



# UvA confidential advisers' annual report 2023

# UvA confidential advisers' annual report 2023

University of Amsterdam

# Contents

Introduction	3
1. Confidential advisers for inappropriate behaviour	4
2. Legislative framework, code of conduct and regulations	7
3. Cases of inappropriate behaviour reported by students and staff in 2023	8
4. Providing information	13
5. Support for confidential advisers	15
6. Confidential advisers' findings and recommendations	17

# Introduction

This is the annual report of the confidential advisers of the UvA. Any inappropriate behaviour (sexual harassment, aggression, violence, bullying, discrimination) towards students or staff at the UvA will adversely impact the safety of their study or work environment. The consequences may be serious. Students and staff can contact one of the UvA's confidential advisers for inappropriate behaviour to tell their story and find help in seeking a solution to the problem. This annual report sets out how many times the confidential advisers provided support to students and staff in 2023 and discusses the types of inappropriate behaviour involved. It also looks at the role, position and professional training of the confidential advisers.

The topic of social safety was also of great public interest in 2023. For example, the total number of notifications increased sharply in 2023 compared with 2022. Across the board, there was a whopping 65% increase (students 45%, staff 84%). In this regard, it is notable that 73% of the total reports from staff members are made by women, while 53% of staff members are women. Among students, 69% are reported by women, while 60% are women. We see the increase in the number of reports as a positive development. It shows that people are increasingly aware of the confidential advisers.

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 manager, study adviser or lecturer. The difference is that reports to a confidential adviser do not necessarily result in 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 the 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 very 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.

# 1. 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 2023 the UvA had 26 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 2022/2023*

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
Started in 2023	6	2	4	5	1	
Stopped in 2022	2	0	2	2		

\* Not registered before 2022

### UvA confidential advisers

Arjen Berkvens, coordinating confidential adviser	
Inge van der Stap	ACTA (discontinued)
Gerrie Veenstra	ACTA
Marjan van Schijndel	ACTA (started)
Myrthe van Amstel	FdR
Erik van Arkel	FdR
Karin Venetis	FEB
Sanne Lagziel - de Munck	FEB (started)
Danny Otto	FEB (started)
Eloe Kingma	FGw
Marita Mathijssen	FGw
Asli Özgen-Havekotte	FGw
Mirjam Koelewijn	FMG
Barbera Rosenhart-Meurs	FMG
Marie Hoogstraten	FMG/FNWI (stopped)
Els Veldhuizen	FMG (started)
Joyce Helsloot	(started)
Diana Vos	FNWI
Kristien van Lunen	FNWI
Belle Jansen	FNWI
Hélène Boeren	Executive staff
Rixt Polder	Executive staff
Marjan Alberda	Facility Services/ICTS
Enneke Tuinhof	AC (started)
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 26 confidential advisers active in 2023, eight held an academic position and 18 a support position. It is also notable that out of 26, only four confidential advisers are male. Furthermore, we have shared, through UvA pride, which two confidential advisers have a connection with the LGBTQI+ community.

### 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	6
normal	9
(too) light	3

\* Not all confidential advisers (18/26) filled in this section.

The fact that six confidential advisers said their workload was too high is a point of concern. The reasons are diverse. Some confidential advisers say this is because of the number of reports they have received. Others say it was because of some very complicated cases, which took a lot of time. The coordinating confidential adviser will closely monitor the workload and will propose measures should it become too heavy. In this context it is crucial to adopt a tailored approach, for example by asking for more hours or spreading the cases more effectively. Generally speaking, faculties and departments are happily willing to accept that the work as a confidential advisers takes more time than the 60 hours allowed under the regulations.

## 2. 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:** making a distinction between individuals on the basis of religion, beliefs, political opinions, race, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, civil status, pregnancy or other characteristics where there is no objective justification for doing so.

**Bullying:** 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.

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.



### 3. Cases of inappropriate behaviour reported by students and staff in 2023

In 2023, students and staff (including PhD students) discussed a total of 333 reports of inappropriate behaviour with a confidential adviser. This represents a 65% increase relative to 2022.

*Table 3 Reports of inappropriate behaviour submitted to confidential advisers, 2017-2023*

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Students	37	27	52	44	69	98	142
Staff members	37	49	84	69	83	104	191
<b>Total</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>333</b>

There has been an upward trend in the number of reports of inappropriate behaviour in recent years. One possible explanation is the considerable attention that the topic of social safety has attracted in the media and in society at large. Generally speaking, the rise in the number of reports is a positive development. It suggests that student and staff know how to access the university's confidential advisers and that they feel free to discuss issues. This helps to find solutions and further improve social safety.

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 2023, 142 students (from a total of over 43,000) contacted one of the confidential advisers to discuss cases of inappropriate behaviour. The number of reports of inappropriate behaviour by students rose by more than 45% compared with 2022 (when 98 reports were submitted). This increase is substantial, but in line with what we saw in previous years. Among faculties, ACTA stands out with a high percentage 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		Aggression, harassment, stalking (violence)		Discrimination	Bullying	Total 2023	Total 2022	Other	Percentage/ number of students
	Verbal	Physical	Verbal	Physical						
ACTA	1		10	2	3	3	19	14	3	2,07%
FdR	2		1	1	6	8	18	12	8	0,37%
FEB	3	2	3		4	1	13	4		0,18%
FGw	2	5	14	1	16	6	44	25	2	0,53%
FMG		1	14	1	8	3	27	12	3	0,23%
FNWI	2	3	7	3	3	3	21	25	2	0,29%
Other								6		
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>18</b>	

\* The category other concerns (in 2022) reports from Medicine and Amsterdam University College.

Table 5 progression 2017-2023

Trends in reports studenten

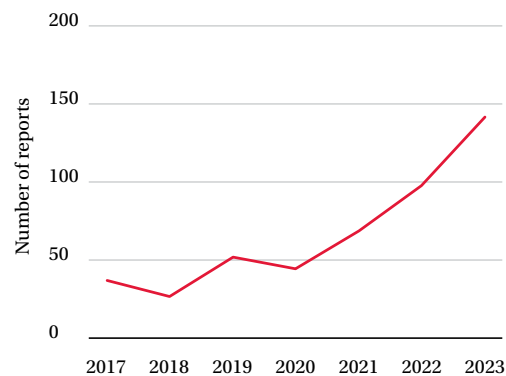
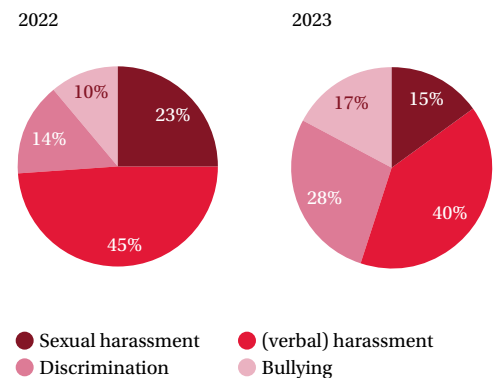


Table 6 reports by category



### Other reports

The 'Other' category includes reports about issues other than inappropriate behaviour. In the case of the 18 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 18 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 three reports, a formal complaint was made to the Complaints Committee.

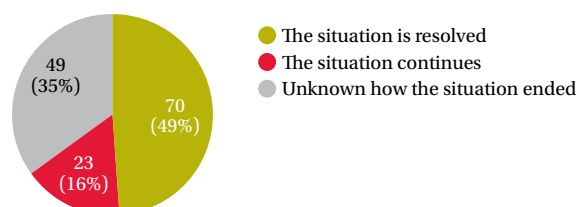
### Relationship between person reporting and 'perpetrator'

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 142 reports (including those in the 'Other' category), 64 concerned an issue between students and 78 an issue between a student and a staff member.

### What was the outcome of the report?

For the first time this year, the confidential advisers explained what the outcome of the report was.

Table 7 result student reports



### Differences from 2022

We saw a doubling of the discrimination category this year. In particular, this has to do with the war between Israel and Gaza. This situation has had a major impact on the UvA community. A number of anti-Semitic incidents were reported to confidential advisers. In addition, tense situations arose between students in particular. Reports on this came in particularly around (masked) protests, teach-ins and discussion meetings.

It is also notable that there has been a sharp decline in the number of reports of sexual harassment. The most common categories are (verbal) violence and bullying.

### Number and nature of staff member reports

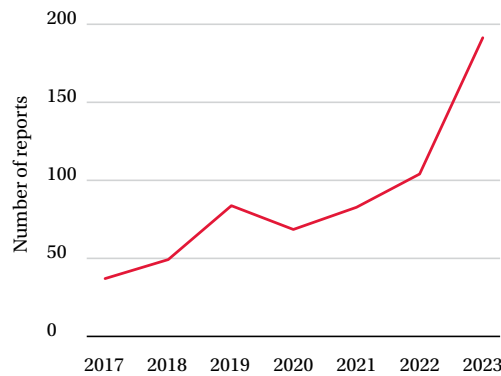
In 2023, 191 staff members and PhD students (from a total of almost 8500) contacted one of the confidential advisers to discuss cases of inappropriate behaviour. The number of reports of inappropriate behaviour by staff members rose by 84% compared with 2022 (when 104 reports were submitted). This is a remarkably large increase. Of the 191 reports, 30 were from PhD students. We tracked this separately for the first time this year, as PhD students were seen as a vulnerable group in the previous annual report. Specific information on PhD students can be found below. Of the faculties, ACTA stands out with a high percentage of reports compared to the number of staff members. We also see large increases in numbers of reports at FdR, FMG and FNWI. Among services, the administrative staff and other services category stands out with a high percentage of reports compared to the number of staff members.

Table 8 Number and nature of staff member reports

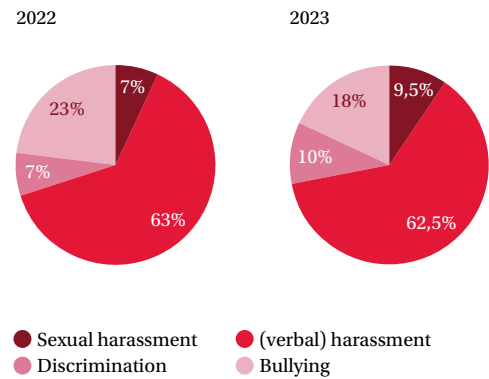
Faculty	Sexual harassment		Aggression, harassment, stalking (violence)		Discrimination	Bullying	Total 2023	Total 2022	Other	Percentage/ staff members in service
	Verbal	Physical	Verbal	Physical						
ACTA			25			9	34	13	2	6,15%
FdR	1		5			6	12	3		1,83%
EB		1	3		5		9	9	2	1,44%
FGw	3		25	1	1	3	33	29	3	2,22%
FMG	2		14		3	2	21	9	2	1,10%
FNWI	8		23		2	4	37	12	3	1,61%
AC								2	1	0,00%
FS			3			2	5	2		3,45%
ICTS						1	1	2		0,49%
UB			7		1	3	11	10	5	5,19%
Staff departments and service units	3		13		6	6	28	13	3	5,29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>21</b>	

**Table 9 progression 2017-2023**

Trends in reports staff members



**Table 10 reports by category**



**Other reports**

The ‘Other’ category includes reports about issues other than inappropriate behaviour. In 21 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 eight 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 one report, a formal complaint was made to the Complaints Committee.

**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 161 reports (excluding PhD students), 156 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?**

For the first time this year, the confidential advisers explained what the outcome of the report was. This table includes all staff (including PhDs).

**Table 11 result staff member reports**

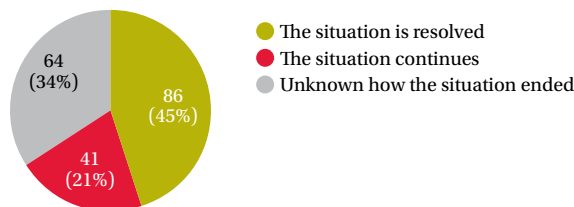


Table 12 Number and nature of PhD reports

Faculty	Sexual harassment		Aggression, harassment, stalking (violence)		Discrimination	Bullying	Reporting party Female	Reporting party Male
	Verbal	Physical	Verbal	Physical				
ACTA			2				2	
FdR						1		1
FEB		1	1		2		2	2
FGw	2		4	1		1	7	1
FMG	1		2				3	
FNWI	2		9			1	6	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>

### Referral

In the case of 1 report of inappropriate behaviour, the PhD student 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 30 reports, five involved a situation between PhDs and 25 involved a situation between a PhD student and another staff member.

## 4. Information and activities confidential advisers

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. There are sometimes misunderstandings about the latter. A confidential adviser reported: 'Sometimes people think I am some kind of police officer,' they said.

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. A new feature this year was that throughout the intake week, the coordinating confidential adviser was available for participating freshmen to interact with. No use was made of this, but it was communicated to everyone and, moreover, the opening of the Introduction Week in Theater Carré was also partly dedicated to the theme of social safety and the Gelijk Spel foundation organised two workshops during the Student Fair in the Beurs van Berlage.

On 26 January, Mariëtte Hamer visited UvA in her role as government commissioner on inappropriate behaviour and sexual violence. She joined Geert ten Dam, chairman of the Executive Board, students and staff in a packed lecture hall on the Roeterseiland campus to discuss how we can continue to highlight social safety, why rules matter now and how students can also contribute to social safety among themselves. The meeting was organised and led by the coordinating confidential adviser. Afterwards, he also contributed further to the development of a handbook on social safety for organisations and provided feedback on the Student Pact developed by the government commissioner.

On 29 November, together with Stichting Time Out, SAFE SPACE, an interactive theatre piece on social safety in student life, was performed. SAFE SPACE highlights issues and encourages dialogue with students, lecturers, confidential advisers, study advisers and education support staff. Time Out produced SAFE SPACE in a co-creation partnership with students to ensure a clear focus on practical situations that student can relate to. The play was in English with a special focus on international students.

The UvA entered into an agreement with the Gelijk Spel foundation for 20 interactive workshops to improve the sexual culture among UvA students. During the workshop, students will discuss how they do want to interact with each other when it comes to sex. Using case studies, themes such as checking desires and boundaries, sexual pleasure and the pressure to score or not score are discussed. This year, the coordination and initiative of the workshops lay with the coordinating confidential adviser. Implementation lay with the faculty study associations and faculties.

In 2023, the coordinating confidential adviser organised nine workshops for student confidential advisers of faculty study associations and Amsterdam student associations. 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.

### **Workshops for UvA staff members**

For the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences (FMG), the coordinating confidential adviser conducted social safety workshops for the academic departments, the faculty office and support staff. 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 nine workshops were held.

For the UvA services, the coordinating confidential adviser gave a presentation in the hall of the Maagdenhuis during a so-called *Broodje Kennis* (Knowledge Sandwich). For the University Library, he participated in a panel on social safety. At FNWI, a workshop was held at the Anton Pannekoek Institute (API) and for the study association SVIA. A workshop was also organised for LGBTQI+ advocacy organisation UvA-Pride.

Finally, the coordinating confidential adviser hosted three workshops for managers as part of the UvA Learning & Development programme. The target group of managers 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.

A total of 18 workshops were delivered to some 600 staff members in 2023.

## 5. Support and professionalisation of confidential advisers

The confidential advisers at the UvA are associated with a particular faculty of service unit, but they 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. The ACTA is an exception: there, the confidential adviser is a 0.1 FTE position in its own right. 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 monthly digital coffee break became a tradition in 2023. These sessions are aimed to increase the confidential advisers' specialist knowledge, reflect on our work and meet relevant people, such as the President of the UvA's Executive Board.

- *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 National Association of Confidential Advisers (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.



– *training and education*

Peer feedback initiatives can also be used to assess the need for in-depth training and education among the confidential advisers. For instance, peer feedback activities in 2022 revealed a need for specific refresher training on how to deal with reports from people with psychological problems. In response, a half-day session will be organised in January 2023 on the theme of 'Self-care and setting limits.' This session was hosted by the Student Psychologists agency in early 2023. On 11 December, we organised a second training by Legien Warsosemito-Schenk, MeToo coach and experience expert. The need for support for professionals facing #metoo experiences is growing. With focus on (sexually) transgressive behaviour only increasing, Government Commissioner Mariëtte Hamer having written a handbook and Amnesty having drafted a manifesto, there is a need to provide even more appropriate attention and support around #metoo. Legien Warsosemito-Schenk developed the #MeToo conversation etiquette, a booklet with 10 pragmatic conversation tips. After the training, drinks were organised for all confidential advisers and a number of people we work closely with at the UvA.

## 6. Confidential advisers' findings and recommendations

The past few years have seen considerable investment in setting up the Social Safety Hub at the UvA. The code of conduct and various regulations have been revised. Several new positions have been created. However, we are not there yet: it is also crucial that we join forces and take steps to change the culture - which is a long-term effort. Lately, we have seen that because of the attention that is being paid in society and at the UvA, reports are also being made about things that happened in the (distant) past. We take that as a good sign. In the past two years, we were able to fully test our (new) system of social safety, no longer hampered by the pandemic measures, which kept many people at home in 2020 and 2021. We see that many of the schemes and activities are contributing in a positive way, but improvements are still possible and needed. Last year, for instance, we drew attention to the role of defendants and are pleased that a scheme for counselling defendants is now in the pipeline. It also remains imperative that we continue to work on culture change. How does the code of conduct work in practice? How do we encourage normal and desirable behaviour instead of having to sanction transgressive behaviour? How do we work effectively on prevention?

### **Recommendations**

#### *1) Keep investing in leaders: beyond the non-commitment.*

The crucial role of managers in our organisation has again often come to the fore this year in the confidential advisers' reports. The vast majority of reports are about unsafe working relationships between immediate colleagues, between whom there may or may not be an implicit or explicit hierarchy. Clashes between staff members and managers occur regularly. The use of training courses and workshops increases the knowledge and skills of managers. At the same time, there are still many managers who do not know how to deal with the topic of social safety. This can result in non-, late, or disproportionate responses to reports. We draw particular attention to two aspects: dealing with reports and workplace culture.

Managers must be able to handle reports of inappropriate behaviour properly. This starts with hearing both sides, then dealing with the report and ends with aftercare for the individuals and team involved. It is vital that the UvA remains committed to strengthening the capabilities of this target group. While every UvA staff member bears responsibility for a socially safe climate, deans, department chairs, College and Graduate School directors and coordinators, directors of operational management, services directors, institute directors and managers and all other staff members with a leadership position bear an additional responsibility. They represent the UvA as an employer and should set a good example. A confidential adviser wrote: "There are a relatively large number of reports about managerial behaviour (unpredictable behaviour, getting angry, taking stress out on staff members)." The latter is problematic because the manager is responsible for a safe and inclusive work culture. We as UvA need to empower the manager to take responsibility in this. This is, on the one hand, a matter of 'leading by example' and, on the other hand, simply working very hard together to ensure that everyone feels welcome within our university.

*Recommendation*

Current initiatives to provide managers with the necessary knowledge and expertise (training, workshops, e-learning courses, handbook) are voluntary. We need to move beyond non-commitment and require staff members to prepare properly for their managerial duties. This can be done by offering courses and workshops, but it is especially important to pay structural attention to this theme, for instance by organising peer feedback between managers and by paying attention to leadership style during annual consultations. This would also benefit from making it clear on the UvA website who the managers are, where students and staff members can make a report. Many of the above options are currently hard to find. This does not contribute to the transparency necessary for a safe working environment.

*2) Support study associations in preventing inappropriate behaviour*

We faced several serious reports involving faculty study associations this year. In doing so, it was noticed that it is often still unclear who is responsible for handling incidents in these associations. Is the board of the association responsible or is it the faculty that bears responsibility? It is notable that study associations are reluctant to act in such situations, whereas they can play a significant role as a link between students and faculty. However, some valuable initiatives have started. The ASVA student union developed sample policies on social safety, study associations pay attention to the topic and appoint internal confidential advisers, the coordinating confidential adviser organised training sessions for the internal confidential advisers and workshops for boards. This, however, is insufficient.

*Recommendation*

Support study associations in developing and implementing social safety policies and do so together with faculties. Clearly map out who within the faculties can serve as a contact person in case of serious inappropriate behaviour. Facilitate the study associations with (compulsory) workshops and training courses and ensure that faculties show interest and commitment to this.

*3) Integrate social safety into education*

Students have a lot to deal with in the first months of their studies. They are taking their first steps into a world that is often new to them. For many young adults, this is exciting, and appropriate behaviour is not simply taken for granted. Sexual inappropriate behaviour unfortunately occurs with great regularity in student circles. On top of that, we are also dealing with a very diverse student population. Confidential advisers see that there are certain groups of students who can have an especially difficult time. For instance, we recently received several reports of Chinese students who faced cyberbullying. This often happens completely outside our field of vision on Chinese online platforms, but it does affect the faculties. We can also see that when political tensions rise (think the pandemic, the Ukraine war, elections and the war in Gaza) it affects relations between them. There seems to be a hardening of relations in recent times. The social norms on social media platforms, such as X, are sometimes copied in the physical space and this manifests itself in abusive language and even threats.

*Recommendation*

Pay attention to social behaviour and social safety in education. For example, during faculty induction days. Make it clear to students that we are all responsible for a safe environment and that bullying, harassment, aggression, discrimination and sexually inappropriate behaviour have no place at UvA. The code of conduct can be helpful in this regard, but it is important to translate this in a way that young people communicate with each other. The Communications Office's efforts on Instagram are a good example.

#### 4) *Prevent discrimination and racism*

UvA confidential advisers call attention to vulnerable groups such as female staff members and students, people of colour, students and staff members with a migration background, LGBTQI+ persons, people without a permanent contract; and PhD students are vulnerable to discriminatory behaviour for a variety of reasons. There is absolutely no place for conscious or unconscious displays of discriminatory behaviour or racist remarks within the UvA. It is important that both social safety policies and diversity and inclusion policies continue to address this issue.

##### *Recommendation*

Work with the above groups to come up with concrete action points to reduce vulnerability. Raise awareness of the issue of diversity and inclusion in the wider UvA community and strengthen the networks dealing with it.