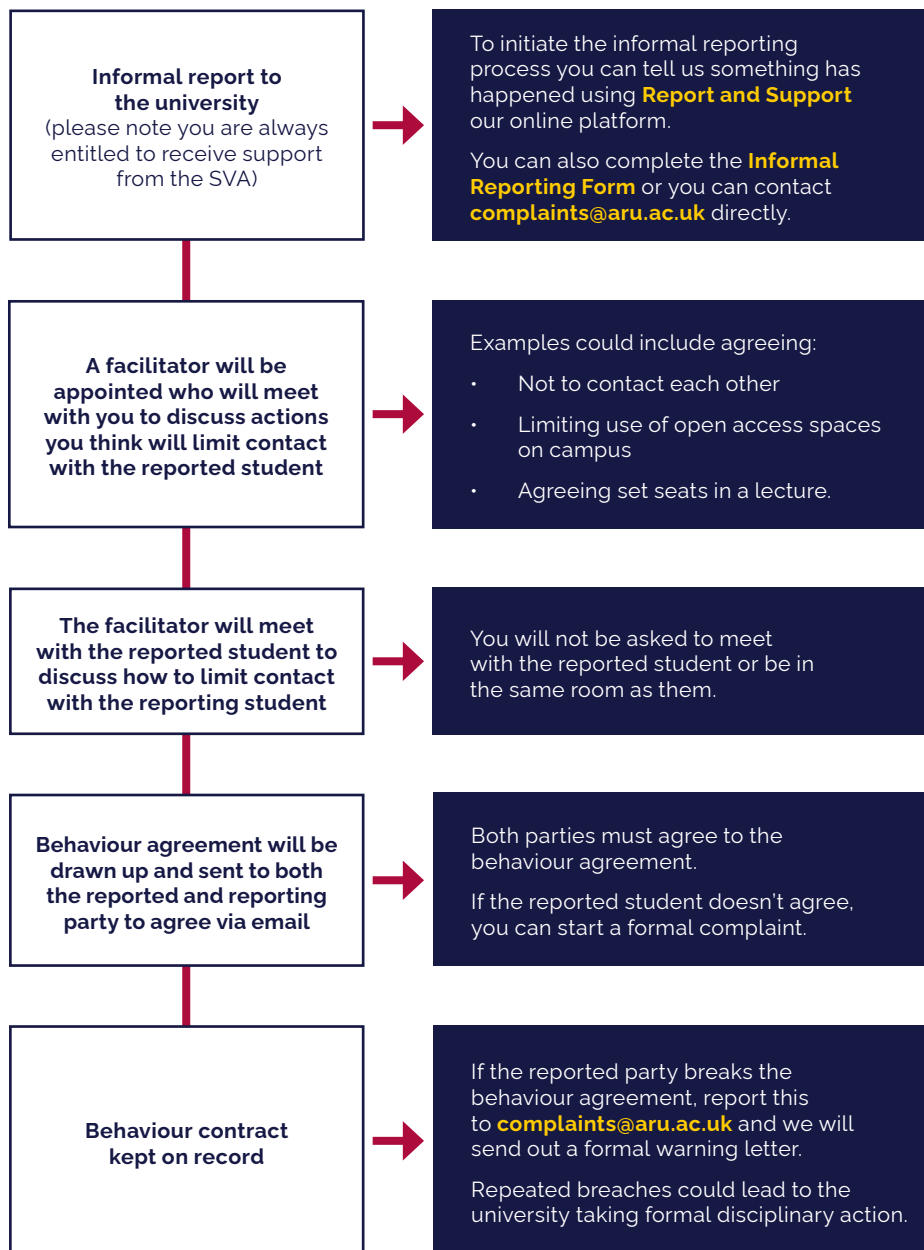
Reporting to the University: Informal Reporting

If you don't want to make a formal report, or for the university to investigate, you can opt to make an informal report. An informal report means the University will not investigate and will not reach an outcome. It also means that you do not have to give a detailed disclosure for ARU to take practical steps to help you be safer. You can tell us the details that you feel comfortable sharing.

Informal Reporting involves the university supporting you to continue with your studies safely by minimising or preventing coming into contact with the reported student through a Student Behaviour Agreement.

This might involve asking the reported student to agree to making no contact with you, or, where possible, to ensure you are not in the same classes or accommodation together.

As this is an informal option it will not go on the reported student's record, but they will be expected to adhere to the Student Behaviour Agreement, and if they do not it could lead to disciplinary action by the University.



Reporting to the University: Formal Reporting

At ARU, where the reported party is a student or a staff member, you have the choice to make a formal report to the University. A formal report means the University will investigate under its disciplinary procedures and you will receive an outcome.

We have different procedures depending on whether the reported party is a student or a staff member. In all our procedures, you will be listened to by the investigator.

Formally reporting a staff perpetrator



As we are following our HR procedures, your complaint may take longer than usual for us to look into, but we will provide case updates.

Formally reporting a student perpetrator



Reporting to the Police

You may choose to make a report to the police. The SVA service can provide initial information around reporting options, including reporting to the police but if you have made, or go on to make a report to the police, you can be referred into the local Independent Sexual Violence Advocacy (ISVA) service for support with the Criminal Justice Process and throughout the investigation.

If you are considering reporting to the police and the University, you may wish to report to the police before the University to avoid the risk of an internal investigation interfering with evidence or undermining or prejudicing a later criminal investigation.

Where there is a criminal investigation ongoing, you can still make a formal report to the University. We will usually suspend our investigation whilst the criminal proceedings are ongoing to ensure we do not impede the criminal investigation.

The University will put in place any necessary precautionary action whilst the police investigation is completed.

Support and reporting links

Harassment support for students at ARU



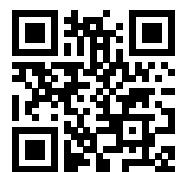
arulink/student-harassment-support



Sexual Violence Support



arulink/sva



Make a report



reportandsupport.aru.ac.uk



Counselling & Wellbeing

aru.ac.uk/wellbeing | 01245 686700 | wellbeing@aru.ac.uk