University of Amsterdam



UvA confidential advisers' annual report 2024

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University of Amsterdam

By: Arjen Berkvens, UvA Coordinating Confidential Adviser

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1. Introduction

This annual report sets out the findings and recommendations of the confidential advisers at the UvA. The report was drawn up by the coordinating confidential adviser and is based on 24 individual reports from confidential advisers within the University of Amsterdam's faculties and services.

The task of a confidential adviser is essentially to assist individual staff members and students, offer a sympathetic ear and help them find a solution to the situation they have found themselves in. Confidential advisers also provide information on their role, as well as drawing management's attention to ongoing forms of abuse within the organisation. Although cases are often highly personal in nature, events and trends in society can have a major impact on the well-being of everyone in the UvA community. This was certainly the case in the past year. A series of protests took place in May, which had a large impact. Due to the political reality of imminent spending cuts, employees feel that their socioeconomic security is under treat. Policies and the way foreign students are talked about by politicians in The Hague have a stigmatising effect and make students feel that they do not entirely belong. Fierce debate about migration and gender identity make people from migrant backgrounds or those who identify other than male or female feel they are not allowed to fully take part. In short, the personal can become political, affecting everyone involved. This places the UvA at the centre of the public debate.

For many people within the UvA, 2024 was an intense year. The fact that we saw a drop in the number of reports of transgressive behaviour from students and staff therefore came as a surprise. This marked a break in the upward trend of recent years (with a particularly large increase in 2023). Whereas in the past we stated that we were happy with the upward trend because it pointed to an increased willingness to seek out the confidential advisers, we can now be moderately confident that we may have peaked in 2023. More detailed information on the figures can be found in the rest of this annual report. A new feature this year is that the report states the relationship between the reporting party and the person a report was made about. We saw that the majority were reports made by employees about their supervisor, and in the case of PhD candidates, more than two-thirds of reports concerned their own supervisor.

On the positive side, the workload of the confidential advisers has fallen to an acceptable level over the past year. Only two of the confidential advisers reported that their workload was too heavy, but there was also a clear explanation for this. In any event, the confidential advisers deserve to be congratulated for their efforts and thanks are hereby extended to everyone who contributed to a more socially safe UvA over the past year. Special mention must also go to the excellent cooperation with the ombudsperson and her team, the confidential adviser on individual legal status, the confidential advisers for academic integrity, the staff of the Communication Office, student counsellors and study advisers and the many dedicated HR staff at both central and decentralised levels.

This annual report is about cases of inappropriate behaviour reported to the confidential advisers. It is important to distinguish between reports made to the confidential advisers and reports submitted to other individuals, such as a supervisor, study adviser or lecturer. The difference is that reports to a confidential adviser do not necessarily require follow-up action. It is the person reporting who decides whether any follow-up steps are to be taken. A registered report involves at least a reception interview with the reporter. The annual report describes the nature and number of reports submitted to the confidential advisers, by category of inappropriate behaviour.

The functions of this annual report are to:

Inform:	the registered number and nature of cases of inappropriate behaviour;
Identify:	the number of cases can be an indication that (parts or the implementation of) the prevailing policy on inappropriate behaviour needs to be adjusted;
Accountability:	for the confidential advisers, it is an account of the use of time and resources.

The annual report presents an overview of the number of reports to the confidential advisers, without seeking to provide a record of all inappropriate behaviour at the UvA. The reports should primarily be seen as an indication of whether people know how to access a confidential adviser. The annual report only provides a limited analysis of the background to the cases of inappropriate behaviour reported to the confidential advisers. The information required for a more extensive analysis is confidential and comes within the scope of the confidential adviser's obligation of secrecy.

2. Key findings

- There was a fall in the number of reports from both students and staff members (including PhD candidates). The number of reports fell by 33% for students and 19% for staff members.
- In the case of staff members, 75% of reporting parties were female and 25% male. In the case of students, 74% of reporting parties were female, 25% were male and 1% identified as other.
- For the 136 reports made by staff members, it is worth noting that 58% made a report about their own supervisor. Of the 18 PhD candidates who made a report, 72% made a report on their own supervisor.
- The unit with the most reports was the University Library (5.59% of staff members), which also includes the Allard Pierson (9.86% of staff members).
- The faculty with the most reports from staff members was the Academic Centre for Dentistry in Amsterdam (ACTA) with 2.71% of staff members, followed by the Amsterdam Law School (FdR) with 2.16% of staff members.
- The faculty with the fewest reports was the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences (FMG) with 0.98% of staff members. Student reports were highest at ACTA with 1.67% and lowest at FMG with 0.17% of students.

3. Confidential advisers for inappropriate behaviour

Confidential advisers for inappropriate behaviour serve both students and staff. Staff members who work for the UvA but are not on its payroll can also consult a UvA confidential adviser. The confidential advisers offer a sympathetic ear and help find a way to end or de-escalate the inappropriate behaviour. They guarantee confidentiality and will never take action without the consent of the person reporting the issue. The confidential advisers document cases of inappropriate behaviour in such a way that they cannot be traced back to the person who reports them. If necessary, confidential advisers refer people on to professional sources of support within the UvA or externally. They can also help students and staff submit a complaint to the Complaints Committee.

Positioning/appointment/facilitation

Every faculty and the shared service units of the UvA have at least one confidential adviser for inappropriate behaviour, appointed by the dean or the Secretary General of the University respectively. Confidential advisers are appointed for a period of three years and can be re-appointed without limitation. Confidential advisers are formally facilitated by the Secretary General/dean so they can fulfil the role of confidential adviser effectively within their existing position.

Freedom of choice

The confidential advisers do not just provide support to students and staff from their own units: any student or staff member, wherever they study or work, can consult one of the UvA's confidential advisers. Consequently, students and staff have a choice as to whom they contact and can choose to consult someone who is either close to their own unit or indeed slightly more distant from their own unit, for example.

Number/recruitment/diversity

In 2024 the UvA had 24 staff members who fulfilled the role of confidential adviser for inappropriate behaviour. Some of them act as confidential advisers for students only, some for staff only and others for both students and staff. Vacancies for the role of confidential adviser are filled through a process of open recruitment on the UvA's job vacancy page and through newsletters or an email to staff. The coordinating confidential adviser is involved in the selection process.

Table 1 Changes in and composition of the team of UvA confidential advisers in 2021/2024

Confidential advisers	Total	Academic staff	Support and management staff	Female	Male	Them
In 2021	14	3	11	*	*	*
In 2022	20	5	15	15	4	1
In 2023	26	8	18	21	4	1
In 2024	24	8	16	18	5	1
Started in 2024	4	3	1	2	2	0
Stopped in 2024	4	2	2	3	1	0

* Not registered before 2022

UvA confidential advisers

Arjen Berkvens, coordinating confidential adviser

Gerrie Veenstra:	ACTA
Marjan van Schijndel:	ACTA
Myrthe van Amstel:	Amsterdam Law School
Erik van Arkel:	Amsterdam Law School
Karin Venetis:	Faculty of Economics and Business
Sanne Lagziel - de Munck:	Faculty of Economics and Business
Danny Otto:	Faculty of Economics and Business (stopped)
Lindsy Wongsopawiro:	Faculty of Economics and Business (started)
Eloe Kingma:	Faculty of Humanities
Marita Mathijsen:	Faculty of Humanities (stopped)
Asli Özgen-Havekotte:	Faculty of Humanities
Cock Dieleman:	Faculty of Humanities (started)
Mirjam Koelewijn:	Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences
Barbera Rosenhart-Meurs:	Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences (stopped)
Els Veldhuizen:	Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences
Joyce Helsloot:	Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences
Loes van Rijn-van Gelderen:	Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences (started)
Diana Vos:	Faculty of Science
Kristien van Lunen:	Faculty of Science(stopped)
Joost Krijnen:	Faculty of Science (started)
Belle Jansen:	Faculty of Science
Hélène Boeren:	Executive staff
Rixt Polder:	Executive staff
Marjan Alberda:	Facility Services/ICTS
Enneke Tuinhof:	Administration Centre
Henriette Reerink:	University Library
Kasper Abcouwer:	University Library

Confidential advisers are appointed with due regard for the composition of the team: the aim is to put together a diverse group of confidential advisers across the whole of the UvA (e.g. in terms of role, gender and background). The independent position of the confidential adviser is crucial to ensure effective performance of the tasks involved. Consequently, the role of confidential adviser must not conflict with any other position or task of the staff member concerned. Moreover, confidential advisers should keep their distance from the department where they work, as it is important to prevent close relationships with the person reporting or the alleged perpetrator. Of the 24 confidential advisers active in 2024, eight held an academic position and 16 a support position. It is also notable that out of 24, only five confidential advisers are male. Furthermore, we have shared, through UvA pride, which two confidential advisers have a connection with the LGBTQI+ community. Four confidential advisers of colour are active within the team.

Number of cases and workload

Confidential advisers are asked each year how many reports they have had and the nature of the reports. In addition, they are asked to indicate how they experienced the workload and whether they observed any notable trends.

Table 2 Perceived workload by the confidential advisers

(Too) heavy	2
Normal	19
(Too) light	3

Significant progress was made compared to previous years in terms of the confidential advisers' workload. A heavy workload can be due to too many reports, as well as labour-intensive reports. Thanks to an increase in the number of confidential advisers, only two reported having a workload that was too heavy in 2024. However, there are clear explanations for this, such as the absence of confidential advisers within a faculty (temporary or otherwise).

4. Legislative framework, code of conduct and regulations

The Dutch Working Conditions Act (*Arbeidsomstandighedenwet*) and the UvA Code of Conduct are decisive in determining whether any particular behaviour qualifies as inappropriate. Inappropriate behaviour refers to any situation where at least one person involved may reasonably feel that the behaviour is inappropriate. Under the Working Conditions Act, every employer has the obligation to implement policies that minimise the psychosocial workload of its staff members. This concerns the following categories:

Physical or verbal aggression: psychological or physical harassment, threats or assault possibly involving mental pressure, occasionally in combination with abuse of a formal or informal position (both verbal and non-verbal aggression and intimidation).

Sexual harassment: sexually transgressive behaviour is behaviour in which one person transgresses another person's boundaries. Examples: unwanted touching, online messages of a sexual nature, sexual harassment and sexual abuse. Such behaviour may inflict serious physical, psychological and emotional damage on the other person, their environment or the perpetrator himself or herself. Sexual harassment is often associated with abuse of power.

Discrimination: distinguishing between people on grounds of race (skin colour, origin), age, sexual orientation, religion and worldview, gender, nationality, disability or chronic illness, political beliefs, marital status, type of employment contract and working hours where there is no objective justification for doing so.

Bullyin: a type of systematic psychological, verbal or physical aggression with the intention of hurting a person over and over again. Examples: making jokes at another person's expense, excluding a person, insulting a person or damaging their property. Bullying is seen both offline and online.

Confidential adviser regulations

The tasks, working method, rights, obligations, workload and scope of duty of a confidential adviser are described in the: Regulations concerning the UvA's Confidential Advisers for Inappropriate Behaviour 2021. Those regulations also contain exact definitions of the terms used. While most of the UvA's confidential advisers have also been trained to deal with integrity violation issues, this category does not fall within their current scope. In addition, the UvA's confidential advisers for inappropriate behaviour frequently use the UvA Code of Conduct and social safety guidelines.

Work on updating the confidential adviser regulations started in 2024. There are two reasons for this. 2025 will see the publication of the new whistleblower scheme, in which the confidential advisers play a role. Counselling for individuals to whom a report relates (accused persons) will also be included in the regulations. Separate 'accused person counsellors' will be appointed for this purpose. The regulations currently in force do not cover integrity and counselling for accused persons. The new regulations will be ready during the new year.

5. Cases of inappropriate behaviour reported by students and staff

This year, students and staff (including PhD candidates) discussed a total of 249 reports of inappropriate behaviour with a confidential adviser. This represents a 25% decrease relative to 2023.

Table 3 Reports of inappropriate behaviour submitted to confidential advisers, 2018-2024

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Students	27	52	44	69	98	142	95
Employees (incl. PhD candidates)	49	84	69	83	104	191	154
Total	**76**	**136**	**113**	**152**	**202**	**333**	**249**

In themselves these reports do not provide sufficient ground for hard and fast conclusions about the level of social safety at the UvA. Students and staff are not obliged to consult a confidential adviser if they experience inappropriate behaviour.

The number of cases is documented on the basis of the work unit of the person reporting, even if they choose to consult a confidential adviser outside of their own unit. The cases are subdivided according to the nature of the inappropriate behaviour concerned.

Number and nature of student report

In 2024, 95 students (from a total of over 45,000) contacted one of the confidential advisers to discuss cases of inappropriate behaviour. The number of reports of inappropriate behaviour by students fell by more than 33% compared with 2023 (when 142 reports were submitted). This is a striking decrease. Among faculties, ACTA stands out with a high percentage (1.67) of reports relative to the number of students. The number and nature of reports broken down by organisational unit is shown below for those students who went to a confidential adviser. Further insight has been provided into how the number of reports has developed over the past year.

Table 4 Number and nature of student reports

Faculty	Sexual harassment Verbal	Sexual harassment Physical	Violence and harassment Verbal	Violence and harassment Physical	Discrimination	Bullying	Total 2024	Total 2023	Other	Percentage/ of students
ACTA			13	1		1	**15**	**19**	3	1.67%
FdR	1	1	4		7	1	**14**	**18**	1	0.28%
EB		2	3	2	2	2	**11**	**13**	3	0.14%
FGw	1	2	5	1	3	4	**16**	**44**		0.18%
FMG	2	8	4		4	1	**19**	**27**	8	0.17%
FNWI	1	1	2	3	5	6	**18**	**21**	1	0.25%
AUC										
Other	1	1					**2**		1	
Total	**6**	**15**	**31**	**7**	**21**	**15**	**95**	**142**	**18**	**0.23%**

* The 'other' category concerns reports from the Faculty of Medicine.

Table 5 progression 2020-2024

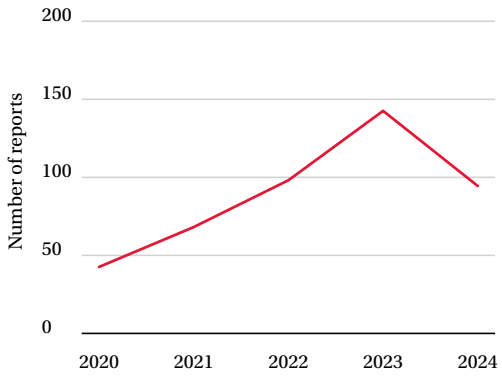


Table 6a reports by category

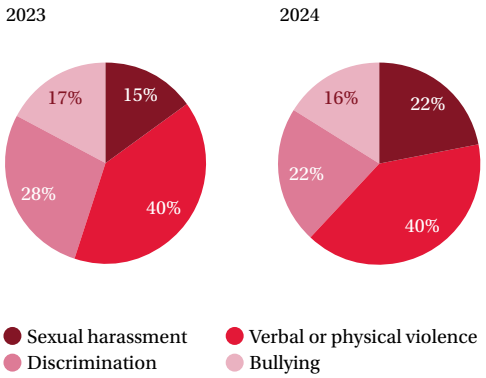


Table 6b grounds of discrimination

Grounds of discrimination	Number
1. Origin	13
2. Gender (male, female, intersex, transgender)	1
3. Sexual orientation	1
4. Age	
5. Disability or chronic condition	2
6. Political affiliation	4
7. Employment status (full-time or part-time)	
8. Employment contract (permanent or temporary)	
9. Marital status	
10. Nationality	
11. Religion	
12. Worldview	

Other reports

The 'Other' category includes reports about issues other than inappropriate behaviour. In the case of the 17 reports in this category, the person reporting was generally referred on to another body within the UvA (e.g. study adviser, student counsellor or the Examinations Board) and/or the behaviour did not belong to any of the above-mentioned categories.

Referral

In the case of 22 reports of inappropriate behaviour, the person reporting was referred on by a confidential adviser to a professional source of support such as a doctor or a (student) psychologist. In one report, a formal complaint was made to the Complaints Committee.

Relationship between person reporting and perpetrator

When documenting the number of reports by students, the relationship between the person reporting and the 'perpetrator' of the inappropriate behaviour was also registered. Of a total of 95 reports, 42 concerned an issue between students, 43 an issue between a student and a lecturer and 10 an issue between a student and another staff member.

What was the outcome of the report?

Table 7 result student reports



Number and nature of staff member reports

In 2024, 154 staff members and PhD candidates (from a total of almost 9000) contacted one of the confidential advisers to discuss cases of inappropriate behaviour. The number of reports of inappropriate behaviour by staff members fell by 19% compared with 2023 (when 104 reports were submitted). Of the 154 reports, 18 were from PhD candidates. Specific information on PhD candidates can be found below. Of the faculties, ACTA stands out with a high percentage of reports compared to the number of staff members. Among the units, the University Library (UB) and the Allard Pierson, which falls under the UB, stand out with high percentages of reports relative to the number of employees. The figures are striking and have also been discussed with the ombudsperson and the confidential adviser on individual legal status. In 2023, the Other Services and Executive Staff had a particularly high number of reports. This number decreased significantly in 2024.

Table 8 Number and nature of staff member reports

Faculty	Sexual harassment		Violence and harassment		Discrimination	Bullying	Total 2024	Total 2023	Other	Percentage/ staff
	Verbal	Physical	Verbal	Physical						
ACTA			17		4	2	**23**	**34**		2.71%
FdR	1		4		1	3	**9**	**12**	2	2.16%
EB			4			4	**8**	**9**	1	1.79%
FGw			5	1	4	3	**13**	**33**		1.06%
FMG	4		19		4	2	**29**	**21**	8	0.98%
FNWI	2		27		3	3	**35**	**37**	19	1.46%
AC			1		1	2	**4**		2	2.74%
FS						2	**2**	**5**		1.26%
ICTS			1		1	1	**3**	**1**		1.41%
UB			4		1	3	**8**	**5**		5.59%
Allard Pierson						7	**7**	**0**	1	9.86%
UvA Holding			2				**2**	**0**		
Other Services and Executive Staff			5		2	4	**11**	**34**	3	2.00%
Total	**7**		**89**	**1**	**21**	**36**	**154**	**191**	**36**	**1.83%**

Table 9 progression 2020-2024

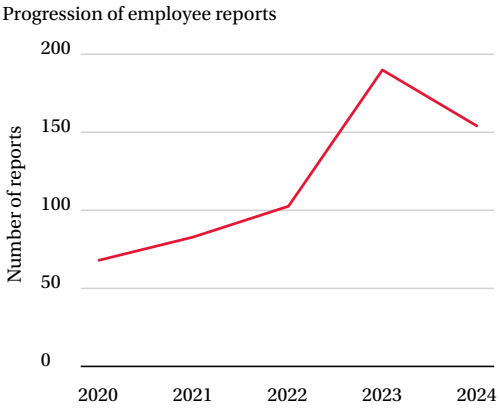
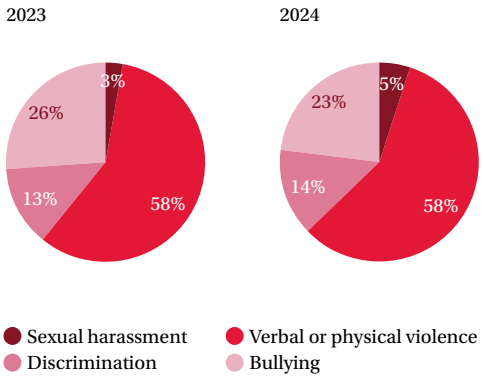


Table 10 reports by category



For the first time in 2024, we kept a record of the forms of discrimination that occurred. Discrimination based on origin is the most common. Confidential advisers note that managers are not always well informed on this issue and are not sufficiently equipped to deal with the complex dynamics of discrimination and power relationships.

Table 10b grounds of discrimination

Grounds of discrimination	Number
1. Origin	9
2. Gender (male, female, intersex, transgender)	2
3. Sexual orientation	
4. Age	3
5. Disability or chronic condition	
6. Political affiliation	
7. Employment status (full-time or part-time)	2
8. Employment contract (permanent or temporary)	1
9. Marital status	
10. Nationality	1
11. Religion	
12. Worldview	

Other reports

The 'Other' category includes reports about issues other than inappropriate behaviour. In 36 reports in this category, the reporter was referred to another body within the UvA, such as a doctor, psychologist or the staff welfare service and/or the behaviour concerned something other than the categories listed above.

Referral

In the case of 23 reports of inappropriate behaviour, the person reporting was referred on by a confidential adviser to an Ombudsperson or a professional source of support such as a doctor, psychologist or staff welfare service. In three reports, a formal complaint was made to the Complaints Committee. Within ACTA, it is sometimes unclear whether an employee has a VU or a UVA contract. This can lead to delays and ambiguity when handling complaints.

Relationship between person reporting and 'perpetrator'

When documenting the number of reports by staff members, the relationship between the reporter and the 'perpetrator' of the inappropriate behaviour was also taken into account. Of the 136 reports (excluding PhD candidates), 79 involved a situation between a staff member and a supervisor, 52 involved a situation between staff members and five involved a situation between a staff member and a student.

What was the outcome of the report?

Table 11 result of staff member reports



Table 12 Number and nature of PhD candidate reports

Faculty	Sexual harassment		Aggression, harassment, stalking (violence)		Discrimination	Bullying	Reporting party	Reporting party	Reporting party	Other reports
	Verbal	Physical	Verbal	Physical			Female	Male	Other	
ACTA			1				1			
FdR										
FEB			1				1			
FGw					1			1		
FMG	1		1				1	1		
FNWI	2		8		2	1	10	3		4
AUC										
Total	**3**		**11**		**3**	**1**	**13**	**5**		**4**

Referral

In the case of 1 report of inappropriate behaviour, the PhD candidate was referred on by a confidential adviser to a professional source of support such as a doctor, psychologist or staff welfare service.

Relationship between person reporting and 'perpetrator'

When documenting the number of reports by staff members, the relationship between the reporter and the 'perpetrator' of the inappropriate behaviour was also taken into account. Of the 18 reports, 13 involved a situation between a PhD candidate and their supervisor and five involved a situation between a PhD candidate and another staff member.

Table 13 result of PhD candidate reports



Table 14a reports by category

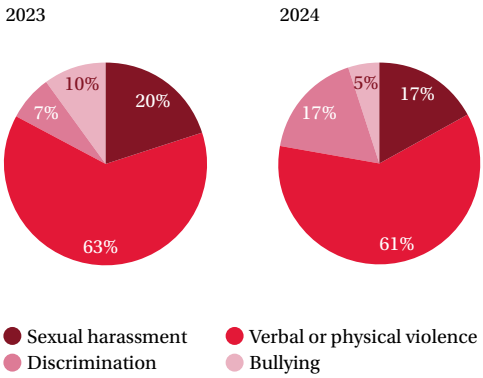


Table 14b grounds of discrimination

Grounds of discrimination	Number
1. Origin	1
2. Gender (male, female, intersex, transgender)	
3. Sexual orientation	
4. Age	
5. Disability or chronic condition	1
6. Political affiliation	
7. Employment status (full-time or part-time)	
8. Employment contract (permanent or temporary)	1
9. Marital status	
10. Nationality	
11. Religion	
12. Worldview	

6. Information and activities

One of the tasks of confidential advisers is to provide information. Every year, their own faculties or service units organise a range of activities to highlight social safety issues and the specific role of confidential advisers in this context. Several activities were also organised at the central level. For example, the UvA confidential advisers had a stand during the annual Introduction Week market. Throughout the day, confidential advisers were available for students to discuss issues. This year, the coordinating confidential adviser was once again available throughout the intake week for participating freshmen to interact with. The social safety campaign 'Looking out for each other' was also conducted again at the central level.

On 13 March, a special event took place at Spui 25 in the form of a meeting on social safety in higher education. The event was a collaboration between ECIO, the Dutch National Student Association (ISO), the TIME OUT foundation and the University of Amsterdam. The session involved a combination of theatre, discussions and the collection of best practices to improve social safety in education. There was also a panel discussion with the initiator of FairPlay Lotte Toet and ISO director Lotte Jansen, Prof. Geert ten Dam, Executive Board of the UvA and UNL social safety coordinator and Dr Liza Mügge, senior university lecturer and behavioural scientist.

In 2024, the coordinating confidential adviser organised nine workshops for student confidential advisers of faculty study associations and Amsterdam student associations in collaboration with the ASVA Student Union and the Amsterdam Chamber of Associations (AKvV). In recent years, many study and student associations have moved to appoint internal confidential advisers. After several discussions with this target group, it was found that there was often a lack of knowledge about the role of confidential advisers. The workshops aim to give students an understanding of the duties of a confidential adviser and addresses the skills needed. The reception interview will also be practised. A workshop was held for the 2024 Introduction Week Committee in collaboration with the Student Services unit. The Introduction Week Committee organises the induction of new first-year students. A workshop was also held for resident assistants. These are Dutch students living among international students in student houses, who provide the international students with advice and support. Finally, a 'podium module' was organised for study advisers in collaboration with the Student Services unit. The theme was concerning behaviour among students.

Workshops for UvA staff members

The coordinating confidential adviser held three workshops on social safety for the central Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences (FMG). Workshops were also organised for the FMG departments of Sociology, Political Science and Communication Science (staff and separately for PhD candidates). Within the Faculty of Science, workshops were organised at the Anton Pannekoek Institute and the Korteweg-de Vries Institute. An information session on social safety was also held at the Asser Institute (attached to Amsterdam Law School) in The Hague. The aim of the workshops was to engage with staff using dilemmas to discuss inappropriate behaviour. This covered the UvA house of social safety, looked at the code of conduct and the Working Conditions Act, and discussed the different roles and responsibilities. Finally, the culture at UvA was discussed. A total of 10 workshops were held.

For the UvA's units, the coordinating confidential adviser held workshops for the Management Teams of ICTS, Real Estate Development, Facility Services, the Executive Staff and the Administration Centre. There was also a separate workshop for HR advisers. A 'Lunch & Learn' was also included for the

shared University of Amsterdam and Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences service units. This was an online session in which the coordinating confidential adviser addressed questions on the role of confidential advisers and social safety. As a special initiative, the shared service units organised an interactive theatre production on social safety under the title 'Come on', in which all staff members were required to take part. The combination of leadership training, interactive theatre, e-learning and online education should be adopted by other UvA departments.

During the year, the coordinating confidential adviser hosted six workshops for supervisors as part of the UvA Learning & Development programme. The target group of supervisors is very important for social safety at UvA. They represent the organisation, are responsible for handling reports and must set a good example to their staff members. Finally, the coordinating confidential adviser attended a number of meetings, including of the Central Student Council, the Joint Works Council and the joint meeting of the Executive Board and deans.

A total of 23 (18 in 2023) workshops were delivered to some 750 staff members, including around 250 supervisors, in 2024.

7. Support and professionalisation

The confidential advisers at the UvA are associated with a particular faculty of service unit and are available for the university as a whole. After completing a special training programme, they are appointed for a three-year term. The confidential advisers perform a specific role alongside their regular tasks. They are granted 60 hours per year for their work as a confidential adviser, but the dean or the Secretary General of the UvA may decide to award an additional number of hours if necessary. Exceptions to this are the Faculty of Humanities, where the confidential advisers receive 100 hours, and ACTA, where the confidential adviser position has an FTE of 0.1. It is part of the duties of the coordinating confidential adviser to monitor whether there is sufficient capacity available among the confidential advisers. Whether the available 60 hours is sufficient depends very much on the circumstances in place and time, and it varies from situation to situation and sometimes from person to person. This is why a tailored approach remains important.

The following efforts have been made to strengthen the position of confidential advisers and increase their level of professionalism:

- *strengthening the team of confidential advisers*

  Various initiatives have been taken to strengthen the team of confidential advisers. The coordinator's role was to manage, stimulate and motivate the people involved in this process. The digital coffee break became a tradition in 2024. These sessions are aimed to increase the confidential advisers' specialist knowledge, reflect on our work and meet relevant people. Topics covered this year included the legal aspects of the work of confidential advisers, racism, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism.

- *confidential adviser training and certification*

  Confidential advisers must undergo training. We recommend doing so with a trainer offering a course certified with the National Association of Confidential Advisers (LVV). Where there were only two agencies offering certified training a few years ago, there are now more than 10 agencies doing so. A certified confidential adviser is included on a list by the LVV, which can be accessed via the website. To be eligible for recertification after four years, a confidential adviser should meet the following requirements: - membership of the LVV, - continuing education and training - minimum 24 hours, - peer feedback - minimum 32 hours, - additional activities - minimum 16 hours. The UvA enables confidential advisers to meet these requirements.

- *peer feedback*

  Peer feedback sessions are held twice a year, under the guidance of the coordinator. Each peer feedback session involves a discussion of two cases in accordance with the Peer Feedback Guide of the LVV. Participants also have the opportunity to ask pressing questions about their work.

  Alongside these peer feedback sessions, there is now also an option to join an LVV-registered UvA peer feedback group that will meet four or five times a year. These activities are necessary for the purpose of recertification. This group started in 2023 and has met our expectations. It now has eight confidential advisers as members, which is a great result.

8. Recommendations

Staff members

As in other years, the confidential advisers made many comments about the role of supervisors. Although a guide for supervisors has been developed and training is provided, most reports made by staff members concern the behaviour of their own supervisors. It is also clear that a significant number of supervisors still lack the knowledge and skills to handle reports properly. We furthermore note that not enough attention is paid to the soft side of leadership, namely investing in interpersonal relationships and team safety. A focus on psychological safety has a preventive effect and counteracts reports as much as possible. When reports are made, though, supervisors must take responsibility. That responsibility is clearly defined in the code of conduct and in the Working Conditions Act. Despite the UvA's frequent aversion to emphasising hierarchy, it is simply a fact that a hierarchy does exist, although the balance of power may not always seem clear. Most reports therefore arise from hierarchical relationships in the workplace. It is also still too often the case that no or too little action is taken where action is needed: 'In word, but not in deed...,' as one confidential adviser describes. The timely de-escalation of a conflict that is still internal and informal is an essential skill that supervisors need to have in their toolbox. Otherwise, conflicts drag on and on, leading to stress, frustration, absence and worse. In short, supervisors have the following responsibilities when it comes to social safety:

- Prevent by investing in the team.
- Take action when something goes wrong.
- Seek help, delegate and refer if you cannot resolve the situation on your own.
- Provide aftercare to those involved and the team.

Much has already been done, such as the general e-learning, the guide and the workshop for supervisors. However, the way in which reports are handled differs from programme to programme and from faculty to faculty. Some are much faster and more effective than others. Introducing compulsory social safety training for supervisors as standard in 2025 is an important next step. Hopefully the UvA will reap the benefits of this in the coming years, but it will take time for this culture change to take hold.

Staff recommendations

Our first recommendation, therefore, is to continue investing in leadership and particularly in the preventive soft skills leaders need to create a culture of safety in the team.

The second recommendation is to actively encourage peer review between supervisors. Mutual exchange and reflection on social safety dilemmas is of tremendous value.

The third recommendation is 'practise what you preach.' It is hugely important for supervisors to set an example. This includes complying with the code of conduct and following procedures, for example in the allocation of roles and positions.

The fourth recommendation is specific to ACTA and concerns the removal of the ambiguities that sometimes exist in relation to the cooperation between VU and UVA.

Students

The good news is that, at the central level, investment has been made in a part-time student organisations officer in the Student Services unit and a student social safety policy officer in the Academic Affairs policy department. This desire was expressed in previous annual reports and has now been fulfilled. There is plenty for these employees to do. In 2024, it was once again noticeable that faculties find it difficult to deal with reports from students about other students or from staff members about students. Among other things, we saw reports in the context of the protests about the war between Israel and Palestine. There were fewer such reports than in 2023, however, which is remarkable given the large number of violent and non-violent incidents in May 2024. It was also notable that a number of incidents occurred between international students. Conflicts that arise in the country of origin are being carried over into studies at the UvA. It would be useful to look at why this is happening. Violence, bullying and cyber bullying occurred in a number of areas, including among students from China and India. Other reports concern incidents during activities of study associations, which was already noted in the 2023 annual report. Incidents within student associations often receive the most attention in the national media, despite the fact that a minority of students are members of these associations. The student associations are also independent organisations over which the UvA has less influence.

A different situation applies to the faculty study associations, of which many more students are members. These associations often have their own area on campus and play an important role in student life. High-risk activities include parties, drinks receptions and trips both in the Netherlands and abroad. Incidents often take place off-campus, but affect interpersonal relationships while studying. Most programmes give due consideration to this issue and also seek solutions when on-campus relationships are severely disrupted. Progress is being made in this area, but we also see that many staff members with a teaching role still do not know what to do when incidents occur, something UvA needs to invest in. There needs to be a permanent focus on preventing socially unsafe situations. In 2023, we offered faculty and study associations the opportunity to attend workshops on the topic of sexual misconduct. It was good to see that a number of faculties took the initiative to continue this on their own in 2024 and make it a compulsory part of the curriculum. Finally, we note that our Social Safety Hub does not provide the option for students to file a complaint against other students.

Student recommendations

The first recommendation is to develop a guide for and in collaboration with faculties. This guide should help faculty staff involved in teaching to deal with student reports. It is also important to share the different faculties' expertise in this area as much as possible.

The second recommendation is to explore the desirability of developing a complaints procedure for students to submit reports about other students and for staff members to submit reports about students. The experiences of other universities can serve as examples.

The third recommendation is to place a focus on social safety with an emphasis on sexual misconduct within the curriculum. This could be in the form of the workshops mentioned above, for example, or in the form of an e-learning specifically aimed at students.

The fourth recommendation is to invest in gathering and sharing knowledge about the networks and existing sensitivities within groups of international students. This can help us better understand the context and take more effective (preferably preventive) action. The reason for this is that, in a number of cases, problems between individual students were found to have arisen in the country of origin.